

THE ROLE AND IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY IN COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY HONOR
SYSTEMS

by

SHIRLEY DAWN LESPERANCE

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Approved by:
Major Professor
Dr. Christy Craft

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SHIRLEY DAWN LESPERANCE

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Abstract

An honor system is a governing body within an education system 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” (McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 2001). Institutions from high schools to major universities are establishing such systems as a way to preserve the integrity of their diplomas and degrees. Research has shown that “up to 70% of college students cheat at some point prior to graduation” (Whitley, 1998). What is more alarming is the number of these students are using technology in an attempt to get ahead.

In this report, I intend to show how technology affects different aspects of honor systems. First I will briefly discuss the history of honor systems and how the changes in technology have affected them. I will define common terms and ideas associated with today’s honor systems, and then discuss how sanctioning has evolved. Next, I will explore the role changing technology plays in honor pledge/code violations. Specifically, I will address how honor systems are addressing the growing problem of technology being used in cases of academic dishonesty, unfortunate uses of new technology in the classroom, and how on-line learning is impacting the work of honor systems. Lastly, through conversations with people working in honor system offices nationwide, I will highlight the roles and impact that technology is playing on their campuses.

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Dedication

This report is dedicated to my family, friends, and co-workers whose support got me through the last two years.

First to my husband Mark, who gives me the courage to always reach beyond myself because I know he will be there to catch me if I fall. A big part goes to my children, Austin and Amber, who shared me with K-State for the past ten years as I pursued my dreams. Then, to my parents, whose patience and love knows no bounds and who told me from the beginning that no one could stop me from doing my best. Despite myself, they always saw the best in me.

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CHAPTER ONE: Honor System Basics

From the beginning of higher education in America, presidents, other administrators, and faculty have concerned themselves with what makes their universities superior to the others. The focus on being the biggest made a turn for being the best. Discipline, honor, and integrity became the tools of those universities who looked to base the foundations of their schools on solid ground. From those beliefs, the first honor systems were created.

Once schools began to adopt the idea of bringing integrity in to the classroom, a need for common terms and procedures emerged. Early universities modeled one another, so the language became more universal. Today, we see those same terms being used. As a direct result of violations, the sanctioning for students found in violation of their schools' honor systems became more congruent too. While some schools stayed true to their "no tolerance" policies, other institutions used these cases of academic dishonesty as a way to educate students about the importance of academic integrity in the classroom. By adapting different versions of the traditional honor system, schools were able to ingrain academic integrity in to their campuses.

A Brief History

As a university administrator, Thomas Jefferson had the foresight to see that there needed to be a more standardized system of accountability for students at his university, and likewise, protection for the faculty that discovered and reported these acts of academic dishonesty. The first official honor system in the U.S. was chartered in 1736 at The College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia (William & Mary, Undergraduate Honor System, 2005). The system was primarily student run, with some

guidance from faculty and administrators. This peer committee is still in place at The College of William & Mary and has become the standard by which other honor systems are created. The honor code at The College of William & Mary is taught to all students upon their entrance to the university. Their code, a shared effort of both student leaders and faculty of Jefferson's time, has changed very little since its creation and is still used today:

As a member of the William and Mary community, I pledge on my honor not to lie, cheat, or steal, either in my academic or personal life. I understand that such acts violate the Honor Code and undermine the community of trust, of which we are all stewards. (William & Mary, Undergraduate Honor System, 2010)

During the early days of honor systems, the implicit method of receiving a college education was physically attending a brick and mortar institution, by which, students learned directly from the professors in a classroom setting. However, in 1858 that changed when the University of London (UL) began offering classes via mail. Referred to as "external students," citizens from around the United Kingdom could take courses from the university. Because of the method of delivery, the university saw a boom in their enrollment, and subsequently, in 1878 "became the first university in the UK to admit women to its degrees" (University of London, 2009). Furthermore by 1908, with a combined enrollment of internal and external students, UL boasted "4000 registered students exceeding the universities of both Oxford and Cambridge, becoming the largest university in the UK and the fifth largest in the world" (University of London, 2009).

In the United States, the first higher education institution to take the leap into distance education was the University of Chicago. William Raney Harper saw the value

in making education available to anyone who wanted to learn, not just to those who could come to campus. By making use of the U.S. Postal Service, they were able to reach students in the U.S and internationally. Now in the Graham School of Business, distance students are required to follow the same honor pledge as their campus counterparts: “I pledge my honor that I have not violated the Honor Code during this examination or assignment” (Chicago Booth Honor Code, 2009).

Types of Honor Systems

There are two basic types of honor systems prevalent in the United States today: the traditional honor code school and the modified honor code school, or honor pledge school. According to Dr. Don McCabe, as cited in the doctoral thesis of Helene Marcoux, a traditional honor code school must have four components (McCabe as cited in Marcoux, 2002):

- (a) Pledge. A signed statement required from each student that he/she will act or has acted honorably in the preparation of work to be accepted for academic credit.
- (b) Unproctored examinations. A uniform requirement that academic honesty in an exam be enforced only by the voluntary cooperation of each student being examined. (This specific components calls for students to complete examinations without being under direct supervision of the instructor of the course.)
- (c) Reportage. An obligation placed upon each student not to tolerate any infraction of honor by another student.
- (d) Court. A peer judiciary whose primary concern is the infraction of honor by students.

