ITEM 9.5   ACADEMIC INTEGRITY - TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

Issue

On 19-20th November 2015, the Chair of Academic Senate hosted a two-day academic integrity workshop which were co-facilitated by academic integrity experts and international research leaders:

- Associate Professor Tracey Bretag, former Chair and Founding Member of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Educational Integrity and President of the Executive Board of the International Centre for Academic Integrity; and
- Dr Teddi Fishman, the Director of the International Centre for Academic Integrity (ICAI), based at Clemson University in the United States.

The purpose of the workshops was to provide a forum to encourage staff and students to think about how we might embed a renewed culture of personal integrity and ethical good practice throughout Macquarie’s undergraduate and postgraduate coursework programs. Research integrity was not in scope for these workshops, although a significant body of work in this regard is already in train and is being led by the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research and Integrity).

The recommendations arising out of the workshops, and documented below form “A Framework for Action”, for consideration and endorsement by Academic Senate. It is hoped that this Framework will provide a solid foundation for ensuring that academic integrity remains a strategic priority for 2016 and beyond.

Recommendation

That Academic Senate discuss the Academic Integrity report titled Towards a Framework for Action.

Submitted by: Professor Dominic Verity, Chair of Academic Senate

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Primary Recommendations

1. Develop a positively framed statement of values, rights and responsibilities in relation to academic integrity, to apply equally to all members of Macquarie’s academic community (students and staff).
2. Establish a rolling campaign of positive academic integrity messaging on campus, using mechanisms such as banners, information screens, lab screensavers, e-mail newsletters, and the University website/social media spaces.
3. Develop and implement an institutional strategy for academic integrity education, to encompass a coherent and sustainable program to design and deploy educational modules, learning resources, and staff training materials.
4. Appoint an “Academic Integrity Tsar” reporting to the DVC-A and responsible for promoting academic integrity values and co-ordinating academic integrity initiatives across the University.
5. Renew the University’s commitment to the AIMA society and implement a support plan to ensure its sustainability. This would include consideration of how we might ensure it is supported by an appropriately expert and committed staff sponsor.
6. Appoint work loaded Academic Integrity Champion(s) within each department, who would be responsible for discharging minor breaches, supporting the preparation of cases for referral to discipline committees, assisting staff in implementing educational and assessment processes, liaison with AIMA members and support of AIMA sponsored activities, and promoting positive academic integrity culture within departments.
7. Develop a new Academic Integrity Policy (or statement) and associated support materials. This should complement the Student Discipline Rule and Procedure, by articulating Macquarie’s shared academic integrity values and providing staff and students with greater detail in regard to the application of those principles.

Introduction

In common with many Australian Universities, Macquarie is currently undergoing a major review of its approach to the question of Academic Integrity. The University has just completed a top-to-bottom overhaul of all of the University’s student discipline policies and processes. It is now critical that we turn our attention to the broader issue of how best to set, communicate and reinforce positive messages in regard to the ethical behaviours we expect all University citizens to model.

Higher education institutions are facing significant challenges in regard to academic honesty and ethical behaviour throughout assessment practice.
Importantly, one should note that these issues extend far beyond our age old worries about plagiarism and collusion. Certainly the recent MyMaster events have served to remind the University community of the growing threat of contract cheating, organised essay mills and ghost writing of assignments. Other less well known forms of cheating, such as deception, impersonation, and sabotage are also on a rapid rise.

The MyMaster coverage has galvanised all Australian institutions, with most now reporting substantial reconsideration of their academic honesty and integrity frameworks and processes. However, anecdotal evidence presented at a recent National Meeting of Chairs of Academic Boards, held as a satellite meeting of the 2016 Universities Australia Conference, would indicate that this event has already wrought a substantial negative impact on the perception of Australian Higher Education overseas. Where in the past Australian Universities have been seen as leaders in this space, we are now generally regarded as lagging behind our competitors in the US and the UK.

