

MARCH 1990

Encouraging Academic Integrity

A perennial problem for all teachers is that of student cheating. Some teachers may deny that it occurs and others may ignore it, but this does not mean that it isn't there. It is. It always has been. It probably always will be. Neither denial nor wishful thinking can make it go away. What can?

First and foremost, a teacher should acknowledge that cheating does occur, probably more frequently than anyone would like to admit. Examples of academic dishonesty cover a wide range of behaviors, including, among others, copying homework, plagiarizing, buying term papers, and cheating on exams. Some students are fully aware that they are cheating, while others may not identify their actions as such. When questioned about cheating, students may try to excuse themselves by saying that everyone does it. They exaggerate, of course, but a substantial number of students do rely on less than honorable means for passing classes, at least at some point in their academic careers. This fact, of course, neither excuses or justifies the act.

The most effective tool against academic dishonesty is to discourage it from the very beginning. Make sure that your students know what academic dishonesty is and why it is unacceptable; make them see that plagiarism is nothing less than intellectual thievery. Set limits for your students on the first day of the semester. Explain the meaning of group work and where and when it is appropriate. Demonstrate the proper method of footnoting sources, both for direct quotation and paraphrase. Perhaps most importantly, make it clear that any cases of cheating that are discovered will be reported to the proper university authorities. No excuses; no exceptions. You may find it useful to hand out a copy of the university's Policy on Academic Integrity (see page 3) and explain that you have no recourse but to follow its directives in every case. Your syllabus may also carry a stern reminder about cheating.

Do not stop at merely warning your students. Throw obstacles in the way of their cheating. Do not use the same exams or paper assignments from semester to semester; many students see this as an invitation to cheat. With a multiple choice exam, create two or three different versions of the exam, or merely use different colors of xerox paper so that the students *think* there are different versions of the exam. Make sure that there are enough proctors in the

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TAs to File GAPSFAS

The Graduate School requests that all U.S. citizens and permanent residents who have been offered a teaching assistantship submit a GAPSFAS form to the Educational Testing Service (ETS) for 1990-91. A copy of the form will be included with all reappointment letters. ETS should be instructed to send the results to Rutgers. The Graduate School-New Brunswick will reimburse TAs for the fee upon presentation of a receipt.

Although filling out the form is a nuisance, all students are urged to do it because it is a means by which the university can identify additional funds for graduate student support. Your financial aid form may show you to be eligible for federal College Work Study funds; these would be used to pay a portion of your salary as a TA, and the university money saved could be used to provide additional support for other graduate students, either in tuition remission or to replace fellowships recently lost as a result of State budget cuts. This process will have no effect on the student's stipend or assignment.

For additional information about this process, contact Ms. Barbara Pleva, the Graduate School-New Brunswick.

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classroom during an exam. If you are alone in the room, do not stay at your desk; either stand in the back of the classroom or walk around the room while the test is in progress. Warn students in advance not to bring books or notebooks into the exam with them; any belongings they do carry in will be placed at the sides of the room during the test, so all valuables should be left at home.

If, after all of your warnings, safeguards, and appeals to integrity, one of your students is caught cheating, you have no recourse but to follow the university guidelines for handling cases of academic dishonesty. Failure to report a case of cheating does not only affect your class but can also cause problems for your colleagues at a later date. For example, if another faculty member accuses the student of cheating next semester, your complaint could help that faculty member or dean in deciding how to deal with the student, a second offense being much more serious than a first.

TapTalk is a monthly newsletter produced by TAP, the Teaching Assistant Project, The Graduate School-New Brunswick. Letters and suggestions for articles should be directed to the editor:

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Finally, remember that most students do want to do the right thing, but may, through ignorance or carelessness, violate the academic integrity code. One of your responsibilities as an educator is to impart to your students an understanding of the standards that guide the university and, consequently, their own actions as members of that community.

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Dealing with Academic Dishonesty: A Case History

A student who is doing poorly in a class, in both class assignments and tests, hands in an excellent research paper, clearly "A" work. You doubt that the student is capable of the level of sophisticated reasoning and analysis that went into the paper, but you have no clear-cut proof that the student has cheated. What do you do?

- a. Give the student the benefit of the doubt--the "A" for the paper--and say nothing.
- b. Give the student a grade of "F" and wait to see if the student comes to your office to speak to you about it. If the student did the paper, he or she will probably come in to your office to contest the grade; if not, the student will be too embarrassed to confront you.
- c. Give the student an "F" and report the incident to the dean of the college.
- d. Call the student into your office to discuss the paper.

If you follow path "a", you will be doing a disservice both to the student who handed in the paper and to all other students in your class. First, the student who handed in the paper will be

encouraged by this successful deception and will probably do it again. While this may get the student through the university, it is certainly not the preferred way to do so. Conversely, if the student didn't cheat, it is your responsibility as the teacher to find out why class and test performance are at such odds with research paper quality. As for the other students in the class, it is patently unfair that they labor over their papers and are graded on a par with someone who had a paper written by someone else. Although this path may seem the easiest for you, it is not the best.

If you choose path "b" or "c" you may find yourself in a lot of trouble before too long. Unless you are *absolutely* certain that the student has cheated, you *cannot* make any accusation. To give an "F" grade on what is clearly an "A" paper requires some explanation on your part. To report the student to the dean on just a hunch may also lead to problems.