Such schools as the Air Force Academy in Colorado and University of Virginia are considered traditional honor code schools because they have all of the above components active in their systems. Another true code school, The Citadel, prides itself on a tradition of long standing honor among its cadets. Their school requires all of the students to read and know *The Honor Manual* (The Citadel, 2009-2010). This twenty-four page document outlines what is expected of each cadet who serves on the Honor Committee, the violations that are considered breaches of the honor code, and specifically lists what will happen to students who participate in academic dishonesty. All four of the components listed by McCabe are present within The Citadel's honor code. To further stress the importance of how the school views their code, the first page of the manual is a spirited letter from Honor Committee Chairman, Cadet Lieutenant Colonel Donald Dyer. He states:

...the Code serves as a minimal standard of how we as cadets are expected to act and reflect the values of The Citadel. Since its existence, this cherished principle has helped mold many great leaders. At a time in history when we need great leaders, our Code will push us forward among our peers and make us better people. (The Citadel, 2009-2010)

Kansas State University (K-State) is just one of the many universities that has an honor system that is considered a modified honor system, as it only integrates some of the four main components. Specifically, K-State utilizes an honor pledge and a peer majority represented on the judiciary side as the backbone of their system. The honor pledge at K-State reads, "On my honor, as a student, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this academic work" (Kansas State University Honor System, 2009). Other

schools, such as Texas A&M utilize three of the four components: an honor pledge, student majority on panels, and mandatory reporting. As part of their mission to change the culture of cheating on their campus, new students to Texas A&M swear upon admission, “An Aggie does not lie, cheat, steal, or tolerate anyone that does” (Texas A&M Honor System, 2010).

Both types of honor systems share the same basic language. Some schools choose to go a more legal route with their terms, while others try to steer clear of legal jargon. Some terminology often used in honor systems includes the following:

- Alleged Violator / Defendant – Individual charged with academic dishonesty for breach of the school’s honor pledge.
- Reporter / Plaintiff – Individual(s) who witnessed or have reasonable proof that a violation has occurred resulting in a report being filed.
- Case Investigator / Counselor – Individual(s) who review information (evidence) to substantiate the charge against the alleged violation. Conducting interviews, visiting the location of the alleged violation, and making a report on their findings is considered good practice.
- Hearing Panel / Jury – A panel consisting of a student majority that hears the information of a case and makes a ruling based on their school’s policies.
- Hearing / Trial – The main adjudication component of an honor system by which all parties can present their information to a hearing panel.
- Violation / Charge – The actual occurrence that results in a report of academic dishonesty.

- Information / Evidence – Physical documents and eyewitness accounts of what took place leading to the report of an alleged violation.
- Sanction / Sentence – The “punishment” for being found in violation of an honor pledge violation.

One of the main ways the different honor systems interact and learn from one another’s experiences is by becoming members of the Center for Academic Integrity (CAI). Chartered officially in October, 1992 in Maryland, this organization has grown to include over 360 institutions of higher learning from around the world. The CAI is looking to the future of higher education and the role that honor systems will play in that future. The CAI mission statement explains, “The primary focus of the Center is to provide resources and catalyze commitment to academic integrity in educational institutions, with emphasis on higher and secondary education” (Center for Academic Integrity, 2007). The CAI has members that represent all types of honor systems including military schools, state and private school, international universities, and an increasing number of high schools from across the country all looking to make an impact on their educational communities.

Honor System Responsibilities

Ultimately, each honor system is responsible for helping to set the standard as to how their university will address instances of academic dishonesty. In addition, many honor systems are also responsible for assigning sanctions to violators of the honor system. Given the different types of systems, and the range of sanctions at some institutions, honor systems are faced with trying to change the culture on their campuses to modify the thinking of their students. Also, schools have begun looking at sanctioning

as less of a way to punish their students, but more as a way to help them develop morally. As a direct result of changes in sanctioning, there has been an equally interesting trend in how, and by whom, reports are being made.

Some campuses have found ways to ensure their degrees are worth the paper upon which they are printed. The University of Georgia (UGA) has adopted a “Culture of Honesty” on its campus where students are held accountable for all acts of academic dishonesty by other students, as well as by the university. Professors are very clear in what they expect from their students. Professor Loch Johnson stated, "I tell students on the first day that their most cherished possession is their honor. They can lose it by cheating. Once that happens, it's hard to get it back. It's not just cheating on the mid-term. It's about how to live one's life with honor” (Curry & Rainey, 2000). Additionally, student members of UGA’s honor system are called “Solicitors”; they work with students in the system. "It's imperative that you have students involved in a process like this," said [Suzanne] Scoggins. "It's better for the accused. They trust us more. One of our strongest tools is age and the fact that we're peers. We're not trying to win or lose a case. We're trying to find out what happened" (Curry & Rainey, 2000). This trust helps to make sanctioning a key part of the experience.

The sanctions at many honor code schools have evolved over the years as well. More systems have begun looking at what effects the sanctions themselves are having on students. As a result, sanctions have become less severe since the early William and Mary days where a student was immediately expelled with only the word of the instructor. While expulsion was the rule in 1890, many schools have taken student development into consideration when it comes to cases of academic dishonesty. Many instructors and/or

honor panels now assign sanctions that include receiving a zero on the assignment, retaking a test/quiz, or getting a letter grade reduction in the class. More severe sanctions, like the XF at K-State, require the student to retake the class to replace the F and to complete the Development and Integrity Class to remove the X. In the Development and Integrity class, students learn about the culture of cheating and how it impacts not only themselves but also their classmates and their future employers. Many students leave this class with a better understanding of why they chose to cheat as well as insight into the impact upon their future should they be caught cheating again.