We must also confront the fact that it is not students alone who engage in academic fraud on an industrial scale. Indeed, this reality has led a growing number of journals to introduce policies which call for the routine application of plagiarism detection software, such as iThenticate, to article submissions. The evidence appears to indicate that plagiarism, self-plagiarism, fabrication, and duplicate submission is common in journal articles, with 1 in 3 editors surveyed\(^1\) reporting that they encountered plagiarism regularly. In 2011 the journal Nature reported a 10-fold increase in retractions over a decade\(^2\) with 44% of those being made on the grounds of researcher misconduct (plagiarism and fabrication). If academic integrity is becoming less of a valued commodity in our own work, and we are more willing to justify corner cutting as a transactional convenience in an increasingly competitive publish or perish environment, then how can we expect our students to adhere to codes of good practice that we ourselves find it increasingly difficult to model.

There exists no silver bullet, no panacea to solve this complex and multi-faceted problem. It is not even the case that we may take comfort from the traditional refuge of formal examinations. These too are increasingly subject to routine identity fraud and the use of ubiquitous, sophisticated and easily concealed electronic communications and data storage devices. In a highly publicised, 2015 survey of student behaviour by the UK website The Student Room\(^3\), researchers found that 1 in 10 students admitted to cheating in exams. The same survey found that while most cheating involved low-tech approaches, such as sneaking in notes or in one case writing on a tampon in Morse code, a significant and growing minority involved the use of high-tech methods such as UV light pens, smart watches, wireless video cameras, and concealed headphones. This is a level of examination cheating comparable to reported levels of cheating in other assessment types, which might lead us to ask whether exams are as robust an assessment mechanism as we might assume.

A wholesale shift back to assessment regimes weighted predominantly to formal examinations may just have the undesired effect of fuelling greater technical innovation in the exam cheating space. In this regard we might ponder our experience of antibiotic resistant bacterial strains, whose evolution has been largely driven by the selection pressure provided by the indiscriminate use of common antibiotics. Is it wise to re-apply an exam focused assessment regime, which would act as a further encouragement to a technological arms race in the use of mobile devices as an aid to cheating in examinations? Might that not simply render our examination processes, the antibiotic of assessment, almost as open to cheating as other assessment forms?

Ultimately, the academic integrity of our community will only be bolstered through a combination of strategic, integrated, and targeted measures that are promoted in every aspect of the academic enterprise. Indeed, one of our strongest defences may well be a matter of the educator's art. Taking the time to explain what it means to be an ethical University citizen, why behaviours like plagiarism damage the individual and the University community, and how acting with integrity will benefit our students in their lives beyond the University.

Academic Integrity is a core value of our University, and cornerstone of our intellectual community; we are all responsible for ensuring that it is preserved.

**How Big is the Academic Cheating Market?**

As an indication of the size of these emerging threats we might consider only one of the newcomers on the cheating block, that being the *contract cheating* market. This is a relatively new phenomenon that has been extensively studied by Lancaster and Clark\(^4\) over the past 10 years. This term is now used exclusively to refer to a form of academic cheating, unfortunately now common in IT, Engineering and Business disciplines, in which students obtain solutions to assignments by putting them out to tender on freelance auction websites.

In 2006 Lancaster and Clark found that around 12.3% of all contracts fulfilled on the then popular website Rent-A-Coder, now a subsidiary of Australian freelance website giant Freelancer.com, were requests for the fraudulent completion of student assignments. Their more recent estimate of the minimum size of the market for assignments on Freelancer.com itself, completed in 2013, put it at around 1% of all the business transacted on that site. It is a matter of public record that Freelancer.com transacted 6.9M projects in 2014, so 1% of that business would represent around 69,000 contract cheating instances in that year, with the majority of these being commissioned by students in the USA, UK and Australia.

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Lancaster and Clark\textsuperscript{5} also found that the average value of each such contract was approximately AU$250, valuing the size of this market on Freelancer.com alone at a minimum of AU$17.25M in 2014. They also point out that the known and well documented prevalence of this activity on Rent-A-Coder would tend to indicate that this valuation is very much a minimum, and they express the opinion that the size of this market on Freelancer.com is probably many times this baseline estimate.

This is the minimum size of just one paid cheating activity on a single Australian website, albeit quite a large one. Unfortunately, however, such documented evidence of the size of this market as a whole is hard to come by. That being said, the Lancaster and Clark analysis combined with widely referenced estimates of the size of the UK market contract cheating market, placing it at £200M as long ago as 2006, clearly points to an international market worth many billions of dollars today and to an Australian market whose size is certainly numbered in the tens of millions of dollars annually.

