

An Honest Look at

# *Academic Dishonesty*

at Ohio University

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# *Executive Summary*

## Executive Summary

Research in the United States indicates that academic dishonesty is a growing national problem. Due to recent local mass media attention to this problem in Athens and at Ohio University, the present project was developed as an exploratory study to assess the perceived frequency and attitudes toward academic dishonesty at Ohio University.

An online survey and personal interviews were conducted with faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates. Results suggest that:

- 84% of OU undergraduates and 55% of OU graduate students admit to cheating in the past year. This compares to McCabe's (2005) findings that an average of 70% of undergraduate students admitted to cheating when the same instrument was administered on 60 other U.S. campuses.
- 45% of undergraduates and 18% of graduate students admit to having engaged in serious forms of cheating (academic misconduct) during the past year. Those instances of cheating would unquestionably be classified as A1 offenses under the student code of conduct.
- Undergraduate students see all types of cheating as significantly less serious than do graduate students and faculty.
- 68% of faculty and graduate teaching assistants have observed academic misconduct in their classes in the past 3 years, but only 40% report that they have ever reported a case to anyone. 27% report that they have reported a case to University Judiciaries, but the actual number of incidents that University Judiciaries has handled suggests that this percentage is probably much lower.
- Students who have engaged in one type of cheating behavior are likely to have engaged in several types of cheating. Students who admit to having cheated view cheating as being significantly less serious than those who have not cheated.
- Students who are oriented toward mastery learning and have high academic efficacy are significantly less likely to engage in academic misconduct than students with low levels of mastery and academic efficacy.

Some of the factors that contribute to academic dishonesty include time pressure to finish assignments, the perceived benefits of cheating, a lack of knowledge about course material and proper approaches to source citation, a lack of trust in relationships among students and between students and faculty, and an overall culture that seems – via its normative prevalence and the lack of serious consequences – to condone cheating.

Based on our results and those of dozens of prior studies, we recommend (1) developing a campus-wide honor code, (2) teaching students and faculty about academic integrity, and (3) developing approaches to dealing with cheating after it occurs that promote both learning and a stronger ethos of honesty at Ohio University.

Knowledge and integrity are at the heart of the Ohio University mission. If we cannot presume that most work is being done honestly, we have a responsibility to make changes that will improve the quality of education and create a brighter vision for Ohio University. It is in this spirit of betterment that we offer the present report.

# *Background and Method*

## Background

Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty are increasing in frequency at academic institutions. The estimated proportion of undergraduate students who cheat ranges from 40-80% from study to study (Bennett, 2005; Davis & Ludvigson, 1995; Harding, Carpenter, Finelli, & Passow, 2004; McCabe, 2005; McCabe & Trevino, 1996), but McCabe's (2005) studies conducted on more than 60 campuses since 2002 that found that 70% of all undergraduates admit to some cheating on most campuses are probably the most accurate. Wajda-Johnston, Handal, Brawer & Fabricatore (2001) found that 28.7% of graduate students admit to cheating in graduate or professional school, with cheating being most likely in the first year and less likely each year afterward. Even though graduate student cheating is less common, these authors point out, "Students who cheat at the graduate level may be compromising the degree to which they are proficient in their areas of expertise, which could have serious implications for consumers of their services" (p. 304).

Other studies have found that dishonesty in school is likely to lead to dishonesty in other contexts. Nonis and Swift (2001) found that cheating in college is closely related to cheating in the workplace and that once cheating is perceived as an acceptable alternative, it is more likely to be used in a variety of situations. Harding, Carpenter, Finelli & Passow (2004) surveyed engineering students who had experience in the workplace and found that 48.8% of respondents were tempted to use of company supplies improperly, 31.5% were tempted to falsify records, 22.4% were tempted to ignore quality problems, 16.9% were tempted to ignore safety problems, 15.2% were tempted to accept improper gifts, and 9.6% were tempted to take credit for another's work. In this post-Enron era, such a link between academic and workplace dishonesty should be taken seriously.

Different forms of academic dishonesty are viewed as varying in level of seriousness. Pincus & Schmelkin (2003) found that faculty viewed cheating as being located on two continua: serious to ambiguous and papers vs. exams. Cheating on exams is generally seen as more serious than cheating on coursework such as papers. Elzubeir & Rizk (2003) surveyed medical students and interns and found that they also see exam cheating as more serious than plagiarism or cheating on a paper.

There are several factors that have been associated with cheating behaviors. Harding, Carpenter, Finelli, & Passow (2004) found that the most common temptations to cheat included lack of time, lack of preparation, lack of motivation, grade pressure, a professor who deserved it, and material that is too hard. Holmes (2004) and Sutherland-Smith (2005) found that cultural factors could contribute to cheating because behaviors that are considered perfectly acceptable or that are even encouraged in one culture might be considered cheating in another culture, but there are no integration procedures in place that teach students about these expectations when they begin to study at an American university. A third factor discussed by Bennett (2005), Overbey & Guiling (1999), Park (2003), and Sutherland-Smith (2005) is that students often lack an understanding of the definition of plagiarism and knowledge about how to properly cite sources, so they might



plagiarize unintentionally. Overbey and Guiling (1999) found that students have difficulty recognizing some of the more subtle forms of plagiarism, particularly those dealing with source documentation, and that students vary greatly on how they believe plagiarized assignments should be graded, with many believing that an assignment that is completely copied from other sources should receive at least a 50%. Finally, low levels of goal orientation, academic integration, self-efficacy, academic performance, and school identification are associated with high levels of cheating (Bennett, 2005; Finn & Frone, 2004; Rettinger, Jordan, & Perschiera, 2004).

Many academic institutions have taken a variety of measures to decrease the frequency of plagiarism. Some universities have developed campus-wide honor systems to give support to faculty, conduct hearings for cases of academic misconduct, track cheating cases, enforce consequences, and educate students about academic ethics. McCabe (2005) surveyed over 12,000 students on forty-eight campuses in 1990, 1995, and 1999 and found that campuses with honor codes have one-third to one-half less serious cheating on tests and one-fourth to one-third less serious cheating on written assignments than campuses without an honor code. Some universities are using technology, such as turnitin.com, to check assignments for plagiarism by comparing them to other documents in a database before papers are graded. Others are focusing on training faculty and students by incorporating academic integrity education into existing courses or through computer training modules, such as the Ball State's Multimedia Integrity Teaching Tool, which is a computerized integrity seminar. These measures are supported by research that found that students who are given feedback on their responses to a plagiarism knowledge survey or examples of plagiarism are much more capable of detecting plagiarism, which suggests that even a brief training session about plagiarism could greatly reduce cheating (Landau, Druen, & Arcuri, 2002). Finally, over 390 institutions have joined the Center for Academic Integrity, in affiliation with the Keenan Institute for Ethics, which helps to "provide resources and catalyze commitment to academic integrity in educational institutions" (Center for Academic Integrity, 2005). While these measures have significantly reduced the amount of cheating at these institutions, cheating still occurs much more frequently than academic institutions would like for it to.

Research suggests that strategies within the classroom can also help foster academic integrity whether or not institution-wide policies exist. Teachers can ward off plagiarism by structuring assignments to be more challenging and creative, by tailoring projects to topics that are less likely to have previously published material, by requiring students to use sources that cannot be found online, by incorporating group work, by watching for violations online, and by including a well thought-out policy in their syllabi (Phillips & Horton, 2000; Whiteman & Gordon, 2001). Teacher immediacy behaviors that improve classroom climate may also reduce cheating (Pulvers & Diekhoff, 1999; Stearns, 2001). Students are also less likely to cheat when they feel like they are part of a campus community (McCabe & Trevino, 1996), when they are involved (Park, 2004), when they are completing high-effort tasks (Davis & Ludvigson, 1995), and when there are clearly communicated expectations of moral and academic integrity (McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 1999).

At Ohio University, there is a statement that condemns cheating in the Code of Conduct that is supposed to be included in all syllabi, and faculty are encouraged to report cases of cheating to the University Judiciaries. However, there is no honor code or honor system, and no type of academic integrity training is required or even recommended. Faculty give anecdotal examples of plagiarism and approach it on a case to case basis, but there appears to be little consistency from faculty to faculty. Currently, the only data collected on plagiarism are cases brought before the Ohio University Judiciaries, but given the findings at other universities, we suspect that the majority of cheating cases go unreported.

Given the recent publicity about cheating (See Appendix B) and that the administrators at Ohio University are considering what types of measures might be effective in reducing academic dishonesty at this university, it is important to have a complete picture of the state of cheating at OU. With accurate data and a deeper understanding of the actual frequencies, perceptions, and attitudes toward cheating as well as the types of and motives for cheating, it will be possible to make recommendations for strategies that are most likely to effectively reduce academic dishonesty at Ohio University.

### Method

While the reported frequency and attitudes toward academic dishonesty have been investigated at several other universities, no such study has ever been conducted at Ohio University. Thus, this was a somewhat exploratory study that intended to find out what the perceived frequency and attitudes toward academic dishonesty are at Ohio University. Our study was designed to answer the following research questions:

*RQ1: What is the frequency of cheating behaviors at Ohio University?*

*RQ2: Are there differences in the beliefs about what behaviors are counted as cheating among faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students?*

*RQ3: What personal and situational variables are correlated with cheating behaviors?*

*RQ4: What are the attitudes toward academic dishonesty and the way that cases of cheating are currently handled at Ohio University?*

*RQ5: Are there differences in the perceptions of the frequency of cheating behavior among the reports from faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students?*

*RQ6: Are there differences among faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students in the perceived seriousness of different types of cheating behavior?*

In order to answer these questions, we conducted online surveys and interviews with faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates at Ohio University. The sample for each group was taken from the entire population at OU so that our results can be generalized to the entire university and can be used to aid in decision-making about future OU policies regarding academic dishonesty.

Our surveys were adapted with permission from the survey that McCabe (2003) conducted at Kansas State and other universities. The surveys for each group contained many of the same questions, but also included items that were specialized for each group and included items from Midgley et al's (2000) Patterns of Adaptive Learning Scale (See Appendix A). Surveys were sent to respondents three times to maximize response rate, and the survey tool was programmed to prevent multiple responses from the same participant. The goal of the survey was to establish the actual and perceived frequencies of cheating behaviors and to begin to understand the perceptions of and attitudes toward what "counts" as cheating and how it should be handled.

The individual and small group interviews, however, were intended to get a more complete picture and deeper understanding of the motives for and attitudes toward academic dishonesty and its consequences (See Appendix A). Like the surveys, the interview questions were modified for each group to make the questions as applicable to the participants' experiences as possible. However, we asked students to talk about others' cheating behavior so that they would not have to choose whether to incriminate themselves in order to talk openly about the questions that were raised. We began contacting potential participants via email utilizing a list of randomly selected undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty provided by Computer Services, but because of a low response rate, also recruited some of our participants from Communication Studies classes and by contacting people who had emailed us to express interest in the project after completing the online survey. Interview participants were given gift coupons to the Front Room coffee shop in Baker Center as compensation.

# *Survey Results*

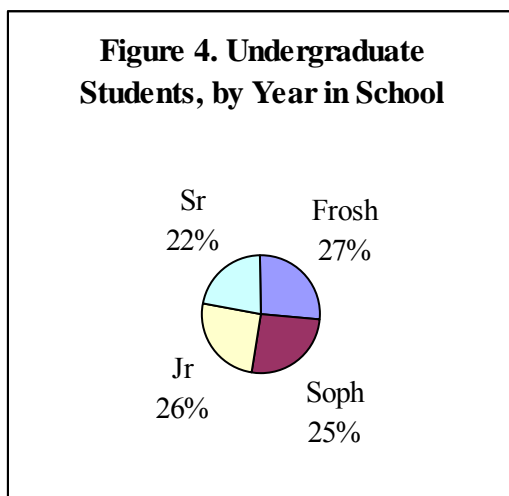
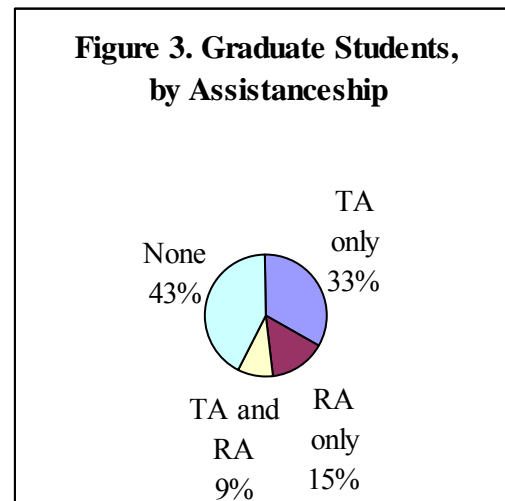
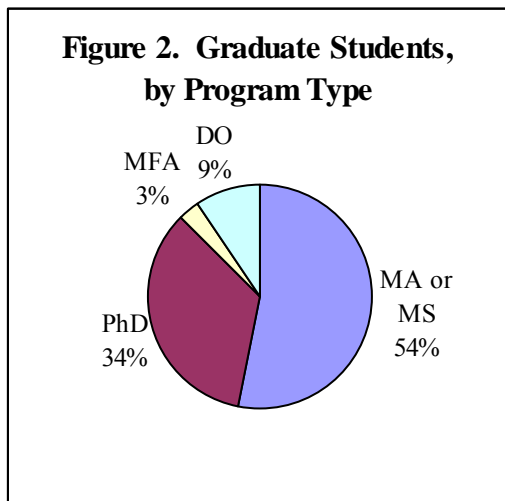
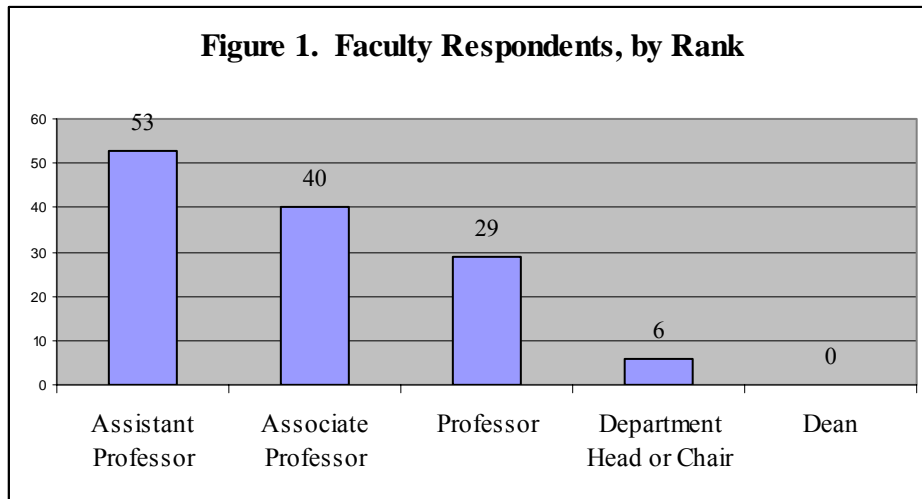
## Survey Results

We administered an online survey that was based on the survey conducted by Don McCabe at Kansas State University in 2003, which was one of 60 universities at which he conducted such surveys (McCabe, 2003; McCabe, 2005). We distributed versions of this survey using the Survey Gold online survey tool to 700 faculty members, 1000 graduate students, and 2000 undergraduate students at Ohio University. Responses were submitted by 123 faculty members, 96 graduate students, and 248 undergraduate students. Table 1 describes the distribution of our sample by college and indicates that our sample is fairly representative of the OU population.

Table 1

*Frequency Distributions within College*

	Undergraduate		Graduate		Faculty	
	N	%age	N	%age	N	%age
Arts and Sciences	79	31.85%	43	44.79%	50	40.65%
Business	17	6.85%	1	1.04%	6	4.88%
Communication	49	19.76%	8	8.33%	13	10.57%
Education	28	11.29%	19	19.79%	8	6.50%
Fine Arts	13	5.24%	4	4.17%	11	8.94%
Health and Human Services	27	10.89%	5	5.21%	16	13.01%
Tutorial College	7	2.82%	1	1.04%	0	0.00%
Osteopathic Medicine	0	0.00%	8	8.33%	5	4.07%
Engineering and Technology	17	6.85%	6	6.25%	14	11.38%
University College	11	4.44%	1	1.04%	0	0.00%
Total	248	100.00%	96	100.00%	123	100.00%



Figures 1 through 4 give additional demographic information about our sample. These figures also illustrate that our sample is fairly representative of the OU population.

The primary goal of our survey was to find out what the perceptions of and attitudes toward academic dishonesty are at Ohio University among faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students. We also wanted to find out whether differences exist among these three groups.

In one of the sections of this survey, we asked respondents whether they had observed or engaged in specific academic dishonesty behaviors and asked them to rate whether they thought each of the behaviors was a serious form of cheating on a five-point Likert scale, with 1 meaning “strongly disagree” and 5 meaning “strongly agree.” Of the behaviors included in the survey, 84% of undergraduate students and 55% of graduate students admitted to having engaged in one or more of the cheating practices in the past year. This compares to McCabe’s (2005) findings (using the same survey) that approximately 70% of all undergraduate students have engaged in cheating behaviors in the past year at other universities.

Table 2

*Students that Admitted to Cheating in the Past Year*

Undergraduate Students	84.1%
Graduate Students	55.2%

However, on face value, the scale appeared to contain several types of cheating behaviors with varying degrees of seriousness. In order to group the behaviors together, we used exploratory factor analysis on the seriousness of behaviors scale, employing Principal Axis Factoring procedures with Varimax rotation. The Bartlett test of sphericity suggested that the data met assumptions necessary for factor analysis,  $\chi^2 = 10013.38$  (325),  $p < .001$ . The Eigenvalue scores indicated that four factors should be retained, which was supported by the Scree Plot. Based on the rotated factor matrix, one factor, using a false excuse to obtain an extension on due date, was not retained because it did not meet the liberal 60/40 criteria for factor loadings. Although two factors (turning in work done by someone else and copying material word for word from written source) did not exceed the .60 loading on their primary factor, they were retained because their secondary loadings were less than .4. Table 3 indicates which questions were included in each factor. The four factors together accounted for 66.73% of the total variance.

After summing scores for the four factors, items comprising each factor were analyzed for reliability. Using Chronbach’s Alpha, reliability estimates were .96, .78, .90, and .86, for Academic Misconduct (Factor 1), Collaboration (Factor 2), Copying Sentences without Citing the Source (Factor 3), and Library Misconduct (Factor 4), respectively.