One of the most interesting aspects of many honor systems has been the impact of how reporting is being handled within the system office. Students of today are tasked with making their degrees count in society, and as such, are taking ownership of integrity in the classroom. At K-State, while most reports are made by instructors and Graduate Teaching Assistants, student reports accounted for roughly 8% of all cases reported in the 2007-2008 academic year (Allen, 2008). These reports often lead to case investigations, and ultimately, to sanctioning assigned by the honor panel.

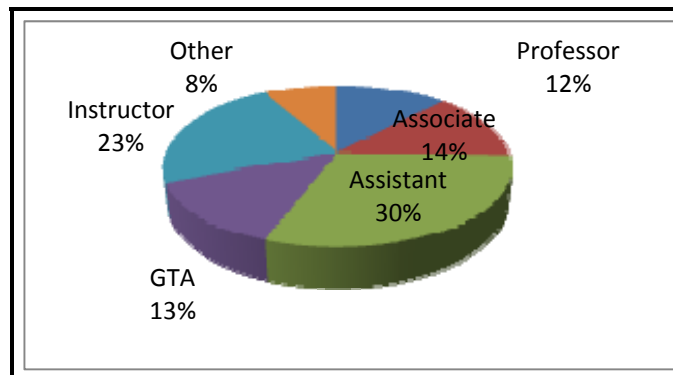


Figure 1: Reporter Statistics
Source: 2007-2008 Kansas State University Honor & Integrity System Annual Report

The old way of thinking about cheating is beginning to change. This is due in great part to how universities are positioning their honor systems. By showing the students that integrity matters to the school, the culture is able to change. This is done mainly through more educational sanctioning by honor panels and by increasing reporting options for students and faculty who witness acts of academic dishonesty. By teaching students that they are in charge of their own educations, they can make the change where it matters most.

CHAPTER TWO: Technology and Academic Integrity

Given the new technology available to students, it is becoming increasingly easier for students to engage in academic dishonesty in higher education. The millions of internet pages, ease of cut-and-paste, lack of proper instruction, and misguided creativity are just a few of the ways students can easily take work that is not theirs and use it as their own. Because of the amount of information that is readily available to students through a variety of forms of technology, many instructors have had trouble discovering these acts. By using technology to look for honor code violations and by being aware of how, and what, students are using to cheat, universities are finding ways to combat these issues. Also, with the increased use of distance education, schools are finding ways to hold their distance students equally as accountable as their on-campus counterparts.

Challenges Related to Technology

Growth in technology over the past 100 years has been amazing, and changes have often happened over a very short period of time. For example, computers that used to fill entire warehouses can now be carried around in a purse and can make it possible to be connected to the Internet from anywhere. What used to be considered a cutting edge way of recording music on vinyl that held 15 songs is now a small digital recording device that holds thousands of songs, data, and video - all in the palm of your hand. And the fastest changing technology today has us reaching out and touching people all across the globe from anywhere we want to go. It was not long ago that a phone was restricted to houses and businesses or to a telephone booth. These new advances may be spectacular, but in academia, people are seeing technology used to help students attempt to get ahead in all the wrong ways.

Today, computers are everywhere: in our homes, our businesses, and in the classrooms. The most common form of cheating involving technology is seen in cases involving the personal computer. While computers do make the world a much smaller place, it also opens the door for dishonest or uneducated students to plagiarize from any number of sources. Between September 2006 and July 2009, of the over 300 honor pledge violations reported at one institution, plagiarism, mainly from Internet sources, accounted for over 50% of all honor pledge violations at K-State (Allen, 2008). This rate is unfortunately the norm as colleges find ways to combat the negative use of the search engines of the world.

The second most common form of honor system violation regarding computers is that of giving unauthorized aid, or unauthorized assistance. This refers to “giving or receiving assistance in connection with any examination or other academic work that has not been authorized by an instructor” (University of Georgia, 2008). This commonly occurs when students are unclear about what is expected of them when it comes to assignments, leading them to turn to their friends and classmates via email and instant messaging for help. Instructors can potentially avoid this in their courses by giving clear expectations on every assignment, and students can avoid the situation by asking questions when the expectations are not clear to them.

The other side to computers and to the Internet is the idea of instant information at the students’ disposal. Problems that can occur include, but are certainly not limited to, social networking sites being used for academic purposes and “paper mills” where students can purchase “original works” for a price. There was one example at K-State where several students had created a fan page on Facebook and were sharing answers

throughout the class in order to get an advantage over their classmates. While the honor system does not speak directly to issues like this, nor did the professor who was teaching the course, it led to many problems for the students who created and joined the group. On the other end of the technology spectrum are sites like bestessays.com, puretermpapers.com, and superiorpapers.com where students can go to purchase papers. For as low as \$20, students are promised original papers complete with bibliographies. However, more often than not, students find the papers are not original and are often found in violations of their school's honor code.

The newest form of technology used for academic dishonesty involves the MP3 player. There are very few students who do not own one kind or another. Since many of the newest MP3 players can hold data and even photographs, the ease and temptation of inappropriately using them is increasing. There have already been cases of students recording test answers and formulas on their MP3 players and then using them during exams. In schools like Mountain View High School in Meridian, Idaho, school officials were compelled to institute a rule of no MP3 players during exams at all. According to school principal Aaron Maybon, "A teacher overheard a couple of kids talking about it" (Boone, 2007). This certainly eliminates the problem in most cases, unless students can cleverly hide the ear-buds in their hair or caps. Apple recently released the newest version of the iPod that takes pictures. One can imagine that this technology will soon be showing up in honor system offices.