In a recent economic study of this activity, Rigby et al\textsuperscript{6} found that of 90 students presented with 8 opportunities to engage in contract cheating (across 3 UK institutions) 45 students expressed a willingness to engage in contract cheating at least once and 7 professed that willingness on all opportunities. It is, of course, unwise to rely solely on generalisations made from such a small sample, and willingness alone does not predict action. The decision to cheat is also informed by cost, perceived quality of the product being purchased, push factors in the assignment process, personal circumstances and so forth. However, this work would tend to indicate that, amongst our cohort of 42,500 students, we might expect to find as many as 40,000 instances in which our students were willing to consider contract cheating and, presumably, a handful of thousands of those in which this actually took place. We are certainly not detecting and prosecuting anywhere near that number of such cases, all of which would be considered to be serious breaches in our discipline framework.

Unfortunately, many of the assignment solutions bought in the contract cheating market are original works of the contractors. Consequently, they are unlikely to be picked up by any plagiarism detection software, and are very likely to sail unnoticed past all but the most vigilant of assessors. This is not a threat that we can address simply by redoubling our detection efforts.

Of course, that doesn’t mean that we can afford to be any less vigilant in regard to plagiarism detection. Nor does it mean that detection mechanisms, automated or otherwise, can play no part in addressing the challenge of contract cheating. We are certainly engaged in an escalating war against forces that are large, well organised, agile and technologically sophisticated. As they refine their evasion mechanisms we must continue to enhance and invest in our detection capabilities. Ultimately, however, this will always be a

\textsuperscript{5} Clarke, Robert; Lancaster, Thomas. "Commercial aspects of contract cheating" In: Proceedings of the 18th ACM conference on Innovation and technology in computer science education, (2013)

matter only of keeping up; to paraphrase André Weil\(^7\), it is a necessary hygiene, not a food to sustain the academic integrity of our community.

**The Higher Education Standards**

At this point, it is worth reminding ourselves of our regulatory responsibilities in regard to academic integrity. Indeed, the new Higher Education Standards, with which we are expected to comply with from the start of 2017, devotes the entirety of its section 5.2 to articulating the obligations of higher education providers (HEPs) in regard to integrity matters. The key clauses\(^8\) for any discussion of Academic Integrity in our teaching programs are:

1.4(3) Methods of assessment are … capable of confirming that all specified learning outcomes are achieved and that grades awarded reflect the level of student attainment.

5.2(1) There are policies that promote and uphold the academic and research integrity of courses and units of study, research and research training activities, and institutional policies and procedures address misconduct and allegations of misconduct.

5.2(2) Preventative action is taken to mitigate foreseeable risks to academic and research integrity including misrepresentation, fabrication, cheating, plagiarism and misuse of intellectual property, and to prevent recurrences of breaches.

5.2(3) Students are provided with guidance on what constitutes academic or research misconduct and the development of good practices in maintaining academic and research integrity.

**Academic Integrity Workshops**

On 19-20\(^{th}\) November 2015, the Chair of Academic Senate hosted a two-day academic integrity workshop which were co-facilitated by academic integrity experts and international research leaders:

- Associate Professor Tracey Bretag, former Chair and Founding Member of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Educational Integrity and President of the Executive Board of the International Centre for Academic Integrity; and

- Dr Teddi Fishman, the Director of the International Centre for Academic Integrity (ICAI), based at Clemson University in the United States.

The purpose of the workshops was to provide a forum to encourage staff and students to think about how we might embed a renewed culture of

\(^7\) "If logic is the hygiene of the mathematician, it is not his source of food; the great problems furnish the daily bread on which he thrives." André Weil, Amer. Math. Monthly (1950)

personal integrity and ethical good practice throughout Macquarie’s undergraduate and postgraduate coursework programs. Research integrity was not in scope for these workshops, although a significant body of work in this regard is already in train and is being led by the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research and Integrity).