Table 3

*Factors on the Cheating Seriousness Scales*

Item	Factor				
	1	2	3	4	
Copying on test from other without their knowledge	<u>.87</u>	.00	.16	.13	
Turning in a paper copied from another student	<u>.84</u>	.13	.16	.16	
Copying on test from another with their knowledge	<u>.83</u>	.13	.14	.12	
Using unpermitted crib notes (cheat notes) during a test	<u>.83</u>	.11	.23	.09	
Helping someone else cheat on a test	<u>.78</u>	.21	.14	.15	
Turning in a paper obtained in large part from a term paper “mill” or website that did not charge for this information	<u>.75</u>	.09	.21	.19	
Falsifying/fabricating research data	<u>.69</u>	.25	.36	.18	
Falsifying/fabricating lab data	<u>.68</u>	.30	.32	.18	
Cheating on a test in another way	<u>.67</u>	.14	.26	.35	
Fabricating/falsifying a bibliography	<u>.66</u>	.29	.35	.18	
Cheating on a written assignment in another way	<u>.65</u>	.19	.33	.34	
Writing or providing a paper for another student	<u>.64</u>	.34	-.10	.13	
Altering a graded test and submitting it for additional credit	<u>.64</u>	.16	.16	.22	
Providing a graded assignment to another student to submit	<u>.62</u>	.30	-.09	.15	
Turning in work done by someone else	<u>.60</u>	.35	-.00	.11	
Copying material word for word from written source	<u>.56</u>	.10	.36	.04	
Working on an individual assignment with others	.04	<u>.71</u>	.16	.08	
Receiving unpermitted help on an assignment	.18	<u>.66</u>	.17	.17	
Sharing an assignment with others to use as an example	.03	<u>.60</u>	.10	.10	
Getting Q/A from someone who has taken test	.24	<u>.57</u>	.10	.16	
Copying a friend’s computer program	.29	<u>.47</u>	.13	.14	
Using a false excuse to obtain an extension on due date	.28	.42	.19	.38	
Copying few sentences from written source without citing	.30	.30	<u>.76</u>	.13	
Copying a few sentences of material from an Internet source without footnoting them in a paper	.25	.33	<u>.70</u>	.11	
Hiding library or course materials	.30	.30	.12	<u>.74</u>	
Damaging library or course materials	.25	.27	.08	<u>.74</u>	
	Eigenvalue	12.41	2.44	1.35	1.15
	% of Variance	47.74	9.38	5.20	4.425
	Chronbach’s Alpha	.96	.78	.90	.86

Note: Underlined factor coefficients show which factor the item is loaded on.



When we look specifically within each of these factors, we can gain a better understanding of what types of cheating behaviors are actually occurring. Table 4 summarizes the percentage of students who have engaged in each of the four types of cheating behaviors at least once in the past year.

Table 4

*Students Who Admitted to Engaging in Each Type of Behavior at Least Once in the Past Year*

	Undergraduate Students	Graduate Students
Academic Misconduct	44.7%	17.7%
Collaboration	74.6%	43.8%
Copying Sentences	29.4%	6.3%
Library Misconduct	2.4%	2.1%

If we consider that the behaviors included in the Academic Misconduct category are those which would traditionally be considered deliberate or blatant cheating and that would unquestionably be classified as A1 offenses by University Judiciaries at OU, we should be alarmed that 44.7% of undergraduate students and 17.8% of graduate students admitted to engaging in these behaviors. Though the number of students who admitted to the second type of behaviors, Collaboration, is much higher, we should consider that these strategies are often encouraged by teachers as a regular pedagogical practice. As collaborative and cooperative learning methods are becoming increasingly common (Howe & Strauss, 2000), we might want to question whether all of these behaviors should be included as cheating as they are broadly described in this survey. Though copying sentences without citing the source of the material is certainly inappropriate, it is possible that some of these cases were unintentional cheating. Bennett (2005), Overbey & Guilings (1999), Park (2003), and Sunderland-Smith (2005) all report that a lack of knowledge and training about how to properly cite sources is often a factor associated with this type of cheating, which suggests that such behaviors might be most easily decreased through teaching students about proper source citation practices. Because so many resources are now available online and because Ohio University is not the type of institution where we might expect to find competition for and hiding of library resources, it is not surprising that so few student reported engaging in these behaviors, and considering the behaviors, it is entirely possible that these were also unintentional accidents (such as spilling something on a book or accidentally tearing a fragile page) or were cases of vandalism rather than cases of academic dishonesty.

However, most of these incidents are not being reported to University Judiciaries. Table 5 compares the number of A1 academic misconduct cases that were reported to University Judiciaries and the estimated number of students who actually engaged in academic misconduct, based on our survey findings and the university enrollment during

each of those years. For the purposes of comparison, we are estimating cases based on the self-reported incidents of academic misconduct (Factor 1) only, since these are the types of cheating behaviors that would be classified as A1 offenses by University Judiciaries.

Table 5

*Reported and Expected Incidents of Academic Misconduct*

Academic Year	Undergrad Enrollment*	Undergrad Reported Cases**	Undergrad Expected Cases	Graduate Enrollment*	Graduate Reported Cases**	Graduate Expected Cases
1999	16,218	33	7249	2,522	0	446
2000	16,290	35	7282	2,621	2	464
2001	16,695	25	7463	2,543	1	450
2002	16,854	25	7534	2,672	0	473
2003	16,795	27	7507	2,742	0	485
2004	16,640	14	7438	2,636	1	467
2005	16,761	9	7492	2,534	1	449

\*Enrollment figures are from Athens Final Fall Enrollment headcount from the Office of Institutional Research, available at <http://www.ohiou.edu/institres/student/quartenroll/QuartEnrollFALL.html>

\*\* Reported incident counts are taken from the University Judiciaries Precedent Report. 2005 figures are incomplete.

Furthermore, when faculty members and graduate students who are on teaching assistantships were asked whether they had observed these same behaviors in their own classes over the past three years, it became clear that such behaviors have not gone unnoticed, as can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6

*Faculty and GTAs Who Have Observed Cheating in Their Classes in the Past 3 Years.*

Academic Misconduct	68.3%
Collaboration	41.5%
Copying Sentences	48.8%
Library Misconduct	2.4%

When faculty and GTAs were asked whether they had ever reported an incident of academic misconduct to someone, 40.2% said yes and 59.8% said no, as can be seen in Table 7. Table 8 shows to whom faculty and GTAs said that they referred these cases.

Table 7

*Have you ever referred a case of suspected cheating to anyone?*

Yes	40.2%
No	59.8%

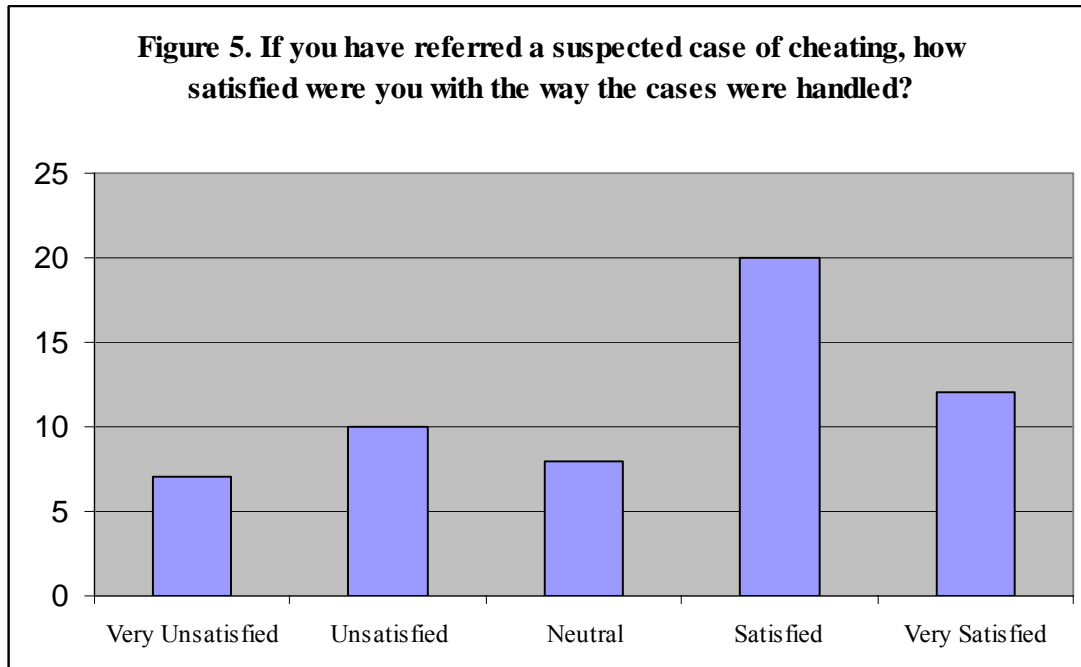
Note: These figures are based on responses from faculty and graduate students with a teaching assistantship.

Table 8

*To whom are faculty and GTAs referring cases?*

University Judiciaries	26.9%
Department Chair or Head	21.6%
Course Supervisor	7.5%
Dean of Students	2.2%

Figure 5 shows how satisfied faculty and GTAs were with the way that referred cases of cheating were handled. The mean level of satisfaction was 3.35.



Of course, the fact that faculty and GTAs do not always report incidents of cheating to University Judiciaries or to administrators does not necessarily mean that nothing is being done about these incidents, since it is possible that faculty and GTAs are handling incidents of cheating on their own. Table 9 summarizes what faculty and GTAs said their most likely actions would be if they were convinced that a student had cheated in one of their classes.

Table 9

*Most Likely Actions of Faculty and GTAs Convinced of Cheating Behavior*

Fail student on the test/assignment	59.1%
Inform faculty responsible for the course*	43.9%
Reprimand or warn student	34.1%
Discuss incident with other GTAs*	34.1%
Report student to University Judiciaries	28.7%
Report student to a Chair/Director	25.6%
Fail student for the course	22.0%
Lower student's grade	16.5%
Inform lab coordinator*	12.2%
Require student to redo the test/assignment	11.0%
Report student to a Dean	6.7%
Do nothing	1.8%

\*Indicates GTA only responses. Percentage is of GTAs who responded.

We also asked faculty and GTAs whether they had ever ignored a suspected cheating incident. As can be seen in Table 10, 28.7% of all faculty and GTAs said that they have ignored cheating incidents in their classes.

Table 10

*Have you ever ignored a suspected cheating incident?*

Yes	28.7%
No	71.3%

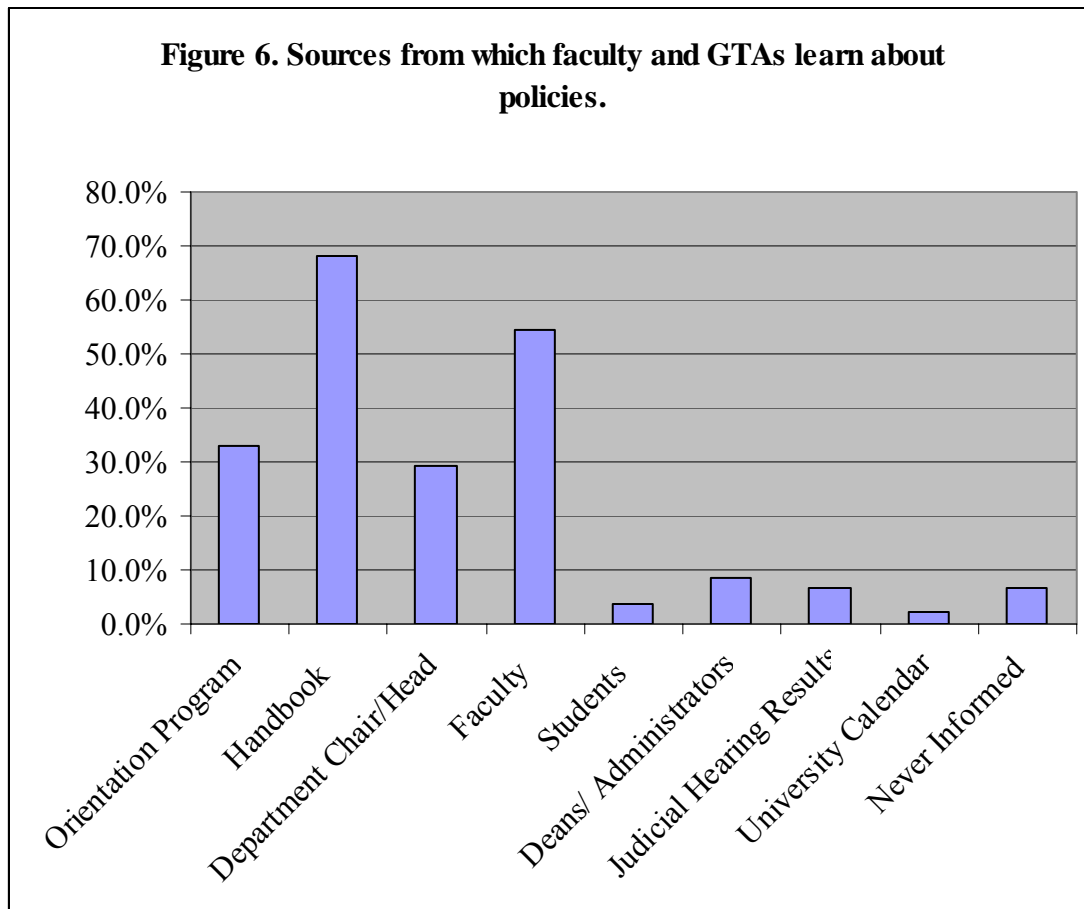
Table 11 shows the reasons why faculty and GTAs who said that they have ignored incidents of cheating did so.

Table 11

*Reasons Faculty and GTAs Ignored Cheating Incidents*

Lack of evidence/proof	27.7%
No time to pursue case	10.0%
Cheating was trivial/not serious	5.4%
Lack of support from Administration	5.4%
Didn't want to deal with it	3.1%
Student will ultimately suffer	2.3%

Given the variation in the way that cheating incidents are handled, it is important to know where faculty and GTAs are learning about OU’s policies on academic misconduct, which is summarized in Figure 6.



Because of the prevalence of cheating behaviors and because of the discrepancy between the observed and reported incidents of cheating, it is important to see whether this might be due in part to attitudes toward academic dishonesty behaviors. For each behavior, we asked all participants to rate whether they thought the behavior in question was a serious form of cheating on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 meaning Strongly Disagree and 5 meaning Strongly Agree. Table 12 summarizes the means for the seriousness of each type of behavior.

Table 12

*Mean Seriousness of Type of Cheating*

	All Respondents	Faculty	Grad Students	Undergrads
Academic Misconduct	4.69 (.59)	4.88 (.51) <sub>a</sub>	4.79 (.46) <sub>b</sub>	4.55 (.64) <sub>ab</sub>
Collaboration	3.50 (.89)	4.06 (.72) <sub>cd</sub>	3.69 (.88) <sub>ce</sub>	3.15 (.78) <sub>de</sub>
Copying Sentences	4.24 (.89)	4.46 (.72) <sub>f</sub>	4.49 (.72) <sub>g</sub>	4.03 (.98) <sub>fg</sub>
Library Misconduct	4.17 (1.05)	4.59 (.81) <sub>h</sub>	4.35 (.93) <sub>i</sub>	3.90 (1.12) <sub>hi</sub>

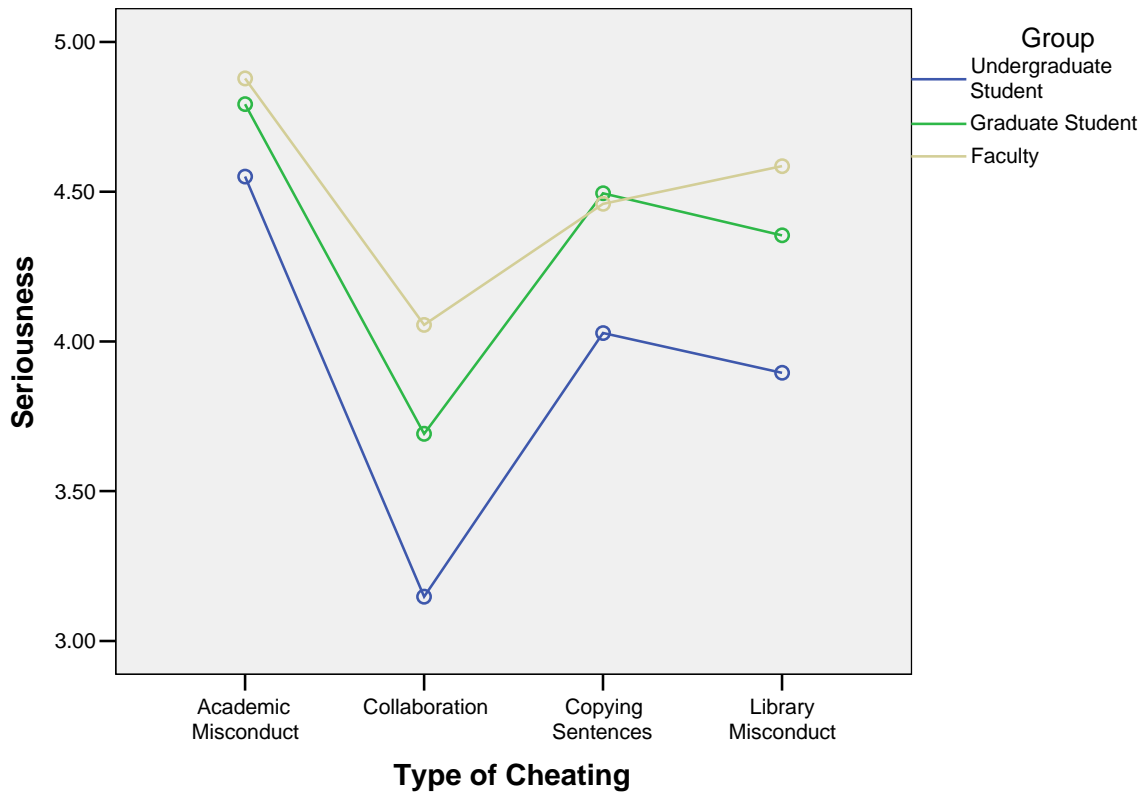
Note: Standard deviations are reported in parentheses. Means with the same subscripts are significantly different at the .01 level.

Next, we conducted a ONEWAY ANOVA to determine whether significant differences in perceived seriousness of each type of cheating existed among faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students. The Omnibus F test was significant for all four factors. For Academic Misconduct,  $F = 15.49 (2,464)$ ,  $p < .05$ . For Collaboration,  $F = 58.36 (2,464)$ ,  $p < .05$ . For Copying Sentences,  $F = 15.54 (2,464)$ ,  $p < .05$ . For Library Misconduct,  $F = 21.24 (2,464)$ ,  $p < .05$ . Bonferroni Post Hoc tests, with alpha set at .01 to adjust for familywise inflation of alpha, were used to test for mean differences between groups. As is indicated by the subscripts in Table 12, significant differences were found between undergraduate students and faculty and between undergraduate students and graduate students for all four types of cheating. Significant differences were only found between graduate students and faculty for collaboration. This means that faculty and graduate students view each of the types of cheating as more serious than undergraduate students view each of the types of cheating. Faculty view collaboration as a more serious type of cheating than graduate students do.

