

# FROM THE RUSS COLLEGE BOARD

by Mark Arnold  
Chair, Russ College Board of Visitors



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Dean Irwin has stated that academic honesty is a core value for Ohio University—a value that is taken very seriously. To deal with our recent challenges and begin rebuilding a culture of academic honesty, Ohio University and the Russ College have, amidst juggling time-consuming media inquiries, implemented a comprehensive strategy with many initiatives.

Some of these initiatives are focused on improving academic processes and procedures, such as ensuring electronic submission of theses and dissertations and broadening the make-up of thesis and dissertation committees. Other initiatives are aimed at bringing people together to work as a community in the spirit of learning. Teaching is, after all, Ohio University's core mission.

The people in any community must be responsible for building their own culture. They must develop, believe in, and take part in it. So, in late September, the University held a Universitywide "Day of Discourse" on academic honesty. All of the University's stakeholders, plus faculty, staff, and students, came together to discuss topics including policies, procedures, education, and support for faculty and students.

This fall, new Russ College graduate students were required to attend a student orientation where academic honesty was a main topic. Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies Angie Buckley, and graduate chairs from various departments, were there to give support and field questions.

Dean Irwin hosted a town hall on academic honesty for faculty and staff, which has been followed by two workshops on academic honesty with case studies and role-playing. And Associate Dean for Academics Ken Sampson joined the dean in meeting with students

over pizza to talk about what plagiarism is and how they can help make the Russ College and Ohio University positive role models for other institutions.

Something else the papers haven't picked up on: The new Russ College Student Academic Honesty Honor Council began working this past summer to develop a Russ College honor code. The council, working in conjunction with a faculty counterpart, will develop a broadly acceptable definition of plagiarism for the

Russ College; assess the state of academic honesty in the college; recommend policies, procedures, and initiatives; and brief Dean Irwin and Provost Krendl regularly.

The councils are being staffed by the Russ College's new academic honesty advisor, Melissa Broeckelman, who serves as a liaison between the councils and Dean Irwin and also provides research and other support. As Melissa helps advise and organize our students, she in turn is learning as she continues working toward her dissertation in communication studies.



Russ College students discuss definitions of plagiarism at the College's first student academic honesty workshop this fall.

What the Russ College keeps returning to is our students. Enrollment has increased this year, on both the undergraduate and graduate levels. In fact, our undergraduate first-year class this fall was one of the largest in 10 years. Overall undergraduate enrollment has also begun to increase again.

The Russ College is focused on people, focused on the truth: Ohio University is a great place, a place about learning. Dean Irwin and the College are taking our challenges and turning them into positives for the students of today and of the future. ☺