Last, but certainly not least, is the cellular phone. When the first cellular phone was released to the public by Motorola in 1973, the goal was to make a way for people to be able to connect with one another without being locked down to one location (Marples,

2008). Unfortunately each phone cost roughly \$3,500, so this new technology reached only a small population of consumers. Nearly forty years later, the mobile phone has become much more affordable, and we now rely on our phones for virtually everything. This generally includes calls, contacts, email, games, and even Internet browsing and music. While the newest cell phones certainly have their good points, instances of academic dishonesty have, unfortunately, resulted from their use.

One of the most common forms of misuse using a cell phone in cases of academic dishonesty involves the texting feature. In 2003, long before texting became the phenomenon it is today, six University of Maryland students admitted to cheating on an exam by texting answers to one another (Associated Press, 2003). Today, nearly every student owns a cell phone, and many students have the ability to text with their phones without really even looking at them. This can make it very easy to send answers across a room of students without much effort. Recently at K-State, a professor in the College of Business reported that some students were allegedly using their phones to take pictures of exams then posting those pictures for other students in the class. Situations like this can become huge problems for universities when those pictures could be made public, like in the case of student organization “test files.” As many professors tend to reuse exams from semester to semester, it would be very easy for these pictures to leak to other students, creating the potential for an honor pledge violation of monumental proportions.

Detection and Prevention

Faculty and administrators are beginning to use technology to combat honor pledge violations. The easiest way instructors can detect plagiarism is through the language of a paper. "It's like hearing two different voices when you are reading a

student's writing. . . . The word choice and sentence structure may be different, and it's easy to notice a shift" (Hall, 2002). Many faculty also go to sites such as Google, Yahoo, or Ask.com and type in suspicious strings of text. Often, those strings will bring up web sites or articles that were not properly cited.

Another tool used to combat academic dishonesty comes in the form of software meant to detect cheating. At K-State, instructors have been using software programs such as this as far back as 2000. "Daniel Andresen, assistant professor in the department of computer and information sciences, said he uses Measure of Software Similarity or 'Moss' software to compare computer programs written by students to other students' work" (Hall, 2002). MOSS is used primarily for computer based classes that involve coding. Recently, more programs have become available for literary and research papers submitted by students. Sources such as TurnItIn.com claim, as of August 1, 2008, to be "used by over 450,000 faculty is licensed to over 6,500 high schools and colleges in 106 countries, and processes over 130,000 papers per day" (iParadigms, 2008 A). Systems like this work because of the sheer amount of information to which they have access. TurnItIn.com, for example, "looks for matches in over 9.5 billion pages of indexed web content, over 60 million papers in the student paper archive, and over 10,000 professional, academic and commercial journals and publications" (iParadigms, 2008 B). Programs like this are designed not only to catch instances of academic dishonesty but also to protect the authors of the original works.

In an interesting twist in protecting original works, TurnItIn.com was sued by four high school students whose schools use this service. The students claimed that they did not want their papers submitted to this service and feel that their rights had been violated

under copyright laws. “According to the lawsuit, each of the students obtained a copyright registration for papers they submitted to TurnItIn” (Glod, 2007). The lawsuit was dismissed in March 2008 by the courts which concluded that “iParadigms' use of archived student works to assess originality of newly-submitted papers constitutes a fair use under US copyright law and is therefore not copyright infringement” (iParadigms, 2008 C). The judge made further comments in favor of the company saying, “TurnItIn helps protect the papers from being exploited by others who might profitably claim them as their own work” (iParadigms, 2008 C). Unfortunately, even with tools to help detect, and ultimately to deter, academic dishonesty, it still occurs.

In general, the positive contributions of technology in academia far outweigh the negative misuses. If honor systems can relay to the students the importance of academic integrity, and start to make real change to the culture of cheating on their campuses, the need to police emerging technology would decrease. Such is the case with Duke University in North Carolina. In 2004, the university conducted an experiment by which each student was given an Apple iPod. According to Tim Dodd, the past Director for the Center for Academic Integrity, incidents of cheating actually declined over the course of ten years at Duke, despite the new technology available, because the community expects its students to have integrity in the classroom. He went on to say, “Teachers are thinking about how technology has corrupted, (but) they're also thinking about ways it can be used productively” (Boone, 2007).

Distance Education

The demand for distance education is increasing as our society becomes more mobile. Many major universities are beginning to find ways to offer comparable courses

to their students who cannot physically make it to campus. While distance education is beginning to find ways to accommodate these students, many schools are struggling to find ways to make their distance students accountable for academic integrity.

As an orientation to their campuses, institutions are beginning to require their distance students to take an online orientation class to help them transition into the school and to learn about how the classes will be taught. St. Leo University in Central Florida started their program in 1998 and has taken their orientation a step further by requiring distance students to also know the school's honor code. Ten years beyond the formation of their initial program, their distance population is now double that of on-campus students. This is important, because students who are taking distance courses from St. Leo know their degrees are earned because they are all held to the same standard as those who attend face-to-face. By being considered an equal to their campus counterparts, students take more ownership in academic integrity and are far less likely to cheat. Additionally, the excuse of not knowing is taken out of the equation, leading to fewer contested violations. While the school cannot say with certainty that having this honor code helps their student retention rate, the director Michael Rogich did note that "part of what I think a school has to do is motivate the student to see the value in the education" (Putre, 2008). By giving students a clear example of what they expect, the school is seeing an increase in student retention numbers and a decrease in honor pledge violations by their distance students.