To determine whether there were significant differences in the seriousness with which each type of cheating was perceived, a split-plot analysis with four within-subjects factors (Academic Misconduct, Collaboration, Copying Sentences, and Library Misconduct) and one between-subjects factor (group) was calculated. Mauchly's test suggested that the sphericity assumption was violated,  $\chi^2 = 120.56 (5)$ ,  $p < .001$ , and consequently, various estimates of epsilon were used to correct and test within-subjects effects. Significant within-in subjects effects were found for the seriousness of the types

of cheating, Greenhouse-Geisser = 250.94,  $F = 204.20$  (2.58, 1199),  $p < .05$ , and for the seriousness of types of cheating by group, Greenhouse-Geisser = 18.25,  $F = 7.43$  (5.17, 1199),  $p < .05$ . Pairwise comparisons of the estimated marginal means of the seriousness of types of cheating within groups showed that there were significant differences ( $p < .05$ ) in the seriousness with which each type of cheating was seen except for between Copying Sentences and Library Misconduct. Academic Misconduct was seen as the most serious type of cheating, Collaboration was seen as the least serious type of cheating, and Copying Sentences and Library Misconduct fell in between the two. (See Figure 7.)

**Figure 7**  
**Estimated Marginal Means of Seriousness of Types of Cheating by Group**



After this, we began to look for relationships that might help explain cheating trends. First, we ran pairwise Pearson product moment correlations between engagement in, observation of, and seriousness of each type of cheating behavior.

Table 13 shows the correlations between Engagement in Cheating Behaviors and Seriousness of Cheating Behaviors. All but three of the relationships had significant negative correlations. This indicates that those who engage in cheating behaviors are less likely to see that behavior as a serious form of cheating, or, conversely, that those who do not believe that a type of behavior is a serious form of cheating are more likely to engage in those behaviors. This is exactly what Festinger’s (1957, in Gass & Seiter,

2003) theory of cognitive dissonance would predict; because people prefer consistency, they are likely to change their beliefs or their behaviors to maintain a state of internal consistency.

Table 13

*Correlation between Engagement in Cheating Behaviors and Beliefs about the Seriousness of that Type of Behavior*

	AM Serious	Col Serious	CS Serious	LM Serious
AM Engaged	-.22**	-.32**	-.28**	-.17**
Col Engaged	-.10	-.38**	-.19**	-.15**
CS Engaged	-.13*	-.19**	-.38**	-.15**
LM Engaged	-.08	-.14**	-.01	-.15**

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 14 shows the correlations between Observed Cheating Behaviors and Seriousness of Cheating Behaviors. Because only two of the pairings are significant at the .05 level, we can infer that whether a faculty member or graduate student has observed students cheating in their classes is not likely to impact how serious they believe that form of cheating is.

Table 14

*Correlation between Observation of Cheating Behaviors and Beliefs about the Seriousness of that Type of Behavior*

	AM Serious	Col Serious	CS Serious	LM Serious
AM Observed	.14*	.18*	.08	.09
Col Observed	.04	-.02	.03	.01
CS Observed	.03	.08	-.02	-.01
LM Observed	-.01	-.08	.02	.04

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.



Tables 15 and 16 show correlations within factors for cheating behaviors engaged in and seriousness of cheating behaviors. We found that, with the exception of Library Misconduct, students who engage in one type of cheating behavior are likely to engage in the other types of cheating behavior. Likewise, students who see one of the types of cheating behaviors as serious are likely to see all of the types of cheating behaviors as serious.

Table 15

*Pairwise Correlation of Engaged Behaviors*

	AM Engaged	Col Engaged	CS Engaged	LM Engaged
AM Engaged	<b>.96</b>	.30*	.37*	.08
Col Engaged	.35	<b>.78</b>	.23*	.07
CS Engaged	.40	.27	<b>.90</b>	.09
LM Engaged	.09	.09	.10	<b>.86</b>

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

Note: Boldfaced figures represent Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficients. Figures below the diagonal are corrected for attenuation due to unreliability.

Table 16

*Pairwise Correlation of Seriousness of Behaviors*

	AM Serious	Col Serious	CS Serious	LM Serious
AM Serious	<b>.96</b>	.47*	.55*	.54*
Col Serious	.54	<b>.78</b>	.47*	.46*
CS Serious	.59	.56	<b>.90</b>	.38*
LM Serious	.59	.56	.43	<b>.86</b>

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

Note: Boldfaced figures represent Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficients. Figures below the diagonal are corrected for attenuation due to unreliability.

The final section of the graduate and undergraduate student surveys included portions of the Patterns of Adaptive Learning Scales (PALS) developed by Midgley, et. al. (2000). Bennett (2005) and Finn and Frone (2004) found that goal orientation,

academic integration, and self-efficacy are indicators of a student's likelihood to engage in academic misconduct, and Jagacinski and Duda's (2001) comparative analysis of goal orientation scales found that the PALS is the most accurate, valid scale for measuring these traits, so we included survey items that measured the following four factors:

1. Mastery Goal Orientation: Student wishes to develop competence.
2. Performance-Approach: Student wishes to demonstrate competence.
3. Performance-Avoid: Student wishes to avoid demonstrating incompetence.
4. Academic Efficacy: Student's perception of their competence.

First, we conducted a ONEWAY ANOVA to determine whether significant differences in the scores for each factor existed between undergraduate and graduate students. The Omnibus F test was significant for three of the four scale items: Mastery Goal Orientation,  $F = 33.19 (1,343), p < .05$ ; Performance –Approach,  $F = 8.69 (1,343), p < .05$ ; and Academic Efficacy,  $F = 18.11 (1,343), p < .05$ . Graduate students had higher scores for Mastery Goal Orientation and Academic Efficacy, while undergraduate students had significantly higher scores on Performance-Approach. No significant differences were found between undergraduate and graduate students for Performance Avoidance. These results are not surprising since graduate students self-select to continue in their studies and were usually some of top students in their undergraduate programs.

Table 17

*Undergraduate and Graduate Mean Scores for PALS*

	<u>Undergraduate</u>		<u>Graduate</u>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Mastery	3.84*	.69	4.3*	.59
Perf-App	3.23*	.96	2.88*	1.06
Perf-Avoid	2.86	.95	2.93	1.03
Acad Eff	3.92*	.64	4.2*	.62

\*Mean differences significant at the .05 level.

Pearson product moment correlations were calculated to determine relationships between pairwise combinations of factors. As indicated by the correlation coefficients in Table 18, strong significant positive correlations were observed between Mastery Goal Orientation and Academic Efficacy ( $r = .55$ ) and between Performance-Approach and Performance-Avoidance ( $r = .52$ ). A weak but statistically significant correlation was found between Academic Efficacy and Performance-Approach ( $r = .11$ ). This suggests

that Mastery Goal Orientation is closely related to Academic Efficacy and that Performance-Approach is closely related to Performance-Avoidance.

Table 18

*Pairwise Correlation of PALS Factors*

	Mastery	Perf-App	Perf-Avoid	Acad Eff
Mastery	<b>.84</b>	.02	.03	.52*
Perf-App	.02	<b>.85</b>	.55*	.11*
Perf-Avoid	.04	.64	<b>.87</b>	-.07
Acad Eff	.62	.13	-.08	<b>.83</b>

\*Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

Note: Boldfaced figures represent Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficients. Figures below the diagonal represent corrected correlation values

Next, Pearson product moment correlations were calculated between each of the PALS factors and whether students had engaged in each type of cheating behavior. As indicated in Table 19, Mastery Goal Orientation had significant negative correlations with Academic Misconduct and Collaboration. Academic Efficacy had significant negative correlations with Academic Misconduct, Collaboration, and Copying Sentences. This suggests that students who wish to develop competence or who feel that they already have the skills needed are less likely to engage in academic dishonesty.

Table 19

*Correlation of PALS Factors and Types of Cheating Behaviors Engaged In*

	AM Engaged	Col Engaged	CS Engaged	LM Engaged
Mastery	-.19*	-.23*	-.10	.07
Perf-App	.13*	.08	.02	.02
Perf-Avoid	.09	.01	.06	.07
Acad Eff	-.15*	-.17*	-.19*	-.02

\*Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

Pearson product moment correlations were also calculated between each of the PALS factors and the perceived seriousness of each type of cheating behavior. As indicated in Table 20, Mastery and Academic Efficacy had significant positive correlations with all four types of cheating behavior. This indicates that those who have high levels of Mastery and Academic Efficacy are likely to see all types of cheating behavior as more serious than students who have low levels of Mastery and Academic Efficacy. A small but significant negative correlation was also found between Performance Approach and seriousness of Collaboration. This may mean that students who want to demonstrate competence are less likely to view Collaboration as a serious form of cheating.

Table 20

*Correlation of PALS Factors and Seriousness of Type of Cheating*

	AM Serious	Col Serious	CS Serious	LM Serious
Mastery	.23*	.28*	.21*	.18*
Perf-App	-.03	-.11*	-.10	-.05
Perf-Avoid	-.02	-.04	-.01	.05
Acad Eff	.18*	.22*	.23*	.11*

\*Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

The correlations with the PALS factors suggest that increasing levels of student mastery and academic efficacy will decrease the amount of cheating and will increase the seriousness with which each type of cheating is viewed.

# Questionnaire Results

## Interview Results

In order to gain a deeper understanding of academic dishonesty at Ohio University, we conducted individual and small group interviews with five undergraduate students, two graduate students, and three faculty members. We heard similar responses and stories across all three groups, and these responses and stories were congruent with the responses and stories that we have heard from others in informal conversation. Most of the responses can be grouped into three general categories: definitions, motives, and solutions.

### *Definitions*

We began by asking participants questions that were intended to solicit definitions of and distinctions between types of cheating. Many participants made a distinction between cheating and plagiarism. Participants usually described cheating as academic dishonesty on a test or other assignment and specifically mentioned behaviors such as looking at and copying answers from another's test, making copies of tests to share with others by taking photographs of exams with cell phones, passing notes with answers, and "recycling" PowerPoint presentations by using the same presentation assignment in two classes. Plagiarism was described as academic dishonesty on a written assignment or paper. Specific types of plagiarism mentioned by participants included cutting and pasting written material from the internet, turning in entire essays that were found online, turning in someone else's work as one's own, turning in the same paper for separate assignments (self-plagiarism), and failing to properly cite sources. Some participants talked about cheating and plagiarism as synonymous terms, some saw them as entirely separate behaviors, and some saw them as related categories. For example, one participant said, "Plagiarism? I guess I don't really think of it as cheating when I think of it. It's definitely not a good thing, but I think it's a somewhat different thing. Maybe just a different category of cheating."

When asked whether they viewed some types of academic dishonesty as more serious than others, some participants said that they thought that all types of cheating were equally bad because, as one faculty member put it, "Cheating is getting credit for work turned in without having the knowledge that the work demonstrates." Most, however, made distinctions in levels of cheating depending on the amount of information taken (copying an entire paper is worse than copying a paragraph), frequency of incidents (the more often a student engages in academic dishonesty, the worse it is), and intent (knowingly cheating is worse than unintentional cheating). Several participants said that plagiarizing a paper is worse than cheating on a test. As one undergraduate student said:

When you plagiarize, if you take someone's paragraph or their paper, you're taking all of the research that they did and that they have under their name specifically and then saying that you did it. If you're taking a test that's multiple choice where you could get the right answer if you guessed it, compared to taking someone's research and work which could

even be printed under their name, like in a book, and saying that you wrote that is, I think, more severe.

One graduate student, who also agreed that plagiarizing on a paper is worse than cheating on a test, argued that falsifying research is the worst academic dishonesty of all. He said:

Last quarter, I set up my research, collected my test results, and it came out the opposite way. It hurts because I put all of this time into it. I can see why people would manipulate the test. This is the worst kind. Even if you plagiarize somebody else's words, it's still based in the facts. When you manipulate test results, then you are trying to manipulate the outcomes.

However, some cases of academic dishonesty are ambiguous, particularly collaboration on assignments. Faculty members, graduate students, and undergraduates all saw collaboration as problematic because group work is often encouraged as a pedagogical strategy, while at other times group work is forbidden. As one undergraduate said:

We're encouraged to work in groups a lot. We have help sessions that directly lead us to working in groups. So I don't know if it's so bad. But with our Organic Chemistry homework, he's [the professor is] like, 'I'd rather you guys worked on it alone.' I think it would be more helpful to work on it with other people. Those who do [work together] I wouldn't consider cheating. I consider it cheating when you are copying it, not talking about it. But when you talk about it and discuss it, I think that's more just learning.

A faculty member summed up his concerns with collaboration by saying, "It's a fine line because students are encouraged to work together."

Sometimes students are even required to work together, and on group projects, the lines between honest and dishonest work can become even fuzzier. Concerns were raised by several participants about the integrity of group projects in which one person does more or less work than the others. Other concerns were raised about who is responsible when one of the group members includes plagiarized work in a group project. One graduate student told a story about a group project in which one member, unbeknownst to the others, plagiarized part of the final paper that was turned in. This student said:

For example, I know of an instance last year in the MBA program where they were working in a team. Four people. And a lot of times in these teams have so much work; they're just bogged down with work. And they will have five different projects due in one week. So each team member will take a role of being the leader on that one project. And then someone else takes on another project. The whole team got in trouble for

plagiarizing when the other four people had no clue that this other person plagiarized.... I think they are all guilty.

### *Motives*

All of our participants identified several reasons that students might be inclined to engage in academic dishonesty behaviors. These responses can be grouped into five categories: (a) time pressure, (b) cost benefits, (c) knowledge, (d) trust relationship, and (e) culture.

#### *Time Pressure*

One reason for academic dishonesty that was cited by every person that we interviewed was time pressure. Students are often trying to juggle multiple assignments and roles and sometimes become overwhelmed by the stress and time constraints that they must deal with, especially as the end of a quarter approaches. Projects are due and exams are given at about the same time in every class. An undergraduate described a situation in which it would be tempting to cheat by saying:

It's the last minute, you didn't get to it, and you need to find something else. It's three thirty in the morning and you just remembered something that's due tomorrow at eight. It's either pull an all-nighter or find something that somebody else has.... And sometimes you're about to crash anyway.

Other students brought up concerns for time management, unreasonably high expectations, and trying to balance their social and academic commitments. Several participants cited the quarter system as a contributing factor to the time pressure. One faculty member argued that because courses are only ten weeks long, faculty are trying to move through so much material that they do not have time to really explain how the assignments should be done, and students do not have the ability to absorb all of the information when they are taking four fast-paced classes simultaneously. She also suggested that we do not necessarily need to change the quarter system, but rather should reduce the number of courses taken at once while increasing the amount of time that students spend in the classroom for each course. Another faculty member argued that the speed of the quarter system promotes short-term memorization instead of higher level learning and does not allow time for the reflection that is needed in order for students to connect ideas.

#### *Cost Benefits*

For many students, the cost of failing an assignment and getting a bad grade in a class is far worse than the risk of getting caught cheating. Students pointed out that grades are extremely important. One said:



Good grades are needs to stay in the major. With my classes, it's not easy to stay above the mark that they have. It's not really a fair mark.... When you're here in college, that's what everyone talks about: what's your GPA? It's a big deal for status for some people.

Others pointed out that a low grade can keep students out of programs that they want to be in and can cost a lot of money in terms of scholarships lost and credit hours that might have to be paid for if a class must be retaken. Since the perceived risk of getting caught for cheating is low and since many cases of cheating go unpunished, there is little incentive not to cheat. As one grad student put it, "If they are not going to be penalized for it, why wouldn't they?" Another faculty member pointed out, "In many cases, it [cheating] does in the long run damage reputation and in the long run has more negative side effects than people think, so it's usually a short-term calculation—trying to get rid of an immediate problem by telling lies."

### *Knowledge*

Many participants pointed out that some cheating occurs because students either do not know that what they are doing is unethical or because they do not have the knowledge that they need in order to do the assignment correctly. One undergraduate student said:

It becomes something that someone didn't necessarily mean to do. Obviously, if you go and you buy a paper, you're planning on cheating. But I think sometimes the person just seriously didn't mean to copy that person's wording or it wasn't changed enough for it to be their own, or they accidentally didn't cite it or something.... It's more of a mistake.

Oftentimes, students think that what they are doing is ethically acceptable, but do not realize that they should be citing sources or should not be looking at exams or papers from previous quarters.

At other times, they are completely aware that they are cheating, but realize that they do not have the knowledge or ability to do the work and pass the class if they do not engage in academic misconduct. One faculty member told the story of two students who were supposed to write a report for an experiment that they had done in a lab. However, these students had never seen an actual lab report, but they had

access to an older copy and they used that as the model. And they sort of knew they shouldn't emulate it, but it felt better than the blank sheet of paper that they thought they were staring at. As a consequence, they stopped thinking when they started appropriating it as more than a model, and their laziness resulted in a lack of learning and in getting caught.

Another said:

In most cases, it's a fear of failing.... In some cases students cheat when they didn't have to because if they would have put the effort in, they could have done the work and they didn't see the need to. But I think in some cases they're afraid failing. And it may be that some students maybe would fail if they didn't copy. I guess that's their state of mind and they're desperate to get by and they want to pass at any cost.

One problem with dishonesty due to lack of knowledge is that students do not gain the skills that they will need to do later assignments, so it becomes a spiral in which students continue to need to cheat to be able to complete assignments because they did not learn what they should have learned on previous work because they were cheating at the time.

### *Trust Relationship*

A fourth theme that we heard often was trust and relationship, both between students and between students and faculty. Students seemed to be mostly concerned with relationships with other students. Most said that if they observed other students cheating, especially if the person engaging in academic dishonesty were a friend or someone they were likely to see again, then they would not report the incident. One student described an incident in which she and several classmates saw another student obviously copying answers on a test. She said:

I was so mad, but then it really put you in the bad position. The honest person goes up and tells, and then we have classes together for the next four years. That makes our life pretty miserable when we have to be in a group with them and you told on them. It's right, but you're putting the honest person in danger. Then you get the people that just have it out for you, and you didn't do a thing, and they don't like you.

However, if there is potential that someone else's academic misconduct might affect other students' grades, they are more likely to report dishonesty. One undergraduate explained, "If students think it's going to endanger their grade if there's a curve on the test, or something that messes with their grade, they will cover their own butt.... It depends if it's personal enough and will hurt them."

