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Abstract

Academic dishonesty is a long-standing issue for faculty and administrators, yet the concern over dishonesty among international students is growing. With the changing demographics of higher education, faculty and administrators must revisit how campus policies and procedures serve all students' needs, but especially international students, as it relates to academic dishonesty. This article explores academic dishonesty from an international student context and provides suggestions for facilitating a campus culture of academic integrity.

Introduction

According to the *2015 Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*, the number of international students in the US increased by 10% percent during the 2014/2015 academic year, bringing the total amount of international students studying in the US to 974,926 (Institute of International Education, 2015).   Although institutions have increased their efforts to recruit international students, solely encouraging international students to study in the US is not enough for them to succeed academically. Faculty and administrators must consider how institutional policies, including academic dishonesty policies, reflect the evolving demographics of their campus communities.   If policies are going to accurately reflect the needs of *all* students, they must be up-to-date, inclusive of a diverse student population, and supportive of the student body as a whole. Academic dishonesty affects all students, but dishonesty among international students is a growing concern. International students often face an unfamiliar academic environment, which can lead to unintended academic policy violations and serious consequences. Serious consequences are appropriate for academically dishonest behaviors; however, faculty and administrators have a responsibility to ensure awareness of academic standards and to educate international students regarding academic dishonesty. This article explores academic dishonesty from an international student perspective and provides suggestions for fostering an environment of academic integrity that speaks to the entire campus population.

The Prevalence of Academic Dishonesty

Definitions of academic dishonesty vary from institution to institution (Butterfield, McCabe, & Travino, 2006; Maramark & Maline, 1993; Witherspoon,

Maldonado, & Lacey, 2010). Broadly defined, students are expected to produce academic work independently and must appropriately acknowledge any outside sources of information they mention in their work. When they misrepresent the words of another as one's own, regardless of the circumstances, they are performing dishonestly. Eriksson and McGee (2015) further define academic dishonesty as intentional or attempted use of materials (cheating), creating information or a citation (fabrication), assisting others in engaging in academically dishonest behaviors (facilitation), and taking another person's words, ideas, or statements as one's own (plagiarism).

Academic dishonesty within higher education institutions has been the subject of ethical debate and educational research for decades. In 1964, Bill Bowers published the first report on college students and academic dishonesty (McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 2001). Bowers asked over 5000 students from 99 American colleges and universities whether they had ever engaged in academically dishonest acts, and three-fourths of the population indicated they had performed dishonestly in at least one situation. In 2006, the International Journal for Educational Integrity was established to address academic dishonesty and help scholars educate and acclimate international students to standards of academic integrity (Cohen, 2006). Organizations, such as the Center for Academic Integrity, also provide resources to students, teachers, faculty, and administrators that discuss academic dishonesty in higher education and promote academic integrity across college campuses (Center for Academic Integrity, 2012).

The reasons why students commit academically dishonest acts are complex (Eriksson & McGee, 2015; Gomez, 2001; Nonis & Owens-Smith, 2001; Witherspoon, Maldonado, & Lacey, 2010;). Students cite issues such as stress, pressure to perform

well and gain employment post graduation, lack of preparation, and competition among peers as reasons for dishonesty. Moreover, status and power in society are associated with having a college degree. To conform to society's expectations, students are willing to take extreme measures, even if that means engaging in dishonest behaviors. Students also justify engaging in academically dishonest acts because of the behaviors they see in connection with public figures and institutions of higher education in the media.

Furthermore, the frequent use of technology has increased the ability to engage in academically dishonest behaviors (Colnerud & Rosander, 2009; Etter, Cramer, & Finn, 2006; McCabe, 2009; Nahir & Aslam, 2010; Jones, 2011). Although restricting students' Internet access while in class is a short-term solution for decreasing academically dishonest behaviors, academic dishonesty as it relates to technology use remains a difficult issue. Most notably, students, faculty, and administrators also have conflicting views on the differences between reasonable and dishonest behaviors and, for this reason, there is an overall indifference towards academic dishonesty (Maramark & Maline, 1993; McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 1999; Roberts & Rabinowich, 1992; Whitley, Jr., & Keith-Spiegel, 2002; Lang, 2010).