Another way that distance education differs from its campus counterpart is in proctoring of exams. At K-State's Division of Continuing Education, students have the option of coming into the building on campus to take their exams or of finding a proctor

in their geographical location who can physically monitor them while they take exams. According to Dr. Camilla Roberts, “Some distance students have used technology to create new email addresses for ‘proctors’ of their exams. With these new addresses, the student could intercept the email, and in essence not have a proctor for the exam.” This may soon change, however. Schools like Troy University have begun using a program called “Securexam Remote Proctor.” This piece of hardware “connects to a computer’s USB port and records the exam as a student completes it” (Patterson Lorenzetti, 2009 B, p. 4). This would allow students to register their identities through the use of a fingerprint scanner at various points during an exam. In theory, this lessens the chances that students are having someone else take their exams for them even when not under the watchful eye of a proctor. It makes the students’ education exclusively distance based while also enforcing the honor code.

Ultimately, the best ways to address instances of dishonesty can be broken down into three categories. These were best explained by McNabb and Olmstead in their recent study from the University of Texas (as cited in Patterson Lorenzetti, 2009 B, p. 7):

- Policing: This requires campuses to seek out and to adjudicate students who violate the honor code.
- Prevention: This step includes creating barriers for dishonesty and facilitating the education of students. Barriers include timed exams, limited logins per exam, and an active proctor. Education is simply instructing the students about what is expected of them concerning their school’s policies on academic integrity.
- Virtue: This is the hardest of the three categories to instill in students. It requires the students to want to perform their school duties with integrity. This can be

established by using message boards to build community, giving clear guidelines and expectations for the class and for each assignment, or by creating activities that are “distinctive, individual, and non-duplicative” (McNabb & Olmstead, 2009, p. 3) such as journals and reflection papers.

As distance education gains popularity, the need for academic weights and measures will increase. By holding distance students accountable to the same levels of academic integrity as campus students, universities can assure the value of the online degrees will remain high.

With the ever-increasing advances in technology, universities will need to remain vigilant in their efforts to curb academic dishonesty. Robert Kitahara, an assistant professor at Troy University stated “The McDonald’s generation expects everything now and they don’t want to work for it” (Patterson Lorenzetti, 2009 B, p. 4). Technology offers students the means to get the information they want at a click of a button. By instilling the knowledge of how to use this information effectively and correctly, and by setting clear rules for what is allowed in the classroom, technology can be used positively in higher education.

CHAPTER THREE: Honor Systems from Coast to Coast

Students today feel they need to use any means necessary to remain competitive in the classroom. In an article written for ABC's *Primetime*, a student was quoted as saying "There's other people getting better grades than me and they're cheating. Why am I not going to cheat? It's kind of almost stupid if you don't" (Gibson, 2004). This kind of attitude is being driven by a student's need to acquire the perfect job after college. Another student claimed "Everything is about the grade that you got in the class. Nobody looks at how you got it" (Gibson, 2004).

I had the opportunity to talk with honor system administrators from coast to coast and found that while their schools are vastly different in size and make-up, the violations they have seen with regard to technology are quite similar. I chose these specific three schools: University of San Diego, Kansas State University, and Georgetown University, because that they represented a range of honor systems with varying histories and procedures. Each school is a form of an honor pledge school, meaning they only maintain some of the four main characteristics of a traditional honor code school. While these three schools are actively seeking to uphold integrity on their campuses, they each approach it differently.

I had originally hoped to speak with the College of William & Mary concerning their honor system. As the first honor system on record, I had hoped to get some insight on how the history of their system reflected on violations they see in relation to technology today. Unfortunately, they were unresponsive to my requests due to the scheduling conflicts of their Director.

University of San Diego

The University of San Diego (USD), located in California, is a Roman Catholic institution that is home to over 7,000 students. USD, which was chartered in 1949, offers over 60 bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees across seven colleges (University of San Diego, 2009). The Honor Council at USD is overseen by the Associated Students team. The USD Honor Council is loosely based off of the modified honor system and the traditional adjudication board. All aspects of the reporting and investigation are done by the instructor (reporter) of the case. The information is then presented to an Honor Panel that is made up of six members; all are Deans or faculty with the exception of two student representatives. I had the opportunity to speak with Dr. James Gump, Associate Dean of History and Director of the University of San Diego Honor Council. According to Dr. Gump, approximately 20 alleged violations happen each semester with the majority of cases coming from the departments of English and Theology. According to the university website, "The University of San Diego Honor Council was created in response to an *ad hoc* Academic Integrity Committee report in July of 2001" (University of San Diego, 2006).

In speaking about how technology has affected the violations that have been reported, Dr. Gump stated, "The two most common violations I've seen recently at USD are plagiarizing Internet sources through sloppy cutting and pasting and texting quiz answers to classmates in another section of the same course." Dr. Gump noted that because of the residential nature of their university, they do not have very much experience with distance courses in relation to honor pledge violations.