Others, especially faculty members, were more concerned about impact of the relationship between the student and teacher on whether students resorted to academic dishonesty. One faculty member said that students need to be able to get to know their professors well enough and develop enough trust that they will be comfortable asking for help and extensions when they do not know how to do something instead of turning to cheating as the most expedient solution.

### *Culture*

Finally, all of our participants talked about culture as a factor that contributes to dishonest behavior. Participants cited companies such as Enron, WorldCom, and Ford as examples of companies that have been caught for unethical practices and talked about corruption among lawyers, police officers, and in the government as illustrations that point to a lack of integrity and an acceptance of cheating throughout the American society. As one faculty member said, “It’s not just an academic issue... it is also a lifestyle.” Within the university system, however, issues of academic integrity were brought up on three levels: the students, the faculty, and the university.

Every person that we talked to had negative attitudes toward the presence of cheating, but everyone agreed that it is not uncommon for students to cheat. Most students talked about being upset about others’ cheating but also put some of the blame on the development of a culture that almost requires cheating. One student said, “Society in general puts all this pressure on everyone just to strive and be perfect. A lot of it is society. They keep raising the standards every year with all of those proficiency tests. It’s ridiculous.” Another said:

You stay out Thursday, go drinking, you crash on Sunday, and you don’t have any time left. And you need something quick to get you through class. Everybody wants to succeed. Any everyone’s here to get a degree, which in our culture is a good step—a step in the right direction toward a good job. Maybe it’s planning for the future, maybe it’s culturally, but they are expected to succeed, but their choices may not be giving them a chance to succeed, so they need to find a way to reach that point.

However, it is crucial to remember that in many cases it is not an active weekend social life on Court Street that is taking up students’ time outside of class, but also participation in OU’s athletic and forensics teams, music and theater programs, community service organizations, and a host of other clubs and organizations. There is a lot of pressure to be involved in numerous activities and organizations, have a social life, and get perfect grades, which leads students to be more willing to accept cheating as an alternative that will allow them to meet all of the expectations. One faculty member said:

It seems that there’s a relatively high acceptance of cheating and anecdotal knowledge of those who take pride in it. It seems to be that way at some of the fraternities, for instance. Partly card catalogues, and partly also electronic files. That’s something that nobody will tell you directly, but you hear it from others who know it and tell you. Of course, you have to kind of evaluate that with a grain of salt... again, this is a little bit on the level of anecdotal knowledge, but after dozens of cases come up, you wonder if there isn’t some background to it.

However, several participants were quick to point out that it is not only students, but also faculty members that engage in academic dishonesty practices, whether through

failing to deal with cheating or by committing acts of cheating themselves. Some faculty are ignoring cheating because they do not want add the burden of pursuing a case to their workload. One undergraduate described a situation in which cheating was obviously occurring and said, “One [professor] knew openly that cheating was going on during his test because they were online.... He didn’t care.” All of the faculty members talked about the difficulties and time required to address academic dishonesty, especially if cases are reported to University Judiciaries. One said, “It’s hard to report cases to University Judiciaries. There are pleas and paperwork to deal with.” Another told a story of a time when he reported a graduate student for obviously plagiarizing eighty percent of a paper. The student’s advisor put a lot of pressure on him to withdraw the case and even threatened him by alluding to his status as an untenured faculty member. Even though the case was eventually resolved, he said, “It was very disturbing actually, and frightening too, because when you don’t have tenure and you do make that step and get that sort of pressure, that’s really bad.” He also said, “I will never go that path again, because as a professor [dealing with the case on your own], you do have the discretionary wiggle-room, so to speak.”

A couple of participants also pointed out deliberate acts of dishonesty by faculty. One said, “That’s important to keep in mind too, you know. There are enough faculty members who cheat, so it’s important not to reduce the issue completely to students.” Others talked about the pressures to produce publishable research, while another pointed out cases in which parts of books by prominent scholars were found to be plagiarized and cases in which research was not carried out properly or reported accurately and fully when the results were not what had been hoped for.

Finally, participants talked about integrity at the university level. One graduate student talked about grade inflation as a type of dishonesty intended to make graduating students more marketable. A faculty member suggested that university integrity is also being compromised by relaxing standards. He said:

There is a culture of students being customers. They pay and you don’t want to lose them, so you are in a difficult situation as a university. And if the customer becomes so important that certain standards are in the way of that, then you may not follow up on those standards.

### *Solutions*

The final set of themes were derived from responses to questions about what should be done about academic integrity and centered around three solutions: an external university-wide system for dealing with cheating, internal solutions in the way that classes are taught, and establishing an ethos of community and integrity.

#### *External System*

Every participant talked about the importance of having some type of university-wide system for dealing with academic dishonesty. Some were very specific and

adamant about wanting a university-wide honor code, while others did not talk about an honor code per se but described a need for procedures that are similar to those found in an honor code system. Participants in all interviews discussed the need for some type of university-wide record keeping system that would allow faculty to see whether students caught cheating in their class had previously been caught cheating, but wanted a system that would not necessarily require punishment for every offense. This type of reporting system was seen as necessary for even relatively minor incidents of cheating so that there could be a way to track trends in student behavior and identify repeat offenders. Participants also agreed that guidelines should be established that would standardize consequences for cheating across classes. Most suggested that the first offense should result in a warning and/or a zero on the assignment and that the second offense should be grounds for expulsion. However, there was a lot of emphasis on making sure that punishments are proportional to the offense and that faculty are able to maintain the authority to adjust consequences on a case-by-case basis that is sensitive to the context in which the academic dishonesty occurred. Participants argued that the policies and procedures should be developed by students and faculty, not by administrators, and faculty placed particular importance on the need to develop an efficient process that would be easy to use so that the time needed would not become a deterrent to reporting incidents of academic dishonesty.

#### *Internal Classroom Solutions*

The second theme that we heard repeatedly was a need to change the way that we approach education within individual classrooms. A couple of participants talked about the need to build a trusting relationship between students and faculty and get to know each other well enough that students will feel comfortable asking their professors for help when they do not have the needed knowledge and skills to do an assignment so that students will not see cheating as their only option. Furthermore, we need to use time within classes to clarify expectations and help students develop the skills and knowledge needed to complete assignments instead of assuming that all students have already learned how to cite sources, write a lab report, or do whatever else the assignment calls for.

This is a more preemptive approach to dealing with academic dishonesty that aims to give students the needed knowledge and skills. It also helps make it easier for students to view seeking help from professors as a viable and better alternative to cheating when they do not understand something. This approach emphasizes teaching students what they should do beforehand instead of punishing them for what they should not have done afterward. While condoning this approach, one faculty member said:

It's not like the punitive stuff works. Most living systems do something because they perceive a benefit, or at least a short-term benefit, from doing it. There's a lot of logic in the world. If we build bridges, then they [students] might feel that there is something to be lost by plagiarizing.

*Ethos of Integrity*

Finally, participants talked about the need to establish an ethos of integrity across the entire university. Honesty needs to become the expectation rather than the exception at all levels. One faculty member suggested that an honor code is a good way to stimulate a culture of integrity for three reasons: (a) expectations are communicated more clearly, (b) it becomes part of the culture, and (c) it has clear consequences for violations of standards. He further explained, “What I see here is a lack of shared and clear standards, and I think that a university with a strong honor code has the advantage that these standards are shared standards and that they help against [with] your work, both as a faculty member and as a student.” A graduate student said, “If the university is promoting [honesty] and everyone is talking about it, then the students become more active in ethics.”

As one faculty member said, “You don’t need to discuss the fact that you use money in the economic sector. That’s your currency. Our currency is honesty and truth, and the way you communicate that is through the university culture.” Knowledge and integrity are at the heart of a university’s work, and if we cannot presume that the work being done reflects actual knowledge and accurately represents research findings, then the entire university system is thrown into question. If students are cheating, they are not learning. If we want to improve the quality of education and create a brighter vision for Ohio University, then academic dishonesty must be addressed.

# Recommendations

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## Honor Code

Our primary recommendation is that Ohio University should adopt a modified honor code similar to the one at Kansas State University and other large public institutions in order to reduce academic dishonesty and help develop a campus-wide ethos of integrity.

In an attempt to reduce cheating on their campuses, many universities have adopted traditional or modified honor codes. Melendez (1985, in McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 1999) defines a traditional honor code as “a policy that includes one or more of the following elements: a written pledge in which students affirm that their work will be or has been done honestly; the majority of the judiciary that hears alleged violations of academic dishonesty is comprised of students, or the chair of this group is a student; unproctored examinations; and a clause that places some degree of obligation on students to report incidents of cheating they learn about or observe” (p. 213). Universities that have traditional honor codes tend to be highly residential private schools that are small to medium in size (McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 2002). Because it is generally easier to develop a strong sense of campus community at small schools, traditional honor codes are easier to implement at such schools, but many larger universities have been skeptical as to whether it would be possible to successfully implement such a policy on their campuses (McCabe & Pavela, 2000).

Instead of a traditional honor code, several large public universities, including Kansas State University, the University of Maryland at College Park, the University of Tennessee, the University of Georgia, the University of Minnesota, and others, have chosen to adopt a modified honor code (McCabe & Pavela, 2000). Modified honor codes vary among universities, but most focus on two strategies: 1) the institution makes it clear that academic integrity is a major priority, and 2) “students are given a significant role both in the judicial or hearing body on campus and in developing programs to inform other students about the purposes of the code, its major components, enforcement strategies, and so forth” (McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 2002, p. 363).

Honor codes like these have significant impacts on student cheating. McCabe (2005) surveyed over 12,000 students on forty-eight campuses in 1990, 1995, and 1999 and found that campuses with honor codes have one-third to one-half less serious cheating on tests and one-fourth to one-third less serious cheating on written assignments than campuses without an honor code. Furthermore, students at honor code schools (43.4%) are more likely than students at schools without honor codes (13.8%) to indicate that they are likely to report cheating incidents, but only 7.9% of honor code and 4.0% of non-honor code students have actually reported cheating incidents (McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 2001).

Furthermore, it is important to consider the impact that honor codes have on the way that faculty deal with academic dishonesty when it occurs. Faculty generally view cheating on exams as more serious than cheating on coursework such as papers, and believe that whether education or punishment should be the response is dependent on how serious they believe the offense is (Pincus & Schmelkin, 2003). Faculty who are



skeptical about whether the university will deal with cheating properly are more likely to deal with cases of academic dishonesty personally than report the case and send it through the appropriate institutional processes (Simon, Carr, McCullough, Morgan, Oleson, & Ressel, 2003). Faculty at schools with honor codes are more likely to have faith in their school's academic integrity system and are more likely to share responsibility for monitoring students' behavior (McCabe, Butterfield, & Trevino, 2003). However, few faculty at schools with honor codes current receive formal training about their school's honor code or about the moral development component (Marcoux, 2002), but including such training would increase the effectiveness of the honor code.

When developing an institutional honor code, Whitley and Keith-Spiegel (2001) suggest that it is important to develop a policy that fits the specific university's mission, students, and faculty and outline details that should be considered when developing academic integrity policies. They recommend that all groups affected by the academic integrity policy; including faculty, students, and administrators; be involved in the policy's creation. McCabe and Makowski (2001) emphasize that meaningful student involvement is one of the most important and most frequently overlooked component of developing and enforcing an effective policy. Whitley and Keith-Spiegel suggest that the policy should 1) include a statement of why the university values academic integrity, 2) condemn dishonesty, 3) specify prohibited behavior, 4) specifically explain the responsibilities of the students, faculty, and administrators, 5) explain resolution procedures, and 6) specify penalties. Furthermore, the penalties should not be too harsh or lenient for the offense, and universities should consider adopting a policy in which an XF grade (which represents failure due to cheating) is assigned for the course but can be removed from the transcript after a year if the student takes an academic integrity seminar and does not cheat again. They also strongly emphasize that education and remediation should be integral components of the policy. Whitley and Keith-Spiegel also recommend having a clear plan for communicating the policy to everyone in the university, training faculty on how to prevent and deal with cases of academic dishonesty, providing support to faculty and students, and promoting an ethos of integrity.

If Ohio University chooses to develop a university-wide honor code, we recommend joining the Center for Academic Integrity (<http://academicintegrity.org>) and suggest contacting the following individuals for additional advice, resources, and connections to peer institutions that have and are currently undergoing the same process:

Tim Dodd, Executive Director, The Center for Academic Integrity (CAI),  
tim.dodd@duke.edu

Don McCabe, Founding Member of CAI and researcher in academic integrity/dishonesty issues, dmccabe@andromeda.rutgers.edu

Helene Marcoux, Associate Director of the Honor System at Kansas State University,  
helene@ksu.edu

## University College Courses

Bennett (2005), Overbey & Guiling (1999), Park (2003), and Sutherland-Smith (2005) pointed out that students often unintentionally plagiarize because they do not fully understand what “counts” as plagiarism or know how to properly document their sources. However, students are less likely to cheat when there are clearly communicated expectations of moral and academic integrity (McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 1999). Therefore, taking time to teach students about expectations of academic integrity and proper source citation could help prevent cheating and plagiarism by increasing student knowledge and by helping to develop a shared ethos of honesty.

A University College course taken by most or all students at Ohio University, such as University Experience, would be an ideal place to incorporate sessions about academic integrity and source citation because such a course is likely to reach the greatest number of students, is taken at the beginning of students’ college careers, and is likely to be taken more seriously than some other measures because students receive a grade for the course. Unlike an online learning module, incorporating this material into a class will allow students to discuss academic dishonesty with peers and an instructor and will allow students to ask questions and receive immediate responses to concerns that they might have.

When integrating academic integrity education into the curriculum, we recommend requiring a book that deals specifically with cheating and source citation because this will show that academic integrity is an important part of the course curriculum and will serve as a reference throughout the students’ time at OU. Charles Lipson’s *Doing Honest Work in College* (2004) is a particularly good book for this purpose because it establishes guidelines for ethical behavior in a wide variety of situations in which students are likely to find themselves and provides citation guides for MLA, APA, Chicago, and other styles.

## Teacher Training

Since research shows that teaching strategies such as developing challenging and creative assignments, tailoring projects to topics that are unlikely to have previously published material, requiring students to use non-internet sources, incorporating group work, using immediacy behaviors to foster a good classroom climate, and including a well thought-out academic integrity policy in the syllabus can help to reduce the amount of cheating in a course, we should provide instructor training that raises awareness and provides ideas and resources for incorporating such strategies into the classroom (Phillips & Horton, 2000; Pulvers & Diekhoff, 1999; Stearns, 2001; Whiteman & Gordon, 2001). This training should also include information about ways to detect dishonest behavior in the classroom and procedures that should be followed when a cheating incident occurs.

The Graduate Teaching Assistant orientation that is held prior to the fall quarter each year is an ideal venue for such training. However, training and information should also be made available for current TAs and faculty who are unlikely to attend future TA orientations.

### Online Educational Module

Ball State University has developed a computerized seminar, the MITT (Multimedia Integrity Teaching Tool), to raise awareness of and educate its students about issues of academic integrity and dishonesty. Much like other online training programs, such as Ohio University's Modules for Alcohol and IRB, the student views and interacts with a number sessions, answering questions to show mastery of the content in one session before being allowed to progress to the next session. The MITT Program is offered in a number of different formats: Full, Little, Presentation and Complete. The Full program is intended for first offenders as a punishment. The Little and Presentation formats are shorter and intended as proactive and preventive approaches. The Complete format is a comprehensive program that contains all three of the previous formats.

The module appears to be an effective tool when used with other academic dishonesty reduction approaches. The module is useful because it can be adapted as both a preventive and a punitive measure. Ball State University conducted a number of surveys, focus groups, and exit interviews and found "general attitude changes about the importance and worthwhileness of academic training" ([www.bsu.edu/csh/mitt](http://www.bsu.edu/csh/mitt)). Dr. Lisa Gray-Shellberg also developed the Gray-Shellberg Academic Integrity Scale (GSAIS) to evaluate the module's effectiveness for increasing awareness of academic integrity.

For more information on the MITT program, contact:

Dr. Jacqueline Robertson  
North Quad 323  
Learning Center  
285-8107  
[jroberts@bsu.edu](mailto:jroberts@bsu.edu)

For more information on ordering the MITT program, contact:

Linda Swartz Ritchie  
Academic Research & Sponsored Programs  
Ball State University  
2000 University Avenue  
Muncie, IN 47306-0155

Phone 765.285.1600  
Fax 765.285.1624

For more information on the GSAIS, contact:

Dr. Lisa Gray-Shellberg  
[lgrayshell@dhvx20.csudh.edu](mailto:lgrayshell@dhvx20.csudh.edu)

Source: The Multimedia Integrity Teaching Tool, [www.bsu.edu/csh/mitt](http://www.bsu.edu/csh/mitt)

## Plagiarism Detection Software

There are two general types of plagiarism detection software. The first type, which includes Turnitin.com, uses a process known as ‘fingerprinting’. The software requires students to submit their assignments electronically through the software’s website. The assignment is then scanned and compared with other documents on the Web, marking sentences and phrases match Web-based documents. A report is then sent to the professor outlining percentages of originality and similarity and highlighting duplicate sentences.

The second type of plagiarism detection software, including WordCHECK RA, compares papers to previously submitted documents that are stored in an “in-house” database instead of comparing them to websites. Papers can either be compared to all documents stored in the database or to a specific set of assignments (i.e.: all papers submitted for English 101 at a particular university).

Though the ‘fingerprinting’ method is effective in finding matches with online documents, there are a number of drawbacks to using plagiarism detection software. The software will ‘distort’ and alter the assignment, requiring students to also submit a hard copy of their assignment for the professor to read. Also, the software does not discriminate between sentences that are correctly cited from those that are not. Thus, professors would still need to check the students’ assignment manually to see if the students cited the ‘copied sentence’. As for the ‘in-house’ software, the database needs to be created manually, requiring time-intensive uploading of the database. Over time, the software would have an impressive database, if updated regularly. However, when used initially, the software would have little material to work from to detect cheating and copying. Finally, both types of software can only detect electronic cheating. If the document does not exist online or in a database, it will not be detected. It is recommended that plagiarism detection software could be useful if in tandem with other plagiarism reduction approaches, and that both types of software would be available.

The following are a sample of plagiarism detection software, divided by type.