Path "d" is the preferred way to proceed. You may wish to consult with a faculty member in your program before you call the student into your office. (It is, in fact, a good practice, whenever possible, to meet with *all* students individually to return papers and discuss the work they have done.) Be ready with specific questions to ask the student, questions that the author of the paper can be expected to know the answers to: What do you mean by your use of this word? How did you arrive at this conclusion? How did you proceed with this research? Question the student

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Policy on Academic Integrity

Violations of academic integrity are classified into four categories based on the level of seriousness of the behaviors. Brief descriptions are provided below. This is a general description and should not be considered as all-inclusive.

Level One

These violations may occur because of ignorance or inexperience on the part of the person(s) committing the violation and ordinarily involve a very minor portion of the course work.

Examples: Improper footnoting or unauthorized assistance on academic work.

Recommended Sanctions:

Make-up assignment at more difficult level, or assignment of no-credit for work in question, or required attendance at a workshop on ethics.

Level Two

Level two violations involve incidents of a more serious nature and affect a significant aspect or portion of the course.

Examples: Quoting directly or paraphrasing without proper acknowledgment on a moderate portion of the assignment, failure to acknowledge all sources of information and contributors who helped with an assignment, or submission of the same work for more than one course without permission from the instructor.

Recommended Sanctions:

Probation, and/or a failing grade on the assignment or a failing grade in the course.

Level Three

Level three offenses are even more serious in nature and involve dishonesty on a more significant portion of course work, such as a major paper, hourly, or final examination. Any violation that is premeditated or involves repeat offenses of level one or two is

considered a level three violation.

Examples: Copying from or giving assistance to others on an hourly or final examination, plagiarizing major portions of an assignment, using forbidden material on an hourly or final, using a purchased term paper, presenting the work of another as one's own, or altering a graded examination for the purposes of re-grading.

Recommended Sanctions:

Suspension from the university for one or more semesters with a notation of "academic disciplinary suspension" placed on a student's transcript for the period of suspension and a failing grade in the course.

Level Four

Level four violations are the most serious breaches of academic integrity. They include repeat offenses of level three violations.

Examples: Forgery of grade change forms, theft of examinations, having a substitute take an examination, dishonesty relating to senior thesis, master's thesis, or doctoral dissertation, sabotaging another's work, the violation of the ethical code of a profession, or all infractions committed after return from suspension for a previous violation.

Recommended Sanctions: Expulsion from the university and a permanent notation on the student's transcript.

HOW TO REPORT VIOLATIONS

Faculty who believe that violations have occurred should immediately contact the dean's office of the student's college/school. Students who suspect that other students are involved in actions of academic dishonesty should speak to the instructor of the course. Questions about reporting procedures may also be directed to the Associate Provost for Student Affairs (201/932-7687).

Notes From the Field

Do you take any steps to discourage your students from cheating on exams and assignments?

I don't give exams in my classes; I only assign papers. I tell my students to feel free to paraphrase or use any quotations they want, but they have to give me citations. I tailor assignments to my lecture and class discussions, so there is no way they can have someone else do their paper.

Loretta Sernekos
Political Science

For exams, I try to identify possible trouble students beforehand and make sure that I keep an eye on them. If I see someone looking around, I warn them, so it doesn't get to a point where it's a problem.

Gregory Buckley
Geology

During tests, I just watch them.

John Sisko
Philosophy

RELATIONSHIP ENHANCEMENT FOR GRADUATE COUPLES

A SMALL EXPERIENTIAL WORKSHOP FOCUSING ON COMMUNICATION, INTIMACY, AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION FOR GRADUATE COUPLES IN

ON-GOING RELATIONSHIPS
SATURDAY APRIL 7, 1990

9A.M. - 3:30 P.M.

SPONSORED BY RUTGERS COLLEGE
COUNSELING CENTER

LOCATION: TO BE ANNOUNCED

LIMITED SPACE: PLEASE CALL
932-7884 TO RESERVE A SPACE.

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closely about sources. If the student supplies satisfactory answers, you may wish to change the subject by contrasting this work to the students' previous unsatisfactory work, explaining your puzzlement at the disparity between the two. The student's answers will have to guide your actions. It is possible that the student put tremendous effort into the paper to overcome the bad grades.

Finally, always proceed with caution. Evaluate each case carefully, and consult with faculty members who may recognize the source for the student's work or suggest ways of handling the student.

Summer Session Tuition Remission

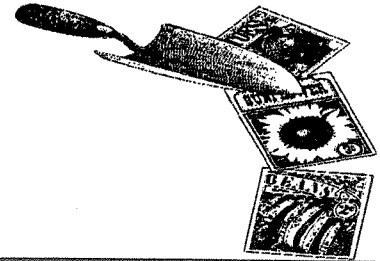
All TAs who had full-time TA appointments during the 1989-1990 academic year are entitled to six credits of free tuition over the summer. Students appointed either for the fall 1989 or the spring 1990 semester only or who had a 1/2 TA for the full academic year are entitled to three free credits. Some GAs may also be eligible for tuition remission.

If you have any questions, please call Carol Hartman or Barbara Pleva at the Office of the Dean, the Graduate School-New Brunswick.

DATES TO REMEMBER



17	St. Patrick's Day
18	Spring Recess Begins
20	Spring Begins
21	Higan-e New-Ruz
25	Spring Recess Ends
27	Ramadan



Teaching Assistant Project

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