In speaking on how their university handles education of their students, Dr. Gump explained that “faculty provide students with information about the University’s Academic Integrity Policy on their course syllabi.” As part of those syllabi, students are encouraged to visit the university website, to read about what academic integrity means to the school, and to focus on how they are expected to conduct themselves as students. They are also given a link to *How to Guard against Plagiarism*, an online manual that was compiled by the Honor Council to teach students what is expected of them and how to avoid academic dishonesty.

Lastly, I asked Dr. Gump about how technology was making a positive impact in regards to the hearing panel and their office. He indicated that the university did not subscribe to a specific program to detect plagiarism but that “in recent years some faculty have made use of TurnItIn.com to detect plagiarism, and I think it has served as a reasonably effective deterrent to cheating.” The Honor Council office makes use of technology to be “greener” in their practices. He stated that they “use e-mail to contact violators and organize hearings, and communicate results using the regular campus mail system.”

Dr. Gump indicated that he felt the system at USD is effective. He feels the policies and procedures to help students avoid pledge violations were making an impact on their campus. Systems like USD’s, where the emphasis is placed mostly upon adjudication, are put in place as a check and balance system for what was being taught to students as they first enter the school. By setting clear expectations and by making that information abundantly accessible to the student body, this system is making a difference in the integrity of the degrees coming from USD.

Kansas State University

Kansas State University (K-State) is, as stated earlier, an example of a modified honor system. This land grant institution, originally chartered in 1858 as Bluemont Central College, is home to “more than 23,000 students from all 50 states and more than 90 countries” (Kansas State University, 2009). K-State also offers over 250 majors and graduate degrees (Kansas State University, 2009). The Honor and Integrity System educates and adjudicates all levels of students, both on-campus and distance, from the Manhattan and Salina campuses, with the exception of students in Veterinary Medicine. The K-State honor council is overseen by the University Provost and is made up of 54 students and faculty from all represented colleges and some “at-large” members assigned from around the campus. Reports can be made by any member of the campus community who witnesses an alleged violation, including students, graduate teaching assistants, and/or instructors. Then the alleged violation is submitted to the Honor and Integrity System for investigation and peer-majority adjudication.

In 1994, K-State had an exceptionally large case of cheating in a Biology class that gained national attention. Initially, 115 students were investigated and 75 of those students were sanctioned with F’s in the class. There was no real honor system in place during this time, so campus police were brought in to address the problem. Campus administrators feared that someone was tampering with the instructor’s exams or hacking into his computer to retrieve the answers. “Administrators asked police to investigate because criminal charges are possible. The minimum punishment for a student found guilty of cheating is a failing grade for the class” (Carroll, 1994). This case led to a

student-run initiative seeking a better system; this was the beginning of the K-State Honor and Integrity System in 1994.

The Honor and Integrity System Director, Dr. David Allen, handles the adjudication side of the program. In speaking with him, I found that most technology-based violations include “cutting and pasting” information taken from the Internet, or coding that has been copied from another source (most often seen in computer-based courses). Dr. Allen expressed a true concern over the ability of faculty to keep up with the ever-changing technology. He stated “I believe students can and do use technology to cheat in class, but faculty are unaware of the capabilities of students to use this technology to share information.”

When asked about what positive aspects of technology he has seen in regards to academic integrity, Dr. Allen stated, “As it becomes more prevalent to cut and paste or purchase papers on the Internet it also becomes easier to detect this form of cheating. With the search engine technology and programs like TurnItIn.com, it becomes increasingly easier to identify plagiarism.” He also indicated that the K-State H & I System has taken steps to make technology work for their office and council members by “utilizing our K-State Online system to coordinate the case investigations and the distribution of information to hearing panelists.” He indicated that some technology, such as projectors and laptops, are used during hearings to access pertinent student information.

I also spoke with Associate Director Dr. Camilla Roberts. Dr. Roberts handles the educational component of the K-State Honor & Integrity System, which includes teaching both the campus and distance versions of the Development and Integrity Course

for violators of the K-State honor pledge. She indicated that “technology, especially the access to the Internet at all times, has given students an ‘easy way out’ when they become stressed or pushed for time.” She also indicated that students get themselves into trouble by using technology to innocently share their papers in order to help fellow classmates. “In the situations where students email their papers to their friends, the technology allows the students to feel as if they are being helpful to their fellow students. Typically the student who has emailed the information to the friend does not have knowledge that the receiving student might copy the material or claim it as his own.” Educating students on what is considered plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration at the university level could lessen the number of reports due to misguided intentions and uneducated decisions on the part of the student.

K-State stresses the importance of having both the educational and adjudication components of their system. Based on theories of moral development, people within the honor system believe that each student is at a different stage in his or her developmental continuum. By facing the crisis of an honor pledge violation, students are better able to move past their pre-conventional, self-based thinking and into the stages of conventional and post-conventional thinking where they make decisions based on how it will affect all involved. This educational stance allows K-State to use sanctioning to make up some lag in what is not clearly spelled out for each new student upon admission to the university. A formal program highlighting the expectations and procedures of the schools honor system could lessen the number of violations that occur due to lack of proper instruction.