### Fingerprinting software

Glatt Plagiarism Screening Program (GPSP)	plagiarsim.com
Turnitin.com	turnitin.com
Essay Verification Engine (EVE2)	canexus.com/eve
Plagiserve*	plagiserve.com

### In-House software

Copycatch	copycatch.freemove.co.uk
WordCHECK RA	wordchecksystemes.com
WCopyfind	plagiarism.phys.virginia.edu

\* Plagiserve also compares documents with the website’s own database

Table 21		
<i>Comparison of Plagiarism Detection Software Programs</i>		
FEATURES/TECHNIQUES	PROS/CONS	COSTS
<b>Copycatch:</b> <a href="http://www.copycatch.freemove.co.uk/vocalyse.htm">http://www.copycatch.freemove.co.uk/vocalyse.htm</a>		
A UK system which concentrates on comparison within a group of students. The software compares text from work collected by email or on disk using a similarity threshold that will detect essays which are very similar or dissimilar to other class essays by communality of words and phrases.	<b>PROS:</b> The JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee - HEFCE-funded UK organization) gave this software five stars for detection, clarity, value, user-friendliness, speed and reliability. <b>CONS:</b> Detects only collusion among students, and cannot detect material downloaded from the Web	Approx \$520 to purchase software.
<b>Glatt Plagiarism Screening Program (GPSP):</b> <a href="http://www.plagiarism.com/INDEX.HTM">http://www.plagiarism.com/INDEX.HTM</a>		
Uses the 'fingerprint' method. It exploits the uniqueness of each individual's linguistic patterns - 'cloze' technique. It eliminates every fifth word of a student's paper and replaces the words with a blank which the student is asked to fill in.	<b>PROS:</b> Useful for detecting plagiarism where the original source material cannot be located. <b>CONS:</b> Students actually have to sit down to a test to fulfill the requirements.	Approx \$430 to purchase software. Additional financial commitment is required to provide the scoring for submitted tests.
<b>Turnitin.com</b> (the user portal for Plagiarism.org): <a href="http://www.turnitin.com/">http://www.turnitin.com/</a>		
The technology used is called 'document source analysis'. It uses a set of algorithms to make a digital fingerprint of any text document, and then compares it against Internet sources and against an in-house database. Results are compiled into an 'originality report' which colour-codes and underlines text passages showing similarities to other sources, and gives the URLs of the sources.	<b>PROS:</b> Covers a huge range of sources. Offers a digital portfolio service in which students' work is archived. <b>CONS:</b> The user has to check the report carefully because the software detects correctly-cited material as well as plagiarised material. As in similar programs, formatting is lost in the checking procedure.	A free one-month trial is available. Costs are for subscription rather than purchase and vary according to extent of commitment. The web page provides quotations depending on numbers of classes, numbers of students, and so on.
<b>EVE2 - Essay Verification Engine:</b> <a href="http://www.canexus.com/eve/index.shtml">http://www.canexus.com/eve/index.shtml</a>		
Performs searches to find Internet sites with similarities to the submitted text. Produces report underlining text passages possibly plagiarized.	<b>PROS:</b> Tests against wide area of internet. <b>CONS:</b> Each piece of work has to be individually loaded and checked by the lecturer.	Download free for 15 days; purchase for approx \$30. Each user must purchase a separate copy and licence.
<b>WordCHECK RA:</b> <a href="http://www.wordcheck systems.com/wordcheck-dp.html">http://www.wordcheck systems.com/wordcheck-dp.html</a>		
Software which profiles documents by identifying key word use, allowing users to search manually for matching documents based upon word use and frequency patterns. Uses an internal database. Produces report with key-word profiles and word frequency lists.	<b>PROS:</b> Similar system to Copycatch. <b>CONS:</b> Uses only internal database. Manual checking of each piece of work is very time-consuming.	RA Individual Desktop \$280 (\$135 academic price) RA Department Desktop \$1,415 (\$990 academic price) plus profile expansion
<b>Plagiserve:</b> <a href="http://www.plagiserve.com/">http://www.plagiserve.com/</a>		
A system which checks the originality of reports by comparing students' work with its own database and the internet. It provides an originality report that colour codes possibly plagiarised passages and provides direct links to the original source.	<b>PROS:</b> Tests against extensive in-house database and internet searches <b>CONS:</b> Formatting is lost during the checking process. Has been claimed to be associated with cheat sites.	Free.
Source: Center for the Study of Higher Education, <a href="http://www.cshe.unimelb.au/assessinglearning">www.cshe.unimelb.au/assessinglearning</a> . Used with permission.		

## Remedial Approach

After discovering that a student had cheated on an assignment, a professor in the College of Engineering who wishes to remain anonymous sent the following letter to a student. This letter is an exemplar approach that emphasizes the importance of trust and knowledge while giving students an opportunity to learn the knowledge and skills that were missing when they decided that cheating on the assignment was their best option. This is an example of one of many ways that faculty can help students learn, reduce the likelihood of future cheating incidents, and help “to create a community with integrity, focused toward the honesty that emphasizes learning above all.”

---

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I became a teacher because I want to help students learn and because I want the world to have well-trained engineers who care and do their best to build and design answers to problems – not shortcuts that become future problems. Your honesty and willingness to ask for help and work on difficult problems are your best tools for becoming a skilled engineer and a good citizen.

Learning is hard. This class is hard. Maybe it comes easier for some. But the lessons we learn by working through difficult material together will be important for the rest of your life. Getting angry is understandable, but once the anger simmers down we still have a problem.

\_\_\_\_\_, I have reviewed your re-submitted lab report. I have a hard time believing that it is all your own work. If you maintain that this is all your own work then I will need you to answer a few essay questions relating to the content of the reports to demonstrate your knowledge and writing skill. See PART II continued below. Otherwise, I would like you to tell me the whole truth about how and why. See PART I below.

This is a chance to start over. If you have been copying from others and are willing to talk about it and re-focus toward honest learning, I am willing work with you and/or get you assistance to help you learn the material and, if needed, the writing skills that you as a student here at OU have paid for. If you have not copied from others and can provide reasonable answers to PART II below then we will move forward. I will, however, require you to turn in drafts and notes of your calculations and writing to allow me to best assess your strengths and weaknesses so that we can ensure that you achieve mastery, as is required, in this class. We will discuss this further. At present, I am not interested in reporting you to the Judiciary system, although I do reserve that right if we cannot come to some workable agreement.

I consider this private communication. If you answer PART I and make a good faith effort, I will not submit it to your record.

**Do either PART I or II.****PART I:**

If you are willing to talk about the problems you are having then I will need you to write me an essay. In this essay you will write about:

- (1) When and why you started copying from others' work.
- (2) What you think might happen if you presented your own best attempt or talked with the instructor about your difficulties.
- (3) What you think you gain and lose by copying,  
and then conclude with:
- (4) How you would like to do things differently here on out. Sign your work.

**PART II:**

*This section contained five reasonably challenging short answer technical questions that have been deleted to preserve anonymity.*

*The student chose to complete these technical questions. The responses indicated that the student had adequate writing skills and some familiarity with the material but not thorough comprehension. Based on the performance and overlapping discussions, the instructor was reassured that though the student may not have told the whole truth, the level of copying was patch work and not a comprehensive example of appropriation, which could have indicated that there were severe learning or ethical deficiencies involved. The instructor agreed to take 15% off the offending assignment and continued to closely monitor the accuracy of citations. The student ended up completing significantly more work (and actually learned more about citations, etc.) than an average student in order to be eligible for a grade as high as a B minus.*



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# *Appendix A*

## **Research Instruments**

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**Undergraduate Student Survey**

**Part I  
Demographics**

**In which college are you studying? (check one)**

- Arts and Sciences
- Business
- Communication
- Education
- Fine Arts
- Health and Human Services
- Tutorial College
- Osteopathic Medicine
- Engineering and Technology
- University College

**Including this year, how many years have you been studying at OU?**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5+

**What is your sex?**

- Male
- Female

**What is your age?**

- 18 years or younger
- 19 years
- 20 years
- 21 years
- 22 years
- 23+ years

**Part II  
Perceptions and Attitudes**

**How would you rate your campus on the following factors?**

	Very Low	Somewhat Low	Medium	Somewhat High	Very High	Not App.
The severity of penalties for cheating						
Student understanding of campus policies concerning cheating						
The faculty's understanding of these policies						
Student support of these policies						
Faculty support of these policies						
The effectiveness of these policies						

**Where and how much have you learned about Ohio University's academic integrity policies?**

	Learned None	Learned Little	Learned Some	Learned a Lot
First year orientation program				
Program Counselor/Faculty Advisor				
Other students				
Faculty				
GTAs				
Deans or other administrators				
Student Handbook				

**In the past year, how often, if at all, have your instructors discussed policies concerning the following?**

	Never	Very Seldom	Seldom	Often	Very Often
Plagiarism					
Group work/collaboration					
Proper attribution of written sources					
Attribution of Internet sources					
Falsification of research data					
Falsification of lab data					

**How frequently do you think the following occur on campus?**

	Never	Very Seldom	Seldom	Often	Very Often
Plagiarism					
Inappropriate sharing in group assignments					
Cheating during tests/examinations					
Falsifying lab data					
Falsifying research data					

**In the past year, how often, if ever, have you suspected another student of cheating during a test/exam or on a major written assignment?**

- N/A  
 Never  
 Once  
 Twice  
 3-5 Times  
 6-10 Times  
 More than 10 Times

**In the past year, how often, if ever, were you sure another student was cheating during a test/exam or on a major written assignment?**

- N/A  
 Never  
 Once  
 Twice  
 3-5 Times  
 6-10 Times  
 More than 10 Times

**Have you ever reported another student for cheating?**

- Yes  
 No

### Part III: Specific Behaviors

Students have different views on what constitutes cheating and what is acceptable behavior. We would like to ask you some questions about specific behaviors that some students might consider cheating. Please choose one response for each question.

**In the past year, how often have you engaged in any of the following behaviors?**

	Never	Once	More Than Once
Turning in work done by someone else.			
Working on an individual assignment with others.			
Receiving unpermitted help on an assignment.			
Writing or providing a paper for another student.			
Providing a graded assignment to another student to submit.			
Sharing an assignment with other to use as an example.			
Getting Q/A from someone who has taken test.			
Copying a friend's computer program.			
Helping someone else cheat on a test.			
Falsifying/fabricating lab data.			
Fabricating/falsifying a bibliography.			
Falsifying/fabricating research data.			
Copying on test from other without their knowledge.			
Copying on test from another with their knowledge.			
Copying few sentences from written source w/o citing.			
Turning in a paper obtained in large part from a term paper "mill" or website that did not charge for this information.			
Copying a few sentences of material from an Internet source without footnoting them in a paper.			
Using unpermitted crib notes (cheat notes) during a test.			
Copying material word for word from written source.			
Altering a graded test and submitting it for additional credit.			
Turning in a paper copied from another student.			
Using a false excuse to obtain extension on due date.			
Hiding library or course materials.			
Damaging library or course materials.			
Cheating on a test in another way.			
Cheating on a written assignment in another way.			



**Do you think that the following behaviors are serious forms of cheating?**

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
Turning in work done by someone else.					
Working on an individual assignment with others.					
Receiving unpermitted help on an assignment.					
Writing or providing a paper for another student.					
Providing a graded assignment to another student to submit.					
Sharing an assignment with other to use as an example.					
Getting Q/A from someone who has taken test.					
Copying a friend's computer program.					
Helping someone else cheat on a test.					
Falsifying/fabricating lab data.					
Fabricating/falsifying a bibliography.					
Falsifying/fabricating research data.					
Copying on test from other without their knowledge.					
Copying on test from another with their knowledge.					
Copying few sentences from written source w/o citing.					
Turning in a paper obtained in large part from a term paper "mill" or website that did not charge for this information.					
Copying a few sentences of material from an Internet source without footnoting them in a paper.					
Using unpermitted crib notes (cheat notes) during a test.					
Copying material word for word from written source.					
Altering a graded test and submitting it for additional credit.					
Turning in a paper copied from another student.					
Using a false excuse to obtain extension on due date.					
Hiding library or course materials.					
Damaging library or course materials.					
Cheating on a test in another way.					
Cheating on a written assignment in another way.					

**How likely is it that:**

	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Very Likely
You would report an incident of cheating that you observed?				
The typical student at your school would report such violations?				
A student would report a close friend?				

**How strongly do you agree with the following statements?** (check one box for each statement)

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Cheating is a serious problem.					
Our university judicial process is fair and impartial.					
Students should be held responsible for monitoring the academic integrity of other students.					
Faculty change exams/assignments on a regular basis.					
The amount of course work is reasonable.					
Difficulty of exams/assignments is appropriate.					
Assessments used in my course are effective.					
Assessment used in my courses help me learn concepts.					

**Part IV**

Please select one response for each of the following items.

	Not true at all	Mostly untrue	Don't know	Mostly true	Definitely true
I would feel really good if I were the only one who could answer the teacher's questions in class					
It's very important to me that I don't look stupid in my class					
I'm certain I can master the skills taught in class this year					
I like class work that I'll learn from even if I make mistakes					
I'm certain I can figure out how to do the most difficult class work					
An important reason I do my class work is so that I don't embarrass myself					
I want to do better than other students in my class					
An important reason why I do my class work is because I like to learn new things					
The reason I do my class work is so my teacher doesn't think I know less than others					
I can do almost all the work in the class if I don't give up					
I would be successful in class if I did better than most of the other students					
I like class work best when it really makes me think					
Even if the work is hard, I can learn it					
I'd like to show my teacher that I'm smarter than the other students in my class					
An important reason I do my class work in class is because I want to get better at it					
The reason I do my work is so others won't think I'm dumb					
Doing better than the other students in class is important to me					
I can do even the hardest work in class if I try					
One of my main goals is to avoid looking like I can't do my work					
An important reason I do my class work is because I enjoy it					
One reason I would not participate in class is to avoid looking stupid					
I do my class work because I'm interested in it					

**Graduate Student Survey****Part I  
Demographic Information****In which college are you studying? (check one)**

- Arts and Sciences
- Business
- Communication
- Education
- Fine Arts
- Health and Human Services
- Tutorial College
- Osteopathic Medicine
- Engineering and Technology
- University College

**Including this year, how many years have you been studying at OU?**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5+

**What is your sex?**

- Male
- Female

**What is your age?**

- 20 years or younger
- 21-25 years
- 26-30 years
- 30-35 years
- 36+ years

**Do you have an appointment as a Teaching Assistant?**

- Yes
- No

**Do you have an appointment as a Research Assistant?**

- Yes
- No

**Toward which degree are you currently working?**

- MA or MS
- PhD
- MFA
- DO

**Part II  
Perceptions and Attitudes**

**How would you rate your campus on the following factors?**

	Very Low	Somewhat Low	Medium	Somewhat High	Very High	Not App.
The severity of penalties for cheating?						
Student understanding of campus policies concerning cheating?						
GTA's understanding of these policies?						
The faculty's understanding of these policies?						
Student support of these policies?						
GTA's support of these policies?						
Faculty support of these policies?						
The effectiveness of these policies?						

**When, if at all, do you discuss with students your policies concerning:**

	Do not Discuss	On Ind. Assign	In my Syllabus	Start of Quarter	Other	Not Relevant
Plagiarism						
Group work/collaboration						
Proper attribution						
Attribution of Internet sources						
Falsification of research data						
Falsification of lab data						

**From which sources have you learned about the student academic misconduct policies at Ohio University? Check all that apply.**

- GTA Orientation Program
- Student Handbook
- Department Chair/Head
- Faculty
- Students
- Deans or Other Administrators
- Publicized results of Judicial Hearings
- University Calendar
- Other-Comment below
- Never Been Informed About These Policies
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**In the past year, how often, if ever, have you suspected a student of cheating during a test/exam or on a major written assignment?**

- N/A
- Never
- Once
- Twice
- 3-5 Times
- 6-10 Times
- More than 10 Times

**In the past year, how often, if ever, were you sure a student of cheating during a test/exam or on a major written assignment?**

- N/A
- Never
- Once
- Twice
- 3-5 Times
- 6-10 Times
- More than 10 Times

**If you were convinced, even after discussion with the student, that a student had cheated on a major test or assignment in your course, what would be your most likely reaction? (select all that apply)**

- Reprimand or warn the student
- Lower the student's grade
- Fail the student on the test/assignment
- Inform faculty responsible for course
- Discuss the incident with other course GTAs
- Inform the lab coordinator
- Report student to a Dean
- Report student to a Chair/Director
- Do nothing about the incident
- Report the student to University Judiciaries
- Require student to redo the test/assignment
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Have you ever ignored a suspected incident of cheating in one of your courses for *any* reason?**

- Yes
- No

**If so, did any of the following factors influence your decision? (Select all that apply.)**

- Lack of evidence/proof
- Cheating was trivial/not serious
- No time to pursue suspected cases
- Student was a friend
- Lab coordinator told me to ignore it
- Other GTAs suggested I ignore it
- Student will ultimately suffer
- Didn't want to deal with it
- Lack of support from administration
- Faculty member told me to ignore it
- Didn't think faculty would be supportive
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Have you ever referred a case of suspected cheating to anyone?**

- Yes
- No

**If yes, to whom did you report the cheating incident?**

- Course Supervisor
- Department Chair or Head
- Dean of Students
- University Judiciaries
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**If you have referred a suspected case of cheating to your Chair, the Dean of Students, University Judiciaries, or someone else, how satisfied were you with the way the cases were handled?**

- Very Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neutral
- Unsatisfied
- Very Unsatisfied

**Part III: Specific Behaviors**

Students have different views on what constitutes cheating and what is acceptable behavior. We would like to ask you some questions about specific behaviors that some students might consider cheating. Please select one response for each question.

**In the last three years, how often have you observed any of the following behaviors by your students?**

	Never	Once	More Than Once
Turning in work done by someone else.			
Working on an individual assignment with others.			
Receiving unpermitted help on an assignment.			
Writing or providing a paper for another student.			
Providing a graded assignment to another student to submit.			
Sharing an assignment with other to use as an example.			
Getting Q/A from someone who has taken test.			
Copying a friend's computer program.			
Helping someone else cheat on a test.			
Falsifying/fabricating lab data.			
Fabricating/falsifying a bibliography.			
Falsifying/fabricating research data.			
Copying on test from other without their knowledge.			
Copying on test from another with their knowledge.			
Copying few sentences from written source w/o citing.			
Turning in a paper obtained in large part from a term paper "mill" or website that did not charge for this information.			
Copying a few sentences of material from an Internet source without footnoting them in a paper.			
Using unpermitted crib notes (cheat notes) during a test.			
Copying material word for word from written source.			
Altering a graded test and submitting it for additional credit.			
Turning in a paper copied from another student.			
Using a false excuse to obtain extension on due date.			
Hiding library or course materials.			
Damaging library or course materials.			
Cheating on a test in another way.			
Cheating on a written assignment in another way.			