With the influx of international students studying in the US and the growing movement toward creating internationalized campuses, it is important for administrators and faculty to address facets of academic dishonesty with their students and colleagues in a way that incorporates the diverse needs of the entire campus population. Students, faculty, and administrators share few common standards of academic dishonesty, and differences in what represents academic dishonesty can lead to difficulties (McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 1999; Whitley, Jr. and Keith-Spiegel, 2002; Eriksson & McGee,

2015; Bretag, et. al., 2014; Lang, 2010; Maramark & Maline, 1993; Roberts and Rabinowich, 1994). For example, how does a student fully understand academic dishonesty when his/her professors express conflicting views on what is dishonest? Who is correct in a situation where a student truthfully perceives nothing wrong with his/her behaviors, but the professor believes the student engaged in plagiarism? One way administrators can assist all students in understanding academic dishonesty is by adopting a clear definition of the term, defining academically dishonest behaviors, and establishing a consistent process for addressing academic dishonesty. These factors will also assist international students as they navigate through their new environment and learn to comply with US academic standards.

Academic Dishonesty in an International Student Context

Understanding academic dishonesty from an international student perspective is even more complex (Song-Turner, 2008; N.A., 2011). A recent study at the University of Windsor found international students violate standards of academic integrity at a disproportionate rate than their domestic peers; the number of international students who cheated was three times higher than their domestic counterparts who violated the same policy (N.A., 2011). A study conducted by the Office of Student Conduct at the University of Southern California (USC), found international students accounted for 47% of all academic dishonesty cases, although international students made up only 10% of the entire campus population (N.A., 1998). At the end of April 2008, 38 Duke University students were discovered cheating on an exam and charged through the institution's disciplinary procedures, and 16 of the students indicated cultural differences led to their behaviors (McClure, 2007). Roughly 62% of college students studying in Taiwan

reported engaging in academically dishonest behaviors (Lin & Wen, 2006) and 84% of students studying in Poland reported cheating during their studies (Lupton, Chapman, & Weiss, 2000). Yang (2016) even suggests South Koreans consider their nation as the "Republic of Plagiarism" because of permeation of academic dishonesty, academic fraud, and scientific misconduct that occurs within East Asian universities (p. 15). As previously mentioned, simply increasing access for international students to study in the US is not enough. Faculty and administrators must be aware of the cultural differences that affect how international students view academic dishonesty in order to help them succeed.

One difficult issue related to academic dishonesty and international students is the concept of plagiarism. Scollon (1995) states, "the concept of plagiarism is fully embedded within a social, political, and cultural matrix that cannot be meaningfully separated from its interpretation" (p. 23). Researchers acknowledge the Western idea of plagiarism, the unauthorized use or misrepresentation of the thoughts of another author as one's own, is not always considered unacceptable in other countries. For instance, repeating the thoughts of another author is considered a form of flattery in some cultures (Scollon, 1995; Song-Turner, 2008). Furthermore, students, whether international or domestic, come to college with varying identities and perspectives derived from their culture, their upbringing, and their views of the world. In a comparison of US to Iranian students, Yekta, Lupton, Takei, Mabudi, and Jahanfar (2013) found both student groups had varying interpretations of academic dishonesty because of cultural differences and, in some respects, systemic issues within each country. If the interpretation of plagiarism is embedded within a mix of social, political, and cultural contexts, establishing a clear

definition of plagiarism for all students to understand is a difficult task for administrators and faculty to undertake. Enforcing policies related to academic dishonesty becomes even more difficult when the administrator or faculty member and the student have differing cultural backgrounds.

