

Faculty Play a Crucial Academic Integrity Role

A national survey by the Center for Academic Integrity that Duke University participated in in 2000 showed that 45 percent of Duke's students said that they engaged in unauthorized collaboration and 37 percent said they falsified lab or research data at least once since coming to Duke.

While Duke's results were similar to other institutions' that had participated in the survey, the survey showed that faculty were less engaged than faculty at other private universities with honor codes, says Judith Ruderman, vice provost for academic and administrative services and chair of Duke's Academic Integrity Council.

The survey found that

- 50 percent of Duke's faculty never reported student cheating
- more than 30 percent were aware of cheating and did nothing
- less than 30 percent reprimanded students for cheating.
- 25 percent lowered grades in instances of student cheating
- 20 percent referred matter to the judicial board.

The administration responded to the survey by forming the Academic Integrity Committee, consisting of faculty, administration, and student representatives to promote academic integrity on campus.

Revising the honor code

One of the Academic Integrity Committee's first actions was to revise Duke's honor code. A subcommittee with administrative, faculty, and student representatives worked on it before presenting it to the entire committee.

When the subcommittee presented a draft to the entire council, each member brought his or her own perspective to it. "Together we hammered out the various issues," Ruderman says. "For example, one faculty member on the council didn't like the word 'tolerate' in the phrase 'I will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor will I tolerate those who do.' Somebody else

didn't like 'those,' meaning 'those people.' After lots of debate, we compromised with the word 'accept' and we added 'the actions of those who do.' It may sound trivial, but it was an important thing. We all worked on it together and we came up with something that might not be perfect, but we're satisfied with it because one group didn't impose it on another group."

Encouraging dialogue

The Academic Integrity Council's most important goal is to raise campus awareness of academic integrity and to encourage the campus community to discuss it and make part of the culture.

Two council members visited 40 of the 45 departments that teach undergraduate students for a 20-minute presentation about the changes they hoped faculty would make, including

- including a statement about the honor code in course syllabi
- emphasizing academic integrity through ongoing discussions
- asking students to write out and sign an honor pledge on assignments
- clearly defining plagiarism
- providing clear guidelines on collaboration, citation, use of notes on exams, etc.

During the discussion period that followed the presentations, Ruderman learned that some faculty chose not to bring cases of suspected dishonesty forward because of they had bad experiences with the undergraduate judicial system in the past. "It was good for us to hear that, because it reinforces that one bad experience can last for the rest of the faculty member's career. The undergraduate judicial system, like everything else, is tinkered with constantly to make it better, and this was a good opportunity to be able to tell faculty that we do things differently now," Ruderman says.

The conversations with faculty also helped clear up some misconceptions about academic integrity on campus. While there is a statement about how to

deal with academic dishonesty in the faculty handbook, some faculty were unaware that they were supposed to forward cases to the undergraduate judicial system; they didn't realize that it's important - regardless of what discipline they teach - to teach the standards of academic honesty; and they didn't fully realize how much undergraduates look to faculty as role models.

Assessment

The next step for Duke's academic integrity effort is to assess the effects of the new honor code and increased focus on academic integrity. Ruderman hopes to survey students and faculty at the end of the academic year (the first year since inaugurating these changes).

"We do know that there are more instances of reported cheating. We think this means there's more faculty awareness and thus more reporting of cheating," Ruderman says. "We're going to have to survey faculty to find out what they do in their classrooms and whether they are doing new things because their awareness has been heightened."

Ruderman has been active in looking for ways to improve academic integrity at Duke. Signing a pledge or displaying community standards in classrooms is a beginning, but, Ruderman says, those things are not enough. "We have to keep thinking of new ways to encourage academic integrity. Our goal is to create the kind of environment at Duke in which people know that the expectations are set high. That's not to say that when you go to the University of Virginia, you never find cheating. But they have a 150-year-old honor code. So does West Point. Some schools you know that if you go there, you have made a commitment to being part of a community of honor. We would like Duke to be one of those schools one day. But it takes time and the effort of a lot of people."

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Abstract: The article gives a clear insight on the crucial role of faculty in *academic integrity*. A national survey by the *Academic Integrity* Council (AIC) that Duke University participated in 2000 showed that 45% of Duke's students engaged in unauthorized collaboration. One of the AIC was to revise Duke's honor code by establishing a subcommittee. The most important goal of AIC is to raise campus awareness of *academic integrity* and to encourage the campus community to discuss it and make part of the culture. Finally, the next step is to assess the effects of the new honor code and increased focus on *academic integrity*.

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