**In the past year, how often have you engaged in any of the following behaviors?**

	Never	Once	More Than Once
Turning in work done by someone else.			
Working on an individual assignment with others.			
Receiving unpermitted help on an assignment.			
Writing or providing a paper for another student.			
Providing a graded assignment to another student to submit.			
Sharing an assignment with other to use as an example.			
Getting Q/A from someone who has taken test.			
Copying a friend's computer program.			
Helping someone else cheat on a test.			
Falsifying/fabricating lab data.			
Fabricating/falsifying a bibliography.			
Falsifying/fabricating research data.			
Copying on test from other without their knowledge.			
Copying on test from another with their knowledge.			
Copying few sentences from written source w/o citing.			
Turning in a paper obtained in large part from a term paper "mill" or website that did not charge for this information.			
Copying a few sentences of material from an Internet source without footnoting them in a paper.			
Using unpermitted crib notes (cheat notes) during a test.			
Copying material word for word from written source.			
Altering a graded test and submitting it for additional credit.			
Turning in a paper copied from another student.			
Using a false excuse to obtain extension on due date.			
Hiding library or course materials.			
Damaging library or course materials.			
Cheating on a test in another way.			
Cheating on a written assignment in another way.			



**Do you think that the following behaviors are serious forms of cheating?**

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
Turning in work done by someone else.					
Working on an individual assignment with others.					
Receiving unpermitted help on an assignment.					
Writing or providing a paper for another student.					
Providing a graded assignment to another student to submit.					
Sharing an assignment with other to use as an example.					
Getting Q/A from someone who has taken test.					
Copying a friend's computer program.					
Helping someone else cheat on a test.					
Falsifying/fabricating lab data.					
Fabricating/falsifying a bibliography.					
Falsifying/fabricating research data.					
Copying on test from other without their knowledge.					
Copying on test from another with their knowledge.					
Copying few sentences from written source w/o citing.					
Turning in a paper obtained in large part from a term paper "mill" or website that did not charge for this information.					
Copying a few sentences of material from an Internet source without footnoting them in a paper.					
Using unpermitted crib notes (cheat notes) during a test.					
Copying material word for word from written source.					
Altering a graded test and submitting it for additional credit.					
Turning in a paper copied from another student.					
Using a false excuse to obtain extension on due date.					
Hiding library or course materials.					
Damaging library or course materials.					
Cheating on a test in another way.					
Cheating on a written assignment in another way.					

**How strongly do you agree with the following statements?**

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
GTAs on this campus try hard to detect cheaters.					
Cheating is a serious problem here.					
Our university judicial process is fair and impartial.					
Students should be held responsible for monitoring the academic offenses of other students.					
Faculty support GTAs who raise academic integrity concerns.					
Lab coordinators support GTAs who raise academic integrity concerns.					

**Which of the measures in Column 1, or combination of measures, do you think is most likely to be taken on your campus if a student is found responsible for cheating on a major test or written assignment? In column 2, please tell us what you think the penalty should be. (Check all that apply.)**

	Likely Action	Preferred Action
The student will be given a reprimand or warning	<b>G</b>	<b>G</b>
The student will receive a grade reduction	<b>G</b>	<b>G</b>
The student will be required to make up the exam/assignment	<b>G</b>	<b>G</b>
The student will receive a failing grade for the exam/assignment	<b>G</b>	<b>G</b>
The student will be given a failing grade for the course	<b>G</b>	<b>G</b>
The student will be placed on probation	<b>G</b>	<b>G</b>
The student will be suspended from school	<b>G</b>	<b>G</b>
The student will be expelled from school	<b>G</b>	<b>G</b>
Don't know	<b>G</b>	<b>G</b>

**What safeguards do you employ to reduce cheating in your courses?**

- None, I do not use any special safeguards in my courses
- Make copies of exams before returning them to students
- Use the Internet to confirm plagiarism
- Refer students to information about cheating/plagiarism on course outline or assignment
- Discuss your views on the importance of honesty and academic integrity with your students
- Remind students about their obligation under your school's code of conduct.
- Tell students about methods you will use to detect and deter cheating in your course
- Have students sit apart from each other during tests and examinations
- Closely monitor students taking a test/exam
- Discuss strategies to reduce cheating with faculty member and/or lab coordinator
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Part IV**  
**Please select one response for each of the following items.**

	<b>Not true at all</b>	<b>Mostly untrue</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Mostly true</b>	<b>Definitely true</b>
I would feel really good if I were the only one who could answer the teacher's questions in class					
It's very important to me that I don't look stupid in my class					
I'm certain I can master the skills taught in class this year					
I like class work that I'll learn from even if I make mistakes					
I'm certain I can figure out how to do the most difficult class work					
An important reason I do my class work is so that I don't embarrass myself					
I want to do better than other students in my class					
An important reason why I do my class work is because I like to learn new things					
The reason I do my class work is so my teacher doesn't think I know less than others					
I can do almost all the work in the class if I don't give up					
I would be successful in class if I did better than most of the other students					
I like class work best when it really makes me think					
Even if the work is hard, I can learn it					
I'd like to show my teacher that I'm smarter than the other students in my class					
An important reason I do my class work in class is because I want to get better at it					
The reason I do my work is so others won't think I'm dumb					
Doing better than the other students in class is important to me					
I can do even the hardest work in class if I try					
One of my main goals is to avoid looking like I can't do my work					
An important reason I do my class work is because I enjoy it					
One reason I would not participate in class is to avoid looking stupid					
I do my class work because I'm interested in it					

**Faculty Survey****Part I  
Demographic Information****In which college do you teach?**

- Arts and Sciences
- Business
- Communication
- Education
- Fine Arts
- Health and Human Services
- Tutorial College
- Osteopathic Medicine
- Engineering and Technology
- University College

**Including this year, how many years have you been teaching at OU?**

- 1
- 2-3
- 4-5
- 6-10
- 10-15
- 15+

**Including this year, how many total years have you been teaching?**

- 1
- 2-3
- 4-5
- 6-10
- 10-15
- 15+

**What is your rank? (Select all that apply.)**

- Assistant Professor
- Associate Professor
- Professor
- Department Head or Chair
- Dean

**What is your sex?**

- Male
- Female

**Part II  
Perceptions and Attitudes**

**How would you rate your campus on the following factors?**

	Very Low	Somewhat Low	Medium	Somewhat High	Very High	Not App.
The severity of penalties for cheating?						
Student understanding of campus policies concerning cheating?						
The faculty's understanding of these policies?						
Student support of these policies?						
Faculty support of these policies?						
The effectiveness of these policies?						

**When, if at all, do you discuss with students your policies concerning:**

	Do not Discuss	On Ind. Assign	In my Syllabus	Start of Quarter	Other	Not Relevant
Plagiarism						
Group work/collaboration						
Proper attribution of written sources						
Attribution of Internet sources						
Falsification of research data						
Falsification of lab data						

**From which sources have you learned about the student academic misconduct policies at Ohio University? Check all that apply.**

- GTA Orientation Program
- Student Handbook
- Department Chair/Head
- Faculty
- Students
- Deans or Other Administrators
- Publicized results of Judicial Hearings
- University Calendar
- Other-Comment below
- Never Been Informed About These Policies
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**In the past year, how often, if ever, have you suspected a student of cheating during a test/exam or on a major written assignment?**

- N/A
- Never
- Once
- Twice
- 3-5 Times
- 6-10 Times
- More than 10 Times

**If you were convinced, even after discussion with the student, that a student had cheated on a major test or assignment in your course, what would be your most likely reaction? (select all that apply)**

- Reprimand or warn the student
- Lower the student's grade
- Fail the student on the test/assignment
- Inform faculty responsible for course
- Discuss the incident with other course GTAs
- Inform the lab coordinator
- Report student to a Dean
- Report student to a Chair/Director
- Do nothing about the incident
- Report the student to University Judiciaries
- Require student to redo the test/assignment
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Have you ever ignored a suspected incident of cheating in one of your courses for *any* reason?**

- Yes
- No

**If so, did any of the following factors influence your decision? (Select all that apply.)**

- Lack of evidence/proof
- Cheating was trivial/not serious
- No time to pursue suspected cases
- Student was a friend
- Lab coordinator told me to ignore it
- Other GTAs suggested I ignore it
- Student will ultimately suffer
- Didn't want to deal with it
- Lack of support from administration
- Faculty member told me to ignore it
- Didn't think faculty would be supportive
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Have you ever referred a case of suspected cheating to anyone?**

- Yes
- No

**If yes, to whom did you report the cheating incident?**

- Course Supervisor
- Department Chair or Head
- Dean of Students
- University Judiciaries
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**If you have referred a suspected case of cheating to your Chair, the Dean of Students, University Judiciaries, or someone else, how satisfied were you with the way the cases were handled?**

- Very Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neutral
- Unsatisfied
- Very Unsatisfied

### Part III: Specific Behaviors

Students have different views on what constitutes cheating and what is acceptable behavior. We would like to ask you some questions about specific behaviors that some students might consider cheating. Please choose one response for each question.

**In the last three years, how often have you observed any of the following behaviors by your students?**

	Never	Once	More Than Once
Turning in work done by someone else.			
Working on an individual assignment with others.			
Receiving unpermitted help on an assignment.			
Writing or providing a paper for another student.			
Providing a graded assignment to another student to submit.			
Sharing an assignment with other to use as an example.			
Getting Q/A from someone who has taken test.			
Copying a friend's computer program.			
Helping someone else cheat on a test.			
Falsifying/fabricating lab data.			
Fabricating/falsifying a bibliography.			
Falsifying/fabricating research data.			
Copying on test from other without their knowledge.			
Copying on test from another with their knowledge.			
Copying few sentences from written source w/o citing.			
Turning in a paper obtained in large part from a term paper "mill" or website that did not charge for this information.			
Copying a few sentences of material from an Internet source without footnoting them in a paper.			
Using unpermitted crib notes (cheat notes) during a test.			
Copying material word for word from written source.			
Altering a graded test and submitting it for additional credit.			
Turning in a paper copied from another student.			
Using a false excuse to obtain extension on due date.			
Hiding library or course materials.			
Damaging library or course materials.			
Cheating on a test in another way.			
Cheating on a written assignment in another way.			

**Do you think that the following behaviors are serious forms of cheating?**

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
Turning in work done by someone else.					
Working on an individual assignment with others.					
Receiving unpermitted help on an assignment.					
Writing or providing a paper for another student.					
Providing a graded assignment to another student to submit.					
Sharing an assignment with other to use as an example.					
Getting Q/A from someone who has taken test.					
Copying a friend's computer program.					
Helping someone else cheat on a test.					
Falsifying/fabricating lab data.					
Fabricating/falsifying a bibliography.					
Falsifying/fabricating research data.					
Copying on test from other without their knowledge.					
Copying on test from another with their knowledge.					
Copying few sentences from written source w/o citing.					
Turning in a paper obtained in large part from a term paper "mill" or website that did not charge for this information.					
Copying a few sentences of material from an Internet source without footnoting them in a paper.					
Using unpermitted crib notes (cheat notes) during a test.					
Copying material word for word from written source.					
Altering a graded test and submitting it for additional credit.					
Turning in a paper copied from another student.					
Using a false excuse to obtain extension on due date.					
Hiding library or course materials.					
Damaging library or course materials.					
Cheating on a test in another way.					
Cheating on a written assignment in another way.					



**How strongly do you agree with the following statements?**

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Cheating is a serious problem here.					
Our university judicial process is fair and impartial.					
Students should be held responsible for monitoring the academic offenses of other students.					
Assessments in my courses are effective at evaluating student understanding of course concepts.					
Assessments in my courses help students learn concepts.					

**Which of the measures in Column 1, or combination of measures, do you think is most likely to be taken on your campus if a student is found responsible for cheating on a major test or written assignment? In column 2, please tell us what you think the penalty should be. (Check all that apply.)**

	Likely Action	Preferred Action
The student will be given a reprimand or warning	<b>G</b>	<b>G</b>
The student will receive a grade reduction	<b>G</b>	<b>G</b>
The student will be required to make up the exam/assignment	<b>G</b>	<b>G</b>
The student will receive a failing grade for the exam/assignment	<b>G</b>	<b>G</b>
The student will be given a failing grade for the course	<b>G</b>	<b>G</b>
The student will be placed on probation	<b>G</b>	<b>G</b>
The student will be suspended from school	<b>G</b>	<b>G</b>
The student will be expelled from school	<b>G</b>	<b>G</b>
Don't know	<b>G</b>	<b>G</b>

**What safeguards do you employ to reduce cheating in your courses?**

- None, I do not use any special safeguards in my courses
- Make copies of exams before returning them to students
- Use the Internet to confirm plagiarism
- Refer students to information about cheating/plagiarism on course outline or assignment
- Discuss your views on the importance of honesty and academic integrity with your students
- Remind students about their obligation under your school's code of conduct.
- Tell students about methods you will use to detect and deter cheating in your course
- Have students sit apart from each other during tests and examinations
- Closely monitor students taking a test/exam
- Discuss strategies to reduce cheating with faculty member and/or lab coordinator
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

## Undergraduate Student Interview Questions

### Warm-up questions/ definitional

1. Tell us a little about why you agreed to be here.
2. When you think of cheating, describe what comes to mind.
  - A. Describe what you think plagiarism is.
  - B. What are different ways that people plagiarize?
  - C. Are some worse than others?
  - D. What kind of classes do you think that other students cheat in most often? Why?

### Perceptions of and attitudes toward cheating

3. How often do you think that students cheat at Ohio University?
  - A. Do you think that academic dishonesty is a problem at OU?
  - B. Why do you think that *other* students plagiarize or cheat in class? Describe.
  - C. What would tempt *you* to plagiarize? Can you describe situations in which you might have or might be willing to cheat?
  - D. Do you think the faculty is aware of cheating?
    - i. Do you think they ignore it?

### Attitudes and perceptions toward consequences of cheating

4. What do you think *usually* happens to students who get caught cheating?
  - A. Who decides on a punishment?
5. What do you think *should* happen to students who get caught cheating?
  - A. What should the university do about cheating?
6. What should the role of students be in reporting cheating?
  - A. Should students have a role in deciding the punishments?
  - B. If you saw someone cheating, would you or should you report it?
  - C. Who should determine the standards of academic integrity?
7. Tell us how you think cheating affects Ohio University as a whole?
  - A. You?
  - B. The faculty?
  - C. The quality of education that you receive?
  - D. Describe how it affects the likelihood of getting a good job after graduation.

## Graduate Student Interview Questions

### Warm-up questions/ definitional

1. Tell us a little bit about what you are doing at Ohio University and why you agreed to be here.
2. When you think of cheating, describe what comes to mind.
  - A. Describe what you think plagiarism is.
  - B. What are different ways that people plagiarize?
  - C. Are some worse than others?
  - D. What kind of classes do you think that other students cheat in most often? Why?

### Perceptions of and attitudes toward cheating

3. How often do you think that students cheat at Ohio University?
  - A. Do you think that academic dishonesty is a problem at OU?
  - B. Do you think that it is a problem among undergraduate students, grad students, or both?
  - C. Why do you think that *other* students plagiarize or cheat in class? Describe.
  - D. What would tempt *you* to plagiarize? Can you describe situations in which you might have been or might be willing to cheat?

### Attitudes and perceptions toward consequences of cheating

4. If you are teaching, have you been given advice about how to handle academic dishonesty cases?
5. Have you ever caught a student cheating in one of your classes? If so, describe what happened.
  - A. What did the student do?
  - B. What did you do?
  - C. How did you feel about it?
  - D. What were the consequences?
6. Have you ever reported a case of academic dishonesty to University Judiciaries?
  - A. If so, what happened?
  - B. Were you satisfied with the way that they handled the case?
7. Have you ever caught students cheating and NOT referred the case to University Judiciaries?
  - A. Why didn't you report the case?
  - B. What did you do instead?
8. What do you think *usually* happens to students who get caught cheating?

9. What do you think *should* happen to students who get caught cheating?
10. Tell us how you think cheating affects Ohio University as a whole.
  - A. You?
  - B. Other students?
  - C. The faculty?
  - C. The university's reputation?
  - D. Describe how it affects the likelihood of getting a good job after graduation.
11. Do you think that we need a better way to deal with academic dishonesty? If so, what would you suggest?

## Faculty Interview Questions

### Warm-up questions/ definitional

1. Tell us a little bit about what you are doing at Ohio University and why you agreed to be here.
2. When you think of cheating, describe what comes to mind.
  - A. Describe what you think plagiarism is.
  - B. What are different ways that people plagiarize?
  - C. Are some worse than others?
  - D. What kind of classes do you think that other students cheat in most often? Why?

### Perceptions of and attitudes toward cheating

3. How often do you think that students cheat at Ohio University?
  - A. Do you think that academic dishonesty is a problem at OU?
  - B. Do you think that it is a problem among undergraduate students, grad students, or both?
  - C. Why do you think that students plagiarize or cheat in class?
4. Have you ever caught a student cheating in one of your classes? If so, describe what happened.
  - A. What did the student do?
  - B. What did you do?
  - C. How did you feel about it?
  - D. What were the consequences?

### Attitudes and perceptions toward consequences of cheating

5. How aware do you think the faculty is of cheating?
  - A. How do you or other faculty respond when you see instances of cheating?
6. Have you ever reported a case of academic dishonesty to University Judiciaries?
  - A. If so, what happened?
  - B. Were you satisfied with the way that they handled the case?
7. Have you ever caught students cheating and NOT referred the case to University Judiciaries?
  - A. Why didn't you report the case?
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8. What do you think *usually* happens to students who get caught cheating?
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10. Tell us how you think cheating affects Ohio University as a whole.
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  - C. The university's reputation?
  - D. Describe how it affects the likelihood of getting a good job after graduation.
  
11. Do you think that we need a better way to deal with academic dishonesty? If so, what would you suggest?

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Articles from the *The Post Online* reprinted with permission of Kyle Kondik, editor, 2/28/06

## Senators plan plagiarism discussion

*The Post Online*, March 7, 2006

by *Bethany Furkin*

Ohio University's Graduate Student Senate is set to discuss recommending changes to the university's plagiarism policy, and encouraged other student groups to join the discussion at last night's meeting.

If a former student is found guilty of plagiarism, colleges decide the penalty and OU's Office of Legal Affairs carries it out, said Mark Mecum, president of Graduate Student Senate. Current students face the same process but University Judiciaries is involved, he said.

More involvement from University Judiciaries could be a potential revision to the policy, Mecum said. This would be especially important if Vision Ohio, OU's strategic plan for the future, creates a graduate college that would consolidate tasks now performed by individual academic departments, he said.

