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Ten Principles of Academic Integrity for Faculty

by Donald L. McCabe and Gary Pavela

[1] Recognize and affirm academic integrity as a core institutional value.

Students need a mental framework to make sense of a flood of seemingly disconnected facts and information. Colleges and universities help provide that framework when they commit themselves to the pursuit of truth. While the ultimate definition of truth exceeds our grasp, the process of truth-seeking is grounded in certain core values, starting with a commitment to honesty and integrity in academic work. It is a responsibility of every faculty member to discuss and affirm that commitment in the classroom.

[2] Foster a lifelong commitment to learning.

Most faculty members became teachers and researchers because they love to learn and to share their discoveries with others. The first job of a teacher is to demonstrate that learning can be a captivating and joyful experience, especially when it entails finding creative ways to explore interesting, important, and challenging questions.

[3] Affirm the role of teacher as guide and mentor.

From the days of Plato's Academy, teaching was seen as encompassing conscientious companionship, grounded in the shared pursuit of truth. While other professions move headlong into the realm of "managed care," teachers will find that their greatest impact on students--including inspiring a commitment to academic integrity--will come in the context of personal respect, attention, and connection.

[4] Help students understand the potential of the Internet--and how that potential can be lost if online resources are used for fraud, theft, and deception.

New generations of students may forget that Internet is a comparatively new invention, with immense potential for human development. That potential will be lost if students don't learn disciplined ways to use online sources effectively and honestly. Faculty members can also try to keep some of the early idealism about the Internet alive by emphasizing that the culture of freedom and openness associated with it

depends on virtues like self-restraint, civility, and proper respect for the work of others.

[5] Encourage student responsibility for academic integrity.

The demonstrated effectiveness of traditional and modified honor codes, converging with the coming of age of the millennial generation, should accelerate the movement to give students significant responsibility to promote and protect the highest standards of academic integrity. Students want to work in communities where competition is fair, integrity is respected, and cheating is punished. They understand that one of the greatest inducements to engaging in academic dishonesty is the perception that academic dishonesty is widespread.

[6] Clarify expectations for students

Defining and enforcing academic integrity standards should be a shared undertaking with students. Nonetheless, faculty members have primary responsibility for designing the educational environment and experience. They must clarify course expectations in advance regarding honesty in academic work, including the nature and scope of student collaboration. Most students want such guidance, and welcome it in course syllabi, reviewed by their teachers in class.

[7] Develop fair and creative forms of assessment.

Students expect their academic work to be fairly and fully assessed. Faculty members should use--and continuously revise--forms of assessment that require active and creative thought, and promote significant learning opportunities for students.

[8] Reduce opportunities to engage in academic dishonesty.

Prevention is a critical line of defense against academic dishonesty and is best undertaken after listening to student perspectives and suggestions. Students should not be tempted or induced to engage in acts of academic dishonesty by ambiguous policies, undefined or unrealistic standards for collaboration, inadequate classroom management, or poor examination security.

[9] Respond to academic dishonesty when it occurs.

Students observe how faculty members behave and what values they embrace. Faculty members who ignore or trivialize academic dishonesty send the message that the core values of academic life aren't worth enforcing. Students then run the risk of developing harmful habits that can lead to far more serious consequences later.

Prompt and equitable enforcement of academic integrity policies does not have to be unduly punitive. Sanctions for first offenses can and generally should have an educational emphasis.

[10] Help define and support campus-wide academic integrity standards.

Although faculty members should be the primary role models for academic integrity, the fact is that defining, promoting, and protecting academic integrity must be a community-wide responsibility--not only to identify repeat offenders, and apply consistent due process procedures, but also to affirm the shared values that make colleges and universities true communities. In this sense, an important aim of a carefully designed academic integrity program should be to serve as a foundation for other efforts to enhance student ethical development.

RESOURCES

[a] Donald L. McCabe on the success of modified honor codes:

<http://www.collegepubs.com/ref/SFX000515.shtml>

"Probably the major finding of this new research was empirical confirmation that modified honor codes do seem to reduce student cheating, even on large campuses where levels of cheating are generally found to be among the highest."

[b] Website of the University of Maryland Honor Council:

<http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu>

This Honor Council website contains background information about the "modified honor code" movement. See "History."

<http://www.jpo.umd.edu/aca/honorpledge.html>

[c] AAUP Statement on Professional Ethics:

<http://www.aaup.org/statements/Redbook/Rbethics.htm>

"As teachers, professors encourage the free pursuit of learning in their students. They hold before them the best scholarly and ethical standards of their discipline. Professors demonstrate respect for students as individuals and adhere to their proper roles as intellectual guides and counselors. Professors make every reasonable effort to

foster honest academic conduct and to ensure that their evaluations of students reflect each student's true merit. They respect the confidential nature of the relationship between professor and student. They avoid any exploitation, harassment, or discriminatory treatment of students. They acknowledge significant academic or scholarly assistance from them. They protect their academic freedom."

** Our first version of the "Ten Principles" appeared in the AAHE Bulletin in 1997. The 2004 update is designed to encompass the growing impact of the Internet, and Don McCabe's research on the effectiveness of modified honor codes.*