The workshops canvassed the following topics:

- Creating a campus culture of personal integrity and ethical good practice
- Policy responses and record keeping
- Educating & engaging students
- Professional development for staff

The workshops were open to all, and widely advertised. Beyond that general call, around 250 individuals were also explicitly invited to attend. This guest list was largely drawn from lists of individuals who had taken part in academic integrity training, academic discipline committees / processes, development of academic integrity training materials, or had participated in funded research in this broad area. It also included a wide range of academic leaders from across the university, who had been selected on the basis of expressed interest or long term experience in academic integrity matters.

So this was a largely self selected and very well informed group, the great majority of whom had been either active participants in discipline committees at Faculty and University level over many years, had engaged in the development of resources to support academic integrity education, or had participated in OLT funded research on some aspect of this question.

The recommendations arising out of the workshops, and documented below form “A Framework for Action”, for consideration and endorsement by Academic Senate. It is hoped that this Framework will provide a solid foundation for ensuring that academic integrity remains a strategic priority for 2016 and beyond.

The Chair of Academic Senate would like to acknowledge and thank Dr Bretag and Dr Fishman who contributed greatly to the discussion and encouraged participants to think very broadly about the issues involved and the range of measures that could be adopted.

What is academic integrity?

The workshops commenced with an exercise to examine what the term academic integrity meant to the Macquarie community, and to interrogate the role of this concept as a keystone of our academic practice. Given the very wide range of (sometime conflicting) interpretations expressed, it quickly became clear that great value could be derived from the University collaboratively developing and adopting a common, and widely agreed, definition of this term and an associated statement of core principles.
The International Centre for Academic Integrity defines academic integrity as “a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to six fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage.” From these values flow principles of behaviour that enable academic communities to translate ideals to action.

Macquarie does not currently define the term ‘Academic Integrity’ in its policy base or glossary. Academic Honesty, however, is defined in the Macquarie Glossary as ‘a fundamental principle that all staff and students act with integrity in the creation, development, application and use of ideas and information.’ The absence of a definition provides an excellent opportunity for the University to re-think and agree on a definition that embodies what the concept means to Macquarie.

Working in groups, participants at the workshop were asked to define academic integrity in a maximum of two sentences. The following are some of the responses:

- **Academic integrity is the ethical foundation of our academic community**
- **The academic learning and intellectual development of individuals and communities matter to society. This requires broad values and active practice of responsibility, respect, honesty and ethical behaviour, generosity, acknowledgement of others and accountability.**
- **Academic integrity is an informed choice about how to behave with honesty, responsibility, respect, and fairness in an academic community**
- **Academic integrity is a matter of personal responsibility and open engagement between members of our academic community, whose purpose is to foster the interpersonal trust upon which all collaborations are founded. It is typified by principles of personal responsibility, community, fairness, honesty and ethical good practice.**
- **Academic integrity is about practising the shared values of the academic community. These include respect, trust, justice, honesty and responsibility, and these values are learned and developed over time.**

While the above definitions may provide a good starting point, it is important to note that the purpose of this exercise was not to commit the University to any particular definition at this stage. Instead, workshop participants were of the view that the development of a commonly held definition, and an associated statement of academic integrity principles and responsibilities, was an activity which should encompass the whole academic community of the University, students and staff. Indeed, if carefully designed this process could form a crucial first step in a broad campaign to improve shared community awareness of the importance (and utility) of academic integrity and the challenges we all face.
This conversation about the meaning of academic integrity to our community needs to start at the university level, and extend downwards into departments and beyond into the classroom. Provided it does so, this will allow genuine and coherent commitment to academic integrity amongst Macquarie’s stakeholders.

Recommendations:

1. Implement a systemic process to develop and agree upon a commonly held interpretation of the term “Academic Integrity”.
2. Develop a positively framed statement of values, rights and responsibilities in relation to academic integrity, to apply equally to all members of Macquarie’s academic community (students and staff).

Evolving our Academic Integrity Culture

Much of the discussion on the first morning of the workshops concentrated upon the challenges of evolving our academic integrity culture to meet rapidly changing environmental challenges. It was universally acknowledged that over the past decade Macquarie had tended to focus on the punitive rather than educative or community aspects of academic integrity. Participants expressed the view that it was common for first punitive interaction with a discipline process to be the first point at which students had come into contact with the academic integrity expectations of the University.