"If we think that we want change to happen, we shouldn't just keep it in Graduate Student Senate," he said, adding that Student Senate and other organizations should be involved.

If a harsh policy is in place, it will act as a deterrent, said senator Jeff Dickman.

Senate will begin discussing the recommendations the first meeting of Spring Quarter, Mecum said.

Senate also passed a resolution accepting its Student Health Insurance Committee's recommendations to Student Health Services.

Proposed changes include giving domestic and international students the option of choosing one of two health care plans and removing coverage for alcohol or drug abuse treatment and abortions if statistics from Student Health Services indicate international students do not use these services.

Senate also passed a resolution supporting OU assisting with graduate student health insurance fees.

Other universities help with these fees, but OU does not do this at all, Mecum said.



## Lax plagiarism policing no surprise

*The Post Online*, March 2, 2006

This letter is regarding the Feb. 27 plagiarism editorial, "Public Enemy No. 1."

Perhaps one reason the problem continues is because faculty find that enforcing their rules for plagiarism for regular class work too tedious and troublesome to bother with.

My last experience with plagiarism before retiring from teaching at Ohio University was like this: The first day of class all students were given a sheet describing course policies. It contained a very specific rule against plagiarism or cheating on exams or quizzes. (Such a practice) would result in an "F" for the course.

On an assignment to write a critique of any article in any of several Human Resources journals being published, one student copied an article that was a critique of a previous article that had appeared in the journal. His copy was complete, including punctuation errors. I spent six hours in the library before I could locate the article he had copied his paper from. I gave copies of his paper and the article from which he had copied it to someone in the office that could get them to the judiciary committee. I never heard from them.

The student came to me to complain and try to negotiate his "F" away. No deal. A few days later, his father called me from Boston and tried the same thing. Also, no deal. The father got rather nasty in the end, complaining that I was ruining his son's career because the course was required for his graduation and that he had been accepted to a law school in San Diego. I thought at the time that we could do without lawyers who were cheats.

A half hour after we hung up, I got a call from a nice sounding lady, at first, who said that she was his grandmother - his father's mother - who began the same argument about destroying his career. When I gave no hint that I would change his "F" to a passing grade, she said that she was much older and better understood her grandson's situation than I.

I asked her how old she was. She said 65. I told her that I was 69.

Weeks later I learned that the student's father had flown down (to Athens) to meet with my department chairman, Art Marinelli, who, to his credit, offered no help. I was later told that he visited with my dean, John Stinson, who offered no help - as did then OU President Charles Ping when his father visited him before returning to Boston.

*- James Lee is a former professor emeritus in the College of Business.*

## **OU acknowledges multiple plagiarism cases, moves to enforce student code**

*The Athens News*, Monday, February 27th, 2006

In a statement released Friday, Ohio University said it has determined that a number of masters theses, completed in OU's Russ College of Engineering and Technology, appear to contain plagiarized material.

The release said the apparent plagiarism has been confirmed by Russ College Dean Dennis Irwin, OU Judiciaries and the Office of Legal Affairs, and that 44 potential cases of plagiarism are under review.

Tom Matrka, who recently completed his master's degree in engineering at OU, unearthed the apparent plagiarism and brought it to the university's attention.

OU's release states that as its review of the plagiarism cases moves forward, Irwin "has taken steps to communicate to students and faculty the imperative of academic honesty," providing information about what constitutes plagiarism and how students can avoid violations.

The Russ College has formed an Academic Honesty Oversight Committee to deal with academic dishonesty allegations. It will now require theses and dissertations to be submitted electronically, and will employ commercially available software to screen for possible plagiarism.

"The nature of the infractions varies as will the remedies, consistent with the university's Student Code of Conduct," the release states. "Based on the gravity of the violation, students may be required at a minimum to correct and resubmit their work in the case of minor failure to adhere to prescribed standards. For more serious occurrences, further corrective and punitive actions will be taken, including but not limited to: delay in graduation, change in advisers and/or research topics, or referral to Judiciaries. For graduates, serious infractions could lead to a possible revocation of a degree."

OU also will look into what role faculty advisers played in allowing the allegedly plagiarized work to be submitted. If the advisors in the cases didn't provide adequate oversight of their students' work, they could be referred to the college's Professional Ethics Committee, the release says.

Provost Kathy Krendl has appointed Gary Meyer, assistant vice president for economic and technology development in the Innovation Center, and Hugh Bloemer, professor emeritus of geography, to conduct an independent review of the allegations and the report of the Academic Honesty Oversight Committee.

The investigation should be complete by early spring quarter.

## Public Enemy No. 1

*The Post Online*, February 27, 2006

In the midst of Ohio University's initiatives to revamp its alcohol policies and attempts to clean up its supposedly damaging party-school image, a far more pressing problem - plagiarism - has reared its ugly head.

Nearly a year and a half ago, Tom Matrka, then a graduate student in engineering, uncovered numerous examples of plagiarized theses within the Russ College of Engineering and Technology. Matrka found it difficult to convince the college of the seriousness of what he discovered. Even though the general university population became aware of the story beginning in May, only recently has the college made a wholehearted investigation into what appears to be an extensive history of plagiarism in its graduate program.

As of Feb. 12, 12 theses had been investigated, and according to a university press release sent to local media on Friday, a total of 44 potential cases of plagiarism are under review. How many of these cases will turn out to be actual plagiarism is unclear, but there are enough examples to reasonably say that students at Stocker Center, administrators in Cutler Hall and anyone who cares about the value of an OU degree should be alarmed. Obviously, it is no easy task to run the day-to-day workings of the university, nor is it easy to conduct a thorough investigation in a short period of time. Nevertheless, it appears that the university stalled on properly handling the matter. Despite the renewed focus on this issue, the university has dragged its feet on what should have been its top objective - restoring the image of an important college, rooting out plagiarism and punishing those who are to blame.

For a while now (and during this school year in particular) addressing the university's party school image and student alcohol abuse has been the university's top public relations priority- with endless talk of Friday classes, early bar closings and new policies. This focus is misplaced when cheating is poisoning the university. Administrators have often lamented the effects that the party school image has on the value of an OU degree, but ridding the university of plagiarism is far more important. A potential employer kidding a recent graduate about Halloween is one thing - questioning the credibility of a degree is quite another. But the university has yet to announce a "day of dialogue" about plagiarism.

Plagiarism is cancerous to the reputation of an institution of higher learning, and it casts a dubious shadow over the Russ College and the university as a whole. Although there are no explanations yet for the plagiarism that has occurred, at the very least the situation indicates a gross lack of oversight. Given other headlines out of the college during the past few years - including a continuing battle over former professor Robert Lipset's tenure (which could lead to the university having to rehire him and pay him hundreds of thousands of dollars in back pay) and an investigation into \$70,000 in missing funds - Dean Dennis Irwin has a lot of work to do whip his college into shape.

Given the status of the investigation, it would be premature and irresponsible to assign blame or allege misconduct on the part of university officials or faculty. However, regardless of the specifics of the case, it is clear that something is wrong within the college and that the university's administration did not pursue the scandal as feverishly as it should have. When first learning of these allegations, OU should have aggressively pursued this issue, both internally and publicly, to try to save face.

This can be rectified, but it is going to take dedicated investigation and firm resolve from the university, with Irwin and President Roderick McDavis leading the way. Identifying plagiarism in the college of engineering and eliminating it must now be this university's most pressing concern. Anything else, be it Vision Ohio or alcohol, is merely window dressing.

## Engineering college takes on plagiarized theses

*The Post Online, February 23, 2006*

by Janet Nester  
Contributing Editor  
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About a year and a half after a former Ohio University graduate student uncovered examples of plagiarized theses, officials from the university and the Russ College of Engineering are beginning a more thorough investigation of the allegations.

Tom Matrka, 40, who received his master's degree in engineering from OU in June and is working for a chemical company in McArthur, has been investigating theses approved by the engineering school dating back to the late '80s. He said he has found about 30 plagiarized theses since he began in July 2004 and is working now with OU officials to stop plagiarism within the College of Engineering.

"(The college) is discrediting us and misleading the public," Matrka said.

As of Feb. 21, 12 theses had been investigated and are "being dealt with," said Dennis Irwin, dean of the engineering college. One student who graduated about five years ago had to rewrite the plagiarized portions of his thesis, Irwin said. The student was "cooperative," and that student's thesis was removed from the library. Many students who publish dissertations and theses make them available in Alden Library.

An additional 35 cases, many from the department of mechanical engineering, are under investigation. The cases being investigated span a period of about 15 years.

Plagiarism occurs in other colleges at OU, but this case is "unique in terms of time frame and number," said John Burns, director of legal affairs.

The College of Engineering has formed a permanent group, the Academic Honesty Oversight Committee, which consists of a group of faculty members, mainly outside the department of mechanical engineering, Irwin said. The committee assists Irwin in deciding how to deal with plagiarism in old theses and possible consequences and punishments.

The committee gave one report about the 12 theses that have been investigated, but Irwin sent it back, asking for more specific recommendations. The committee's new report, which Irwin expects on March 27, will give consistent suggestions and a specific course of action on all questionable theses, including the 35 under investigation now.

Faculty members in the college investigated some cases about one year ago, but only found one case. Now allegations from Matrka are being actively pursued.

The college also is investigating faculty members and looking for correlations among students who plagiarized and professors who were advisers for them, Irwin said.

"I am working to identify a pattern that would lead to root causes (of plagiarism)," Irwin said.

When asked if students are coerced by faculty to plagiarize or if advisers simply might overlook it, Irwin said, "I hope not, but I'm not going to say it's not possible."

Irwin would not give the names of any faculty, noting that at the time of his interview with The Post, there wasn't a concrete case against anyone. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, a federal law that protects students' information and records, protects the identities of students being investigated for plagiarism at OU, Burns said.

### Major challenges

The College of Engineering has been presented with many obstacles. Almost all of the cases of plagiarized theses involve students who received a degree, Irwin said. The university does not have a set policy in dealing with plagiarized theses after a student has graduated, but is taking each thesis on a case-by-case basis.

If plagiarism is found and the student has graduated, the case is sent to the Office of Legal Affairs, said J. Malcolm Smith, interim director of the office of judiciaries.

Cultural differences among students in the engineering college present other challenges. Because the college includes many international students, concerns about whether everyone was aware of American standards of plagiarism have surfaced.

U.S. universities uphold "very strict standards," and most students are expected to understand research and citation by the time they enter graduate school, Burns said. Many graduate students are directed to the student handbook and the engineering college is taking further measures to inform students.

The degree and amount of plagiarism varies with each individual case, making it that much harder to determine a universal policy, Irwin said.

Also, the depth of plagiarism in the engineering college makes it harder for officials to find examples, Matrka said.

Many cases go back to the '80s and '90s, making it difficult to look through every thesis that has ever been written, Burns said.

Additional burdens on the department include finding faculty members and others in the field to review possibly plagiarized theses. It is standard for the board that approves theses to include members who are in another discipline or who are working outside the department. Faculty who originally approved the thesis can't review it again if plagiarism is found, Irwin said.

With the help of Matrka, The Post found many examples of plagiarism. Some theses had a few sentences that were copied without citation from other sources, while other examples had almost 20 pages of copied work, save for a few words, with no quotation marks or references. And many of these examples are available in the library.

"The whole system is falling apart," Matrka said, noting students presently working on their theses could unknowingly reference plagiarized work.

As long as students cite the work they are using, plagiarism isn't occurring, Irwin said.

Some students took information from class textbooks or referenced work by prominent scientists and didn't cite them in their bibliographies, Matrka said. The Post found two examples where students took information from textbooks.

Engineering college officials haven't talked to the original authors yet, and Irwin said he would follow recommendations of the Academic Honesty Oversight Committee.

"Is it the responsibility (of the college) to notify those that have been affected?" Irwin asked, noting that he was unsure what course of action engineering college officials would take in notifying original authors.

Other repercussions for plagiarized work, especially that taken from a textbook, include legal action for copyright infringement. The fines for copyright infringement vary, but defendants who are proven guilty could pay up to \$150,000 in statutory damages, according to U.S. Copyright Law.

Many of the theses being examined by the College of Engineering and the Office of Legal Affairs include plagiarism in the introduction and background portions of the theses, which doesn't compromise the actual experiments or work done by the student, Irwin said.

However, The Post found more than one thesis that directly copied equations from other published works.

One thesis, published in 2001, includes almost 20 pages with identical wording, save for a few words, and direct copies of equations from Kyunho Suk's "Residual Stresses in Axisymmetric Deep Drawing Process," published in 1995. Suk's work is not cited in the bibliography of that thesis. The Post found similar examples that copied or failed to cite large portions taken from other sources.

"These students are graduating with no concept of what a master's thesis is," Matrka said, noting that he has found similar examples.

Beginning in July 2004, Matrka tried to show university officials examples of plagiarism he had found, but he said they were uninterested.

In the earlier investigation college faculty found only one example - the student who had to rewrite his thesis.

### **Punishment and consequences**

While having students rewrite a plagiarized thesis is an option officials in the engineering college are considering, Irwin said that he and others aren't opposed to revoking degrees.

"It's on my list of options," he noted. "I plan to deal with the infraction with the seriousness of the infraction."

OU has never revoked a degree, Burns said.

Students in Graduate Student Senate also voiced their concerns about plagiarism at a recent meeting and are considering a resolution that would create a formal process to deal with plagiarism found in former students' work, said Mark Mecum, Senate president.

Ohio State University has a policy in place that gives university officials the power to revoke a degree if plagiarism is found within six months of the student's graduation, Mecum said.

### **Progress**

The university is hoping to have all of the cases of plagiarized theses identified and dealt with by the beginning of Spring Quarter, Burns said.

Matrka was on campus recently and has shown Burns the cases of plagiarism he found, Burns said.

"I don't mean to put a burden on him," Burns said, noting he has found other cases independently and doesn't want Matrka to feel as though he must be involved. "(Matrka's) been right in a lot of these instances."

As university officials are investigating and working to resolve the cases of plagiarism, the College of Engineering is formulating ways to proactively combat plagiarism.

"There's very little I can do about past work, but I can certainly affect what happens in the future," Irwin said.

More emphasis is placed on the consequences of plagiarism and the standards for graduate work at an orientation meeting all new engineering graduate students attend, Irwin said. Also, students now are required to submit their theses electronically. The college enacted this requirement in September, and they compare electronic theses to the database of other published theses and Internet sources.

The college has found a few examples of "inadvertent" plagiarism, or minor, unintentional misuse of information, since it began using the electronic software, Irwin said. The Academic Honesty Oversight Committee deals with these minor cases of plagiarism.

If a case of faculty wrongdoing surfaces, the Professional Ethics Committee, a university-wide group, deals with faculty members and possible ethical misconduct within scientific research.

Possibly the most drastic of the new requirements the college is holding its students to is the signing of a Statement of Originality, which ascertains that all of the work in their theses is original. Faculty members plan to keep all of the statements on record.

If the college found plagiarism and had the author's Statement of Originality, "I personally have no qualms about the revocation of degrees," Irwin said.

The allegations of plagiarism have damaged the image of the College of Engineering and certainly the reputation of the faculty in the college, Irwin said. "I am very disappointed - embarrassed - but determined to solve the problem without any excuses, just by diligent pursuit," Irwin said.

## Cheating may not be honest, but it sure is popular

By Angela Rito  
Athens NEWS Campus Reporter  
*The Athens News*, Thursday, February 9th, 2006

Sophocles once said, "I would prefer to fail with honor than to win by cheating." Yet according to national statistics, not all undergraduate college students feel this way. Ohio University students apparently are no different in this respect.

According to the Center for Academic Integrity (CAI), in a nationwide survey of nearly 50,000 undergraduate students on more than 60 college campuses, 70 percent admitted to some cheating. The same survey revealed that one quarter of the participants admitted to instances of "serious" cheating on written assignments on one or more occasions. (The CAI is a national consortium of colleges based at Duke University.)

Yet OU Judiciaries has handled only an average of 33 cases of "academic misconduct" per year since 2001. Are students not being caught or just not being reported?

As the former director of OU Judiciaries, Judy Piercy, assistant vice president for student affairs and interim director of residence life, is familiar with the issue as it pertains to the university. "Many faculty members choose to handle (cases of academic misconduct) themselves," she said. Professors usually do this by either awarding an F on the assignment or the overall course, she added.

In Assessment Project surveys conducted by the CAI involving almost 10,000 faculty members at various American colleges over the last three years, 44 percent of those who were aware of students cheating in their course(s) said that they have never reported a student for cheating to the appropriate campus authority.

Piercy noted that the university encourages instructors to add warnings about academic dishonesty in their syllabi. According to Piercy, the university wants to make sure that an OU degree has credibility. "Students need to earn their degree," she said. "In order to do so, they must do their own work."

According to the OU Student Code of Conduct, academic misconduct is an "A"-level offense and is defined as "dishonesty or deception in fulfilling academic requirements." Penalties for "A"-level offenses can include the university's whole range of sanctions, from a reprimand to expulsion. In addition, as mentioned, professors have the option of handling discipline themselves, with grade penalties, or referring the student to Judiciaries.

As stated on the OU Judiciaries Web site, academic misconduct "includes, but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarism, un-permitted collaboration, forged attendance, fabrication, using advantages not approved by the instructor, knowingly permitting another student to plagiarize or cheat from one's work, or submitting the same assignment in different courses without consent of the instructor."

Piercy recalled that she once dealt with an "un-permitted collaboration" case in which students in separate groups had worked together to complete a computer science project. She stressed the importance of clarifying any doubts or concerns about working together with professors. "When in doubt, ask," she suggested with emphasis.

Piercy said that the most common excuse given by undergraduate students charged with academic misconduct is that they "ran out of time" and were hoping they wouldn't get caught.

However, some OU students evidently would rather spend time dreaming up ways to avoid studying than actually doing the work. They go to great lengths to avoid passing exams the "old-fashioned way."

According to one OU senior who asked not to be identified for this story because it would incriminate him, it's easy to take advantage of courses in which multiple sections take the same tests. Sometimes, assuming a

disguise can help, he said.

"My sophomore year I went into Morton Hall during a different class period, wearing a wig and a baseball hat," he said. "As soon as I received a test, I snuck out the back door with it." The senior confided that sitting in the back row is crucial to such cheating schemes.

According to some students, obtaining copies of tests before taking them is one of the easiest ways to pass a course. Another OU senior, who asked not to be identified for the same reason as his fellow senior, recalled that some student acquaintances paid him \$100 to sneak into a philosophy classroom during a test period and steal a copy of the exam.

"I wasn't even in the class," he said. "I sat down in there, pretended to take the test, and then as people handed their's in, I just slipped my copy in my pocket." The student said he then waltzed out the door, no questions asked.