Broadly stemming from cultural differences, international students may also come to college with different perceptions of what behaviors are dishonest. For example, Asian cultures encourage collectivism, memorization, and group work. As such, Asian students studying in Western countries may face difficulty when adjusting to academic standards that encourage individualization over reciting information directly from memory (Lin & Wen, 2006). In a cross-cultural study comparing students studying in Israel, Russia, the Netherlands, and the United States, Magnus, Polterovich, Danilov, and Savvateev (2002) found students who come from cultures where cheating is the norm are more likely to engage, whether intentionally or unintentionally, in the behaviors themselves. According to McCabe, Feghali, and Abdallah (2008), "collectivist cultures are more likely to tolerate cheating, as helping other students during exams is accepted and may even be encouraged" (p. 456). Magnus, Polterovich, Danilov, and Savvateev (2002) found perception of peer behavior was the most significant contribution to whether Lebanese students engaged dishonestly. When the Lebanese students in the study saw other students cheating, they were more likely to believe cheating was okay, assist other students in cheating, and engage in the behaviors themselves. They were also twice as likely to engage in collaborative cheating.

Chapman and Lupton (2004) compared differences in understanding academic dishonesty between Hong Kong and American university students. Results illustrated

significant cross-cultural differences as to what constituted academic dishonesty and the openness to self-report dishonest behaviors. Responses suggested American and Hong Kong students had entirely different interpretations of whether cheating had occurred. Furthermore, the Hong Kong students were less likely to report dishonesty in their courses or others who engaged in cheating behaviors for fear of retaliation or a negative social stigma from their peers. Interpretation of the findings demonstrated a mix of cultural nuances, societal values regarding academic dishonesty, differences in cultural upbringing, and philosophies of education. A similar study comparing American and Polish university students found similar results in that both groups had different ideas of what constituted academic dishonesty (Lupton, Chapman, & Weiss, 2000). The Polish students appeared to take academically dishonest behaviors less seriously than the American students, and Polish students also reported they were more likely to behave dishonestly if the instructor did not create an environment that prevented cheating, such as asking students to clear their desks before an exam or giving multiple copies of the same exam.

International students differ in how they value relationships with their instructors, which could impact their engagement in academically dishonest behaviors (Cammish, 1997). For instance, individuals from some cultures are raised to give utmost respect and obedience to others who show knowledge or authority, especially if the figure is an elder. This respect is demonstrated through not making eye contact or asking questions, whereas in other cultures asking questions and making eye contact denotes one is listening and showing respect. When international students leave their home countries with this norm of respect and obedience to study where a contradictory culture is present,

showing their traditional forms of respect can be problematic. For the student who does not understand classroom materials, yet does not feel comfortable asking questions to the instructor, he/she may resort to academic dishonesty because of the cultural boundaries that prohibit discussing the lack of understanding with one viewed as the authority figure.

Expressing oneself through a formal writing style can be a challenge for all college students, which poses a greater problem for students whose first language is not English. International students do not always have the appropriate skills to conform to Western standards of writing, which could lead to academically dishonest behaviors (Cammish, 1997; DeJager & Brown, 2010; Song-Turner, 2008). The Western style of writing is more rigid and complex than writing styles in other cultures and international students are more likely to plagiarize, not because they do not understand the topic, but because they are less familiar with what the Western style of writing is.

For a student who understands the English language, but is unable to communicate it in writing, it seems easier and less confusing to cut and paste words from another author than to struggle with the proper writing style on his/her own. This student is noted by Song-Turner as being "trapped" because he/she often feels frustrated and is unable to demonstrate understanding because of the difficulties with writing requirements (2008, p. 48). Students characterized as trapped are more likely to engage in academically dishonest behaviors because they assume a published author has most likely written the information in the correct format. This uncertainty also leads to a lack of confidence when asking others or seeking out campus resources for writing assistance (Cammish, 1997; Song-Turner, 2008).

Students lacking in both study skills and fluency of the English language are considered "doomed" for being academically dishonest (Song-Turner, 2008, p. 48). This category of students is at most risk for plagiarizing written work, as they are highly unlikely to grasp the necessary comprehension skills to be successful with the Western style of writing. Students in this category often feel they have no chance of success and engaging in academically dishonest behaviors is the only way to thrive.