Georgetown University

In the heart of Washington D.C. is Georgetown University. What started as a small college of twelve students in 1789 now boasts a diverse student population of over 15,000 across its four undergraduate colleges and multiple graduate programs (Georgetown University, 2010 A). Similar to K-State, the Honor Council at Georgetown is overseen by the university Provost and oversees all educational classifications of students. The honor council is made up of 79 people who comprise several committees and assemblies that oversee all aspects of education and adjudication in relation to the honor system office. An honor panel, which adjudicates matters of academic dishonesty, consists of “five members of the Honor Council, including at least one member of a dean’s office, at least one student, and at least one ordinary faculty member” (Georgetown University Honor System, 2010). Also, the council includes two members of the council from outside of the alleged violator’s college. Any member of the campus community can make a report of academic dishonesty, and the adjudication procedures are handled by the aforementioned council.

The honor system at Georgetown was created in the Fall 1996 out of a need for fairness in sanctioning across the campus. According to Sonia Jacobson, Director of the Georgetown Honor System, “among the four undergraduate schools (College of Arts and Sciences, School of Foreign Service, McDonough School of Business, and School of Nursing and Health Studies) there was a perception of uneven treatment of cases of academic dishonesty.” The problem resulted in situations in which one college would simply make a student redo an assignment for an allegation of academic dishonesty,

while another college would find it grounds for suspension. While their system has undergone some changes over the years, the system remains true to its original purpose.

Some of the uses of technology in cases of academic dishonesty were very similar to those of USD and K-State. There were several instances of students cutting and pasting in papers or students using “clickers” to record attendance for classmates who were not there. In a more bold use of technology, students have received honor pledge violations for changing dates on computers to “trick” the timestamp feature and even a case where a student created an email identity to falsely accuse another student of cheating. In this case, “the fake student allegedly created a fictitious experiment for students to cheat to get a faculty reaction.”

I asked Ms. Jacobson about the role of technology in honor pledge violations at Georgetown. She indicated that “technology is a tremendous resource, but not used very well by most students and certainly not by undergraduates.” She went on to say that technology gives students the tools to procrastinate, noting “students leave things until the last minute, believe sufficient sources are readily available, don't do good research (e.g., knowing what's a reliable source, keeping track of sources, etc), and, worst of all, often don't use sources other than those accessible through technology.”

Georgetown University has been a subscriber of TurnItIn.com for many years. Jacobson stated “software services such as TurnItIn.com can be a deterrent to plagiarism and a means to discovering plagiarism,” however, she followed that by saying “students know about it, and should know if their instructors intend to use it, but nonetheless students often are caught.” She said, however, that the school does not necessarily utilize the service to its full potential. She feels it would be better employed to “discover more

than what may be the tip of iceberg (in regards to academic dishonesty), be used equitably regarding student work, and be used as an educational tool to show students how poorly they sometimes provide citations.” Ms. Jacobson indicated that only about 25% of instructors at their university had registered their classes with TurnItIn.com. She went on to say that these instructors “like the confidence it gives them in reading papers without worrying whether to worry about correct citations, or whether papers are getting recycled.”

In hopes of staying ahead of the curve in this area, Georgetown University requires all incoming students to complete the online “Scholarly Research and Academic Integrity” tutorial (Georgetown University, 2010 B). This tutorial, which is available to the public, is a two-hour tour that students must take within their first six weeks of their first fall semester. As many students find, taking it is not optional; “Only 0.8% (approx 15 of 1800 entering students) fail to complete it, and they cannot pre-register for spring semester with everyone else.” The tutorial addresses issues that may arise because of a student’s lack of understanding of the system and the school’s expectations of them. Jacobson notes that many schools, with Georgetown’s permission, have modeled their own tutorials after Georgetown’s still evolving seminar. In closing, Ms. Jacobson stated:

I wish students were as cautious of the pitfalls as the Honor Council has learned they should be regarding the use of technology. In many ways we are not in sync; many students are ahead of us regarding new and innovative ways to do their coursework (sometimes to cut corners), but the Honor Council is catching up. Somewhere we need to make the technology work for both of us in more pedagogically positive ways.

The honor system at Georgetown has gone through several revisions since its inception, but the message remains the same. The university expects their students to have integrity in every aspect of their coursework and makes those expectations clear to each student from the moment they are admitted. By educating their students through use of the tutorial, violations could be considered more serious resulting in harsher sanctions than those given by other schools. By making the culture of the campus one which values academic integrity, cheating will become less tolerated and potentially occur less often because students and administrators will hold the same values in regards to their education.

Summary of Conversations

By looking at these three schools, it becomes clear that these institutions are experiencing similar technology-related violations from their students. Common themes between schools include the types of devices used in violations (e.g. iPods, “clickers,” cell phones, etc.) as well as the types of violations in relation to these pieces of technology. In addition, plagiarism involving “cut and paste” by which a student copies a direct portion of a source and uses it as her or his own work is reported as the most common violation at these three schools. Unfortunately, each of these schools has some kind of educational component, and violations continue to happen. Each interviewee agreed that the culture of cheating in today’s society is to blame. The obsession of today’s students to be competitive is common place, leading them to look for a way to complete their coursework quickly and with little effort on their part, and still do better than their peers.

What is most apparent from speaking with these three professionals is that professors and administrators are not going to give up on their students. Through education and mentoring programs, students are also starting to take ownership for their education. More honor systems, such as the one at K-State and Georgetown, are being formed because of the students. These groups have seen what the alternative is, that instructors and colleges can assign ranging sanctions for identical violations. The students want change. It is this attitude that gives directors and administrators hope that the tides have turned in reference to cases of academic dishonesty on their campuses. Michael Josephson, founder of the Josephson Institute for Ethics based in the Los Angeles, said “We are in a crisis but I don't think it has to stay that way” (Josephson as cited in Gibson, 2004). If students continue to try and change the cultures at their institutions, much like the students have at these schools, all of higher education will reap the rewards.