The same student proudly refers to his green OU baseball cap as his "cheating hat." "I wear it to almost every test I take," he said. "If I pull it down far enough, nobody can see my eyes." That allows his eyes to wander anywhere he wants them to go.

Another common trend in academic dishonesty is use of the ever-so-handly World Wide Web. Countless "cheating" sites exist, boasting guaranteed A-earning essays on topics ranging from Abortion to Zulu.

One OU sophomore, however, cautioned that there's an "art" to online cheating. "You can't just copy an entire essay and turn it in as is," he said. The student, who predictably requested anonymity for this story, said that the real trick is cutting and pasting portions from different sources and molding them into one paper. "It's almost impossible to get caught this way," he added.

However, this "cutting and pasting" is considered to be academically dishonest without proper citation, even though 77 percent of students in the CAI survey said that they believe such plagiarism is "not a serious issue."

Elaborate schemes aside, some teachers feel that cheating can be a cry for help, and they would rather take matters into their own hands.

Michael Williams, director of graduate studies and associate professor of visual communications, maintains that he would rather help a student and address why that student feels he or she needs to cheat instead of ruining his or her future academic career by taking the case to Judiciaries. "We all would like to think that all of our students are trying," he said.

Williams said he usually deals with such cases on an individual basis, issuing F's or docking points as a penalty.

It's often hard for instructors to produce enough evidence to take a student to judiciaries, he added. "It's hard to catch someone red-handed with enough proof to take to a hearing," he said.

However, Williams cited a distinct difference between cases of academic dishonesty among graduate students and undergraduate students. Cases of academic dishonesty concerning grad students are much more severe, Williams said, because the university has much higher expectations of students at that level.



## Internet boosts state, national cheating rates

*The Post Online*, January 31, 2006

by Ashley Herzog

For *The Post*

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Although cheating in college is growing as a national trend and has reached record numbers at Ohio State University, Ohio University has no plans to revise its policies on academic misconduct, a university official said.

At OSU last year, there were 539 cases of academic misconduct, compared to 287 five years ago, according to a Jan. 17 Columbus Dispatch article. Faculty members began complaining approximately three years ago about insufficient sanctions for cheating at the university, which led to the strengthening of the school's policies during the 2002-03 academic year, according to the article.

Research by the Center for Academic Integrity, a consortium of 200 colleges and universities based at Duke University in Durham, N.C., shows that cheating is on the rise nationally. It cites statistics showing about 80 percent of high-achieving college students admit to cheating and do not consider it a serious offense and the increased use of the Internet as examples.

The number of academic misconduct cases at OU, however, has remained fairly consistent over the last few years. There were 26 academic misconduct offenses in 2004-05, 43 offenses the year before and 31 offenses in 2002-03, said J. Malcolm Smith, OU's interim director of University Judiciaries.

"I believe that (OU) already takes a fairly hard-line stance on cheating," Smith said. "Since we haven't experienced a large increase in academic misconduct over the years, I see no reason to become even stricter."

Penalties for academic misconduct depend on the seriousness of the offense, Smith said.

"Students who cheat on a minor homework assignment will probably be put on probation, since it doesn't have a large affect on their final grade in the course," he said. "But a student who copies an entire paper from a Web site may be suspended or expelled."

Although the number of cases of academic misconduct has not increased, cheating has become easier in recent years, said University Ombuds Elizabeth Graham, who gives advice to students who are caught cheating and sometimes accompanies them to judiciaries hearings.

"Easy access to information, especially on the Internet, has made cheating quite seductive," she said. "It's our job as educators to help students identify the proper use of this information."

Professors have become more aware of academic misconduct and work to limit it, Smith said.

Jay Ryu, a political science professor, said he clearly defines plagiarism to eliminate confusion.

"Some students don't know all the guidelines - what is cheating and what isn't," he said. "If I find that a student has copied a few sentences from a book, I will usually allow them to revise and re-submit the paper. If a student copies an entire paper from a book or the Internet, however, they will get an F on the assignment - no compromises."

Like Smith, Ryu does not believe that cheating is a major issue at OU.

"This is my third year at OU, and I've had only a few instances of cheating," he said. "Most of my students take their schoolwork very seriously, so misconduct is a minimal problem in my classes."

## Senate addresses grad plagiarism

*The Post Online, October 25, 2005*

by Erik Skoog  
For The Post  
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Members of Ohio University Graduate Student Senate agreed last night to investigate allegations of plagiarism in the Master's Program in OU's mechanical engineering department.

Tom Matrka, a graduate student recently accepted into the Integrated Engineering Ph.D Program, said during research for his master's thesis, he discovered about 30 published theses that contained possible instances of plagiarism, one as recent as 2004. Appearing before senate last night, he pleaded with senators to encourage the university to take action.

"I think a thorough investigation needs to be conducted in the thesis containing plagiarism," Matrka said.

At least one author has already graduated from Ohio University, Matrka said, adding he had previously been in contact with accreditation officials, OU judiciaries and OU officials in the Mechanical Engineering Department before contacting senate President Mark Mecum via e-mail.

Mecum said he is unsure of a clear process for pursuing students who have already graduated from OU. Plagiarism is a Code A academic offense in the Student Code of Conduct and punitive measures against a student found to have engaged in plagiarism can range from a reprimand to expulsion from OU.

"I'm still in the process of looking into his complaints," he said after the meeting. "(I think) what his main goal is, is to get the university to have a policy that if they find a thesis that is officially plagiarized, to have it removed from the library," Mecum said.

The allegedly plagiarized theses can be found at Alden Library.

Some senators questioned what measures senate would be willing to take. The university cannot pursue students who have already graduated, however, some senators suggested professors still at OU who advised the graduate students be held responsible for the plagiarism.

A senate investigation could result in a proposed resolution to Graduate Student Senate. Though details of a potential resolution were not available, Mecum said interests of graduate students at OU would be protected.

Katie Nutter, Commissioner of Women's Affairs and first-year graduate student, said a resolution, if passed by senate, is necessary for communication and the introduction of an issue to the senate body.

"Aside from letting the students know how we feel and letting the university know how we feel and hopefully influencing student's opinion as well as university opinion, a resolution is the first step towards action," she said.

## Letter: Consequences of plagiarism: A true story

*The Post Online, May 6, 2005*

*by Letter to the Editor*

Your various articles on plagiarism reminded me of how diverse can be the consequences of catching a student plagiarist.

In a human resources management course in the College of Business in the 1990s, I found that a student had plagiarized his entire term paper, which was assigned to be a critique of any article on personnel administration/human resources management in a journal that carried such articles. On the first day of class each student received a single page handout from me that gave all of the course policies which included that a student caught plagiarizing on class assignments would receive an F for the course.

That was Spring Quarter and a student turned in an assignment that I easily judged to be plagiarized, given that my assessment of his writing ability from quizzes and exams was well below that shown by his paper.

I spent 6 hours in the library locating his source and discovered that he plagiarized every word, including one grammatical and two punctuation errors in the original article, which otherwise was quite well written. In response to his complaint about his F for the course, I took copies of the journal article, his paper, and a copy of class assignments (to prove he had received them) to the judiciary committee meeting on his case. Though a member of the judiciary committee mumbled something about the severity of the penalty, no further action was taken. His F for the course was to stand unchanged.

A week later, I got a call from his father, a lawyer whose practice was in Boston, Mass. He complained of the severity of the penalty, especially since his son had been accepted by a law school in San Diego. I told him that perhaps his son learned something from this penalty and offered no further comments, though he reached a shouting level before I hung up.

About 10 minutes later, I received another call about the young man. This time it was a nice lady who complained that I had ruined her grandson's career, and that if I were older like her, I might better understand what this meant to her grandson.

I figured out that his father had sent his own mother to persuade me to change the grade. When I asked how old she was and explained to her that I was older, she gave up (I was 69 at the time). I heard no more about the case from his family.

A couple weeks later, however, I learned from our department secretary that this wasn't the end of his father's campaign. He had flown down here and tried to get my department chairman to get me to change the grade or do it himself. It didn't work. He evidently worked his way up through our dean and President Charlie Ping, who, to their everlasting credit, sent him back to Boston empty-handed.

I have often wondered if the student now follows the rule of law or if he is a legal scofflaw.

-James Lee is a professor emeritus in the College of Business. Send him an e-mail at [jamesalee@earthlink.net](mailto:jamesalee@earthlink.net).

## Theses questioned

*The Post Online*, May 5, 2005

by Suzanne Wilder

Special Projects Editor

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When Ohio University graduate student Tom Matrka had problems getting his thesis proposal approved, he started to research other students' thesis work in the stacks of Alden Library. But the mechanical engineering master's student in the Russ College of Engineering and Technology did not find motivation or clarity. Instead, he discovered examples of work that matched identically in different theses -multiple cases of probable plagiarism in the mechanical engineering department.

After he had accumulated example after example during a period of several months, Matrka approached Judy Piercy, the director of university judiciaries, in summer 2004. Piercy explained that after a student had graduated, the situation was out of her jurisdiction. Allegations of academic misconduct after a student has graduated are directed through the college they originated in or through the office of legal affairs. Piercy said she turned the information over to Dennis Irwin, the dean of the Russ College of Engineering and Technology.

Matrka also brought examples of plagiarism to the attention of several professors in the college of engineering. Irwin said a committee of professors investigated the cases about which Matrka complained.

The chair of the department of mechanical engineering, M.K. Alam, said the committee investigated four or five students' theses after Matrka's complaint.

"We looked at all of those that he brought to our attention," Irwin said. However, Irwin said he would not discuss details about the number of cases or the outcomes.

He confirmed that the college took action on one case, but he would not elaborate, citing the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, a federal law that protects students' information and records.

John Burns, director of legal affairs at OU, confirmed the investigation of alleged plagiarism. He said the thesis did have some "problems," but the student was correcting them. "We're not looking toward revoking a degree," he said.

The situation was unusual because the university learned about it from a student.

"The complaint came from another student, which is a little strange, but that's what it was," Burns said.

Though Irwin would not give details, he said the investigation was thorough.

"I'm very satisfied with the outcome," he said.

With suggestions from Matrka, *The Post* found several examples of probable plagiarism in mechanical engineering theses throughout the past 15 years. Some of the examples include almost identical sections, as large as 10 to 15 pages, save for a few words changed.

Four theses from 1997 and 1998 are filled with matching passages -without in-text citations or quotation marks -spread throughout about 10 pages in each thesis. The authors worked together on experiments, according to their introductions. Some of the authors list the other theses in their reference pages, but use neither quotation marks nor in-text citations to identify the identical passages.

Though several professors in the college said students often work together on experiments, thesis writing is expected to be completely independent and original.

"It is not accepted in the college to use the same passages verbatim unless they're quoted," Irwin said. He said possible examples of that in theses would not be "condoned" by the college.

Students who work together should be doing all original writing, Alam said. If students quote another source, the quote or reference should be clearly marked in the text.

Two chapters in theses from 1989 and 1990 are nearly identical, with similar abstracts at the beginning and the same diagrams in the first two chapters.

All these students received degrees from OU, according to the office of the registrar.

The university has no official procedure for how to deal with cases of plagiarism after the accused student has graduated, Burns said. Instead, the department of legal affairs and the college the student graduated from deal with each case on an "ad hoc" basis, investigating and contacting the student after confirming that a thesis or dissertation might be plagiarized.

In most cases, university officials -professors, deans or representatives from legal affairs -allow the student to correct problems in the thesis if it appears they were inadvertent. If university officials find proof of severe plagiarism, the university could revoke the student's degree, but Burns said, "We've never done that."

Matrka, who is finishing up his research project and working as an engineer at an explosives plant, still finds examples of copied work. He is unsettled about the plagiarism for several reasons. He said he has found more than 20 examples of copied work, and he is worried those examples are "just the tip of the iceberg."

The plagiarism brings into question the legitimacy of anyone's degree from OU, Matrka said. Though he said he has done his work honestly, he does not want people to think his work is illegitimate because of other cases of plagiarism.

"I think they need to take every bit of plagiarism out of that library," Matrka said in a later interview. "The whole program is compromised by it."

Because of his frustrations with the plagiarism he was finding and with his own problems with his thesis proposal, Matrka sent letters to the governor's office, President Roderick McDavis' office and the Ohio Board of Regents (the governing body for public institutions of higher education) in fall 2004. The Board of Regents received the letter in December, said Bret Crow, assistant director of communication for the board. The board responded to Matrka Monday, after The Post contacted them, telling him via e-mail that because it was not a disciplinary body, it was passing the information on to OU.

The OU department of communications and marketing could not confirm whether it had received Matrka's letter or the letter from the Board of Regents by press time yesterday.

Alam said the letters were not helpful to the situation because he felt the university was handling the investigation.

"That was something that really made this thing a lot bigger than it was," he said. Alam said he wanted to defend the students accused and found to be not guilty of plagiarism, because Matrka had drawn attention to the students and university.

After the initial charges of plagiarism, Irwin assigned a committee to write plagiarism guidelines for the College of Engineering. The document states ways to avoid plagiarism, such as taking careful notes and making sure to use quotation marks and citations in the text.

"I think that from time to time the community at large needs to be reminded that this is an issue," he said.

## Faculty, judiciaries decide punishment for student plagiarism

*The Post Online*, May 5, 2005

by Suzanne Wilder  
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While grading papers for a history class last year, an Ohio University teaching assistant began to check the essays on an Internet search engine. After finding 20 percent of the class had plagiarized, he gave the papers to the professor of the course, Steven Miner.

Miner, the chair of the history department, said he talked with the students, who admitted to plagiarizing. Twelve students in the class of 60 failed.

Although the history department has loose guidelines for dealing with students who plagiarize -failing them in the class or sending them to judiciaries if the situation merits further discipline such as expulsion or suspension -university procedures allow faculty members and academic departments to decide how to reprimand students for dishonest work.

Judy Piercy, director of university judiciaries, said some professors give failing grades for the specific assignment that was plagiarized. Other professors, like Miner, fail students for the course.

Ben Ogles, the chair of the psychology department, said faculty members in his department have total freedom dealing with students who plagiarize or commit other forms of academic misconduct, such as cheating. When instructors discover plagiarism, the process is usually the same.

"By and large, my instructors will come and talk to me when this happens," Ogles said. After discussing the cases with Ogles, the teacher will contact students, discuss the situation with them and base the response on the severity of the plagiarism.

That procedure is the case for most departments.

Phyllis Bernt, Faculty Senate chair and a professor in the School of Communication Systems Management, said that in her experience an honest mistake is treated less harshly than an entire paper that is plagiarized. For example, if a student forgets to cite a source or to use quotation marks around a sentence, students will receive the chance to make up the assignment.

"In general ... faculty try to figure out the severity of what has happened and deal with it accordingly," she said.

Some professors do turn cases over to university judiciaries or call to ask for advice, Piercy said.

Most of the cases of academic misconduct that wind up in Piercy's office are related to plagiarism. Academic misconduct includes cheating, plagiarism, un-permitted collaboration or fabrication, according to the Student Code of Conduct.

Once the student reaches judiciaries, the punishment depends on the severity of the plagiarism, Piercy said. If a student has paraphrased two or three sentences without citations, the office looks on it less harshly than if he or she has copied several paragraphs or pages without quotation marks or citations.

Upperclass students are more likely to face harsher punishment for plagiarism, Piercy said. They should know how to properly cite sources, particularly if they have had classes in a specific department before.

"There's a higher likelihood of suspension as an upperclass student," she said.

Piercy sees plagiarism cases from freshman through graduate levels. But graduate level cases are "few and far between."

"You don't find much of it because most people are really dedicated to what they're studying," she said.

In the history department, graduate students who plagiarize are disciplined severely.

"For graduate students, plagiarism is a sufficiently serious offense that we take them out of the program," Miner said. "In history in general, it's one of the most serious academic offenses you can commit."

During the 2003-04 school year, judiciaries found 43 cases of academic misconduct, mostly plagiarism, Piercy said. The previous school year, judiciaries found 31 cases of academic misconduct.

But cases handled by the professors are not tallied on a university-wide basis, so estimating how much plagiarism exists on campus is difficult.

Nationally, more than 75 percent of college students "admit to some cheating," according to a 1999 study by the Center for Academic Integrity Web site, <http://www.academicintegrity.org>. The survey also stated "about one-third of the participating students admitted to serious test cheating and half admitted to one or more instances of serious cheating on written assignments."

Part of the problem with plagiarizing, Piercy said, is it can damage a professor's view of his or her students. "My experience with faculty is that they really trust ... that students have come here to earn a degree and to learn," she said. When professors find plagiarism, "it affects the faculty members' ability to trust."

## Students misunderstand plagiarism, professors say

*The Post Online*, May 5, 2005

by Suzanne Wilder

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Although the Ohio University Student Code of Conduct clearly states students will be punished for plagiarism, faculty members and administrators say students have many misconceptions about plagiarism.

Dennis Irwin, dean of the Russ College of Engineering and Technology, recently investigated a charge of plagiarism in the mechanical engineering department. He said students might have a "narrow view" of plagiarism, believing it applies only to copying a direct quote.

"I think that there is a lot of confusion about what plagiarism is," Irwin said.

Other forms of plagiarism -taking someone else's ideas or some of their words without citations -are "not well understood by students," he said.

"It's my opinion that students often are unclear in their own minds what is their idea and what is someone else's after reading an extensive amount of material," Irwin said.

Judy Piercy, director of university judiciaries, said students have a few specific misconceptions about plagiarism. One is that they can list a source in a reference page without citing it in text as needed. Another problem is that students use direct quotes but do not use quotation marks, or paraphrase and do not give the original author credit.

Adding to the confusion for some international students might be differences in academic standards. In some countries, writing a paper and directly using a source without in-text citation is acceptable, Piercy said.

Kyle McKenzie, assistant director for the office of International Student and Faculty Services, organizes the orientation for international students. She said part of the orientation includes information about how the academic system in the United States is different.

Plagiarism is one of the topics they discuss, but for specific questions, she recommends students ask professors to clarify. For example, some students might think sharing work or information with other students is acceptable, McKenzie said.

But the idea of collaboration can be problematic for American students too. Piercy said students might not realize sharing work is unethical and not allowed. She said professors should be clear about work expectations.

In the Russ College, students occasionally work together on experiments. But Irwin said if students share work, their writing should be original.

Professors will recognize plagiarism, Piercy said, particularly if the writing seems too advanced for a student. And as experts in a particular field, professors will be familiar with texts on essay topics.

In addition, some faculty and teaching assistants check the Internet for plagiarized work as part of their grading process. Steven Miner, chair of the history department, said it is easy to catch people cheating using various search engines. Students who use the Internet to cheat "are particularly ill-advised," he said.