International students also experience stress and pressure from peers and family to perform well, however, there can be added stress and pressure derived from a cultural context (Teodorescu & Andrei, 2009). For example, students from Asian cultures, particularly from the Japanese culture, are more likely to feel pressured by familial and occupational obligations; successes in these areas are highly dependent on earning a college degree (Diekhoff, LaBeff, Shinohara, & Yasukawa, 1999; Tasker, 1987). When evaluations of academic performance are based on grades from papers and exams, Japanese students demonstrate higher levels of academically dishonest behaviors, especially when the fear of being caught is low. As mentioned by Lin and Wen (2006), familial and socials pressures are much harder to resist by students accustomed to collectivity because they come to college ingrained to work within groups and are more willing to assist another peer, even at the expense of violating an academic dishonesty policy.

In addition to pressure from family and peers to perform well, international students also have the added tension of living, studying, or working in a new country (Song-Turner, 2008). Not only must international students acclimate to the rigors of advanced study, they must also adjust to a new culture, make new friends, develop a new

support system, and conform to everyday tasks many domestic students consider a normal way of life (e.g., driving a car, paying bills, or shopping for groceries). As one student from China expressed, "at home I lived with my parents and they did everything and now I have to do it all and it is very stressful. And not only that, I feel that I need to work at a job to cover some of the costs as it is very expensive studying in Australia - not just fees but also the costs of living and paying rent and all of that! Everything is hard, it takes time and we are always rushed and stressed..." (p. 47). Another student studying from India noted, "most of our parents spent all their money for sending us out and paid the first semester's tuition, the rest of our tuition we need to find a work to support ourselves. Otherwise, we would not be able to complete our degree" (p. 47). Because international students tend to invest more energy and resources, whether mental, financial, or familial, to support themselves and adjust to a new living environment abroad, the demand to succeed becomes higher. This added pressure leads to the increased risk of performing dishonestly.

Fostering a Climate of Academic Integrity

According to Hulstrand, "the first thing administrators need to plan for is how to facilitate the transition for students coming from countries where the academic system is often very different than the one in the United States" (2009, p. 96). Helping international students adapt to the academic standards of higher education and addressing academic dishonesty concerns should be included within this transitioning process. Faculty and administrators must recognize students come to college with varying views of academic standards and it is important to assist all students in understanding the academic values at the particular college they attend. One way to facilitate the transition

is to include information about academic dishonesty in the materials mailed to students before they come to the college, in new student orientations, and in meetings with student advisors. Moreover, this information should be posted on frequently visited websites and academic dishonesty should be addressed when maintaining student visas and other documentation in preparation for international study.

On the other hand, Bretag, Mahmud, Wallace, Walker, McGowan, East, Green, Partridge, and James (2014) suggest a more holistic approach to encouraging academic integrity that involves faculty, students, and staff. Through their multi-campus study, the researchers suggest promotion of academic integrity in every aspect of college life, including: mission statements, initial and ongoing marketing, admissions processes, policies, assessment practices, curriculum design, information during orientation, targeted support in courses at every level, and professional development for students, staff, and faculty.

It is up to institutions to develop clear policies and procedures for identifying academic dishonesty and work towards a shared understanding of academic dishonesty among all members of the campus community (Maramark & Maline, 1993). When policies surrounding academically dishonest behaviors are unclear, it is hard for institutions to promote academic integrity, and even more difficult for international students to adjust to the academic standards of their coursework. In developing clear policies on academic dishonesty, the diverse needs and norms of international students must be considered. As mentioned by McCabe, Feghali, and Abdallah (2008), "the most important policy implication is that 'one size does not fit all' when it comes to academic integrity" (p. 466). Whitley, Jr. and Keith-Spiegel (2002) found institutions could better

promote academic dishonesty policies when the entire campus community portrays an active role in establishing and implementing them. It is essential for students, faculty, and administrators to share responsibility for the creation, implementation, and any modifications to the policies that arise (Whitley, Jr. and Keith-Spiegel, 2002). According to their research, an effective policy should include: a statement informing the community of the importance of academic integrity, specifications of academically dishonest behaviors, information on resolution procedures, specific consequences, remediation or prevention programs, and record keeping. The institution should also specify who is responsible for implementing academic policies, openly communicate policies to the campus community, provide training on managing academic dishonesty, and offer assistance for all members of the community in implementing academic integrity. Whitley, Jr. and Keith-Spiegel (2002) specifically note this information should be offered to international students in a way they understand and provide resources to assist international students in adjusting to academic standards and policies. Bretag, Mahmud, Wallace, Walker, Green, East, James, McGowan, and Partridge (2011) suggest exemplary academic integrity policies are easily accessible, have a detailed consistent message, include shared responsibility among all members of the community, and provide proactive methods for implementing academic integrity.