It is clear that education about the school's expectations and policies early in a student's educational career is vital to her or his success in the classroom. Not only does teaching the student the honor system expectations keep her or him from being involved in academic dishonesty cases, but it teaches the student important skills that will carry over to the future work place.

CHAPTER FOUR: Implications and Conclusion

In a perfect educational setting there would be no instances of academic dishonesty. However, given that even universities with the deepest histories of academic integrity and colleges with the strictest codes still have reported violations, it would seem there is no perfect solution for scholarly integrity and no ideal honor system to curb students' cheating. However, as discussed in this report, several options have proven their effectiveness in the pursuit of academic integrity.

Educational Components

Education is the most effective tool for preventing academic dishonesty. By educating students on what is expected of them early in their educational careers, they are able to avoid violations involving sloppy scholarship. The excuse of not knowing is eliminated, and integrity becomes part of the college culture. Online orientations, like those at Georgetown and the University of San Diego, give students the chance to learn how to properly cite in multiple styles (e.g. APA, MLA, etc.) even before being required to use those styles. This allows students who may not have learned how to cite in high school, or international students who were taught to cite differently or not at all, to have an equal chance of doing well.

Another perspective deals with the opportunity to make a mistake and to learn from it. In systems like K-State's, students can be found in violation of the honor pledge and are not immediately removed from the institution. Students who must take the Development and Integrity course get a chance to develop throughout the course. Some students must have a crisis, like being caught cheating, to make it to the next stage of development.

The last part of education is that of the faculty and administration. If these members of the campus are well-versed in the system and policies attached to it, they will use it. Moreover, only when they are knowledgeable of the system are they able to effectively educate the students in their classes and/or work domains.

Student Ownership

The most effective way to promote an honor system is through the lifeline of the campus: the students. If the student body does not support the honor system or believe in its purpose, then they will not follow it. By including students in all aspects of the school's system, they will sell the idea of academic integrity to their peers. By having students give presentations to their peers about how they can protect themselves from alleged violations, they gain experience speaking in front of others. And, those in the presentation are more likely to listen since it is coming from "one of their own."

Also, by having students serve in some administrative capacity on the honor system board, such as making them a part of the policy or bylaw committees, they get the opportunity to create real change on their campuses. This inclusion is vital, as it creates deeper bonds with the university.

Faculty Buy-In

Just as the students must take a personal interest in a school's honor system, so too must the faculty and administration. By having representatives from this side of the school active in the system, other instructors can be brought into the fold. If a faculty member has a good experience with a reporting situation, she or he is more likely to file a report in the future and to encourage others to do that same.

The other key part of this idea is that administration must uphold the sanctions given by the honor panel. This sends a clear message that the university takes their system seriously and values the education given by holding students to the same standards. This may encourage others in higher education to become a part of the system in some capacity to help secure the degrees the institution is awarding.

Detection Measures

Teaching students how to cite properly and clearly outlining the expectations of the school is a positive step in creating a culture of academic integrity on any college campus. However, there needs to be weights and measures a school can turn to that will help to guarantee the system is working. By using a form of detection software, like what is offered by TurnItIn.com or a similar company, institutions can provide back-up protection for instructors. This assures that all assignments that are submitted are original works.

The key to success in this area is consistency. All faculty and administrators would need to be trained to use the software and then would need to actually use it. It seems simple, but if even one member of the faculty decides that he or she does not want to use the tools available, it will create frustration on the parts of the students and other faculty.

Policies Regarding Technology

Every school should have a policy regarding technology. Ideally, each university could create a policy that would be in effect in every department across campus. This would make it clear to the students what forms of technology are and are not allowed in classrooms. It would remove the ambiguity of each professor having a different policy,

which often creates friction between departments or instructors since some would allow some forms of technology at all times, when others would allow none. If a policy like this is not an option, then each instructor would need to make clear the expectations of her or his own classroom. A line in the syllabus, as well as a reminder to the students, could also help remove the temptation to cheat.

By following these recommendations, honor systems can make a marked impact on their campuses and the students that benefit from such environments. This report clearly shows that without the presence of these systems on campuses, the culture of cheating would remain strong. And, I believe our society would suffer both socially and economically because of it.

Conclusion

John Tudor (2010) said it best when he stated “Technology makes it possible for people to gain control over everything, except over technology.” While technology no doubt will remain an important part of higher education, administrators and faculty will need to remain vigilant on how it is being used in their schools. Across the nation, and across the globe, schools are discovering ways technology can be used to help students in the classroom. Unfortunately, these same institutions are finding out the ways students can misuse it. We are no longer experiencing the days of students writing on stretched rubber bands and slips of paper. If a piece of technology can hold any kind of information, it can be used in honor pledge violations.

Students today are more focused than ever to succeed in classes by any means necessary. This leaves it up to the schools to educate each generation that integrity in the education of their students is more important than a 4.0 grade point average. According to

Dr. McCabe, “We need to get students to understand why integrity is important — as opposed to policing dishonesty and then punishing that dishonesty” (McCabe as cited in Gibson, 2004). By teaching the students the history and mission behind each school’s honor system, it becomes a part of the school’s traditions. It becomes ingrained in the culture of the school, thus making the degrees given by that institution more valuable in the “real world.”

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