

# Academic Honesty 101

## *The Russ College Is at the Head of the Class*

*"We members of the Russ College pledge to act with integrity and expect the same from each other."*

— Russ College honor pledge

"Foremost for us is a renewed commitment to academic honesty—as a culture that we live and breathe," stated Russ College Dean Dennis Irwin in 2006.

That commitment—and the many positive initiatives that the Russ College has developed and employed—is now giving students an edge and bringing recognition to the College as an expert in higher education-academic honesty issues.

Real, sustainable cultural change must come from within through a bottom-up approach. Some of the best ideas emerge and shared understanding develops through open dialogue, in part because much "plagiarism" is unintentional and results from not having a shared understanding of expectations.

The Russ College's efforts toward that cultural change include student and faculty honor councils, the appointment of an academic honesty advisor, an academic integrity Web site, faculty workshops and brownbag series, a required technical writing seminar for graduate students, graduate courses on teaching engineering, pre- and post-defense screening for theses and dissertations, the development of courses on the teaching of engineering, and a pending honor code that includes an honor pledge and statements of student and faculty responsibility.

Of the small proportion of universities that do have honor codes, most simply have university-wide codes. The Russ College is one of the only engineering colleges—if not the only—with its own honor code.


Aviation major Riley Brookings says the College's initiatives are a strong influence. "I have seen an amazing response from the faculty in my classes. All of my professors take this kind of cheating seriously. With the many different kinds of programs like town hall discussions and meeting with professors one on one, students cannot be ignorant about the issue," Brookings said.

The College also has consulted with the nation's top three recognized experts in academic honesty and sponsored public lectures on campus by two of them.

"Bringing students, faculty, and administrators to the table as partners in the promotion of academic integrity is the 'gold standard' in our profession, and Ohio University has produced a valuable template for others to adopt in their efforts to stem cheating and plagiarism on their campuses," said Tim Dodd, former executive director of the Center for Academic Honesty, after his visit in May.

Dean Dennis Irwin and various faculty and staff presented the College's experiences to institutions across the country at a premier academic integrity conference hosted by the Center for Academic Integrity in October. Irwin also led a special discussion for other deans.

"Our many efforts are giving our students the knowledge and skills to write and publish in their academic and research careers now and in the future," said Mike Prudich, interim associate dean for research and graduate studies.

The Russ College will continue its work this academic year with additional awareness activities, more faculty brownbag sessions, and the new engineering teaching courses to ensure that the dialogue continues. 

## Russ College Sophomore Learns What It Is to Lead

By Sonja Abbey

**T**he national LeaderShape® Institute is a six-day leadership development experience designed to help participants learn to "lead with integrity." Participants learn to work in high-performance teams, practice decision-making for ethical dilemmas, learn to deal with change, clarify personal values and standards, and learn to understand and respect the values of other individuals.

Electrical engineering junior Sonja Abbey attended the August 2007 program, held at Salt Fork State Park in Cambridge, Ohio, as the Russ College's representative. Abbey currently serves as president of Engineers Without Borders, vice president of the IEEE



Electrical engineering sophomore **Sonja Abbey**

student chapter, and Russ College Student Council representative for the Society of Women Engineers.

I applied to attend LeaderShape after Melissa Feigi, vice president of the Society of Women Engineers, mentioned that she had participated and that it was a worthwhile learning experience. The timing—the week before classes—worked because I was able to move into my dorm room early.

I learned a lot about integrity and what it really means to have core values and to

hold to them—how often, we think we hold integrity and sometimes fall short. A big step toward evaluating whether you act with integrity is defining what your values are and spending time thinking about what is the best way to act in different situations.

Students from many other organizations, such as the Sales Centre, Greek groups, and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender organization attended. I learned about the ways people communicate differently and how to communicate with others. I learned the importance of team effort and how to work in a team better—not always just as the leader but as a member of the group.

I also learned about vision and what it means to have a vision. A vision is something you cannot achieve in a lifetime. You can't achieve a vision by yourself, but you can do something to make progress toward that vision and share it with others.

To view a video about the 2007 program, please visit [www.ohio.edu/campuslife/leadership/leadershape.cfm/](http://www.ohio.edu/campuslife/leadership/leadershape.cfm/).