Faculty members can also support students while in the classroom in understanding what academic dishonesty means (Lupton, Chapman, & Weiss, 2004). This means clearly articulating, orally and in writing, acceptable behaviors and the consequences of academic dishonesty. Faculty members should take appropriate steps to reduce academic dishonesty in the classroom, such as asking students to clear their desks

before and to not use Internet-based devices during exams. Faculty members should also clarify which behaviors are considered dishonest, and emphasize the importance of asking questions and utilizing office hours to discuss course materials. Moreover, faculty members should address peer influences and set expectations on how students can manage the peer pressure. Giving special importance to this information would be particularly useful for students who have cultural norms that include collective behaviors and demonstrating respect towards authority figures. One solution for managing collectivist behaviors is for faculty members to develop teaching strategies that allow for collaborative opportunities and distinguish the difference between when group and independent work is allowed (McCabe, Feghali, and Abdallah, 2008). Furthermore, offering peer resources for assisting students with academic difficulties may be helpful for students who do not feel comfortable discussing issues with faculty, but are more willing to seek advice or assistance from a peer advisor, mentor, or tutor. Institutions with peer support programs should be aware of the cultural norms students bring to college that differ from the institution's academic expectations and be equipped with tools that allow students to maintain their cultural identities without becoming academically dishonest.

Developing academic integrity as part of the greater campus culture can also divert academic dishonesty. Gomez (2001) reported students view academically dishonest acts as victimless crimes because the only student affected by dishonesty is the one who engages in the behavior. Eriksson and McGee (2015) also suggest that students' antisocial attitudes account for increased academically dishonest behaviors, both in high school and in higher education, especially when they do not see academic dishonesty as a

serious offense. However, as mentioned by Whitley (1998) and McCabe, Trevino, and Butterfield (1999), when students feel a sense of connectedness to their environment, they are less likely to engage in academically dishonest behaviors. Furthermore, because research demonstrates students who cheat in college are more likely to cheat in their professions, emphasizing academic integrity could reduce the dishonest behaviors students take with them beyond the college experience. Institutional honor codes are helpful in guiding academic integrity because they provide an environment in which faculty and administrators influence academic behaviors across the entire campus community (McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 1999). Students can also share responsibility in implementing honor codes and can promote collective behaviors that emphasize holding self and others accountable while supporting each other in honest ways. Institutions should also enforce integrity, not only in academics, but in all other facets of campus culture to display integrity as important to the institution as a whole.

More importantly, values and ethics should be displayed within institutional leadership starting with top management. As discussed by Whitley, Jr. and Keith-Spiegel (2002), when leaders model ethics and integrity, the culture of the organization is subject to change. For example, the Chinese government has increased efforts to establish academic norms and combat academic dishonesty through developing standards, increasing awareness through public forums and programs, and encouraging collaboration across universities; this has led to some universities in East Asia establishing units to address academic dishonesty on their respective campuses (Yang, 2016). How leaders manage their organizations and what they view as important reveal the culture and values of the institution. Members of the campus community often take

note of how leaders display themselves in public and private settings. When leaders act with integrity and exemplify model behavior, members of the organization are more likely to follow.

Conclusion

There are many challenges to higher education as it relates to academic dishonesty, but the challenges become even greater when examining academic dishonesty from an international student perspective. This article explored academic dishonesty from an international student context and provided suggestions for fostering an environment of academic integrity that informs the entire campus community. Although further research is needed to fully understand the challenges of academic dishonesty, inferences made from this brief discussion display the strengths and weaknesses of the current literature and provide a framework for how faculty and administrators can further develop the tools and resources needed to effectively support their campuses and combat this longstanding issue.

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