It is clear that most students know that cheating is forbidden and that activities such as plagiarism can attract some form of sanction. It was commonly held, however, that few possessed a nuanced view of why academic integrity was regarded as such an important issue and, despite our focus on detection and punishment, fewer still were aware that breaches can attract penalties as severe as unit failure or exclusion from enrolment. Participants expressed the view that many students had incomplete and naïve views of what might be regarded as an inappropriate act, and that it was common for them to fall foul of the University’s discipline process as a result of that lack of understanding.

It was observed that a number of online modules had been developed to educate students and staff in academic integrity matters. As a secondary concern these had been framed in a manner that increase ethical sensitivity, and influence behaviour. However, they have been limited in their effectiveness and reach, largely due to the fact that they are voluntary. Interestingly, it has been reported that workshops on ‘how to avoid plagiarism’ are far better attended than workshops on ‘academic integrity’. This may be attributed to a lack of understanding of what academic integrity means and why it is important.

After much discussion, workshop participants concluded that our primary cultural challenge in regard to academic integrity is that of embedding awareness of academic integrity as an explicit consideration into all of the University’s activities (pedagogical, pastoral, and operational). It is imperative that academic integrity simply becomes ‘just a part of what we do’ as an
institution, not an added extra or afterthought to briefly entertain incoming students or members of discipline panels.

A first step in this direction might simply be to ‘piggy-back’ a conversation about academic integrity onto regular meetings or planning days. In another form, it could be included in the induction of new staff members, going beyond the HR portal and the phone directory to familiarise new members of our academic community with the University’s statement on academic integrity.

We must all take a far more active part in highlighting the importance and benefits of good ethical behaviour, both at university and beyond the campus. As educators we must seek to place the emphasis back on teaching, and on encouraging engagement with academic integrity principles, in preference to simply policing breaches:

“In our stampede to fight what The New York Times calls a "plague" of plagiarism, we risk becoming the enemies rather than the mentors of our students; we are replacing the student-teacher relationship with the criminal-police relationship… Worst of all, we risk not recognizing that our own pedagogy needs reform. Big reform.

…All those who worked to get advanced academic degrees in order to police young adults, please raise your hands. No hands? Then let's calm down and get back to the business of teaching.”

For our students, this change is best wrought by active reinforcement of positive messages on campus and by the conscious removal of all inappropriate communications from public spaces (real and virtual). These activities might include an ongoing, rolling series of engaging and amusing re-enforcement messages on banners, information screens, and lab screensavers, and a week devoted to a celebration of Macquarie’s academic integrity culture. These should be grasped as an opportunity to explain how academic integrity is key to the value of the degrees that students are working towards, and to articulate the benefits of ethical practice in our educational and professional lives.

On the verso, in recent years we have become more vigilant in the removal of inappropriate marketing posts from our social media spaces. That being said, we cannot become complacent in this area; those delivering these posts become more sophisticated by the day and we must keep up with them. We have not, however, been quite so vigilant in tracking down similar marketing posted on physical bulletin boards, in bathroom spaces, in classrooms, or on lighting posts on and in the environs of our campus. What is more it being not quite good enough to simply remove these messages, we also must pause to articulate why the messages we are removing are contrary to good academic practice. We cannot, and should not, simply assume that everyone in our community can innately sift ethical wheat from the chaff, so we must act deliberately in training them to make those fine distinctions.

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In brief, Macquarie must make integrity central to every function of the university, from marketing and recruitment through to graduation and absolutely everything in between. Importantly, our mission should be visible to staff, students and the wider community. Academic integrity should be front and centre in, but not limited to, our mission statement, unit guides, orientation information, classrooms, and on-boarding activities.

Figure “Embedding and extending exemplary academic integrity policy and support frameworks across the higher education sector”, OLT project 2015, A/Prof. Tracey Bretag et. al. https://lo.unisa.edu.au/course/view.php?id=6751&section=5

Recommendations:

1. Establish a high profile, on campus, annual festival to raise the profile of Macquarie’s academic integrity values and to introduce new members of the University to Macquarie’s academic integrity community.
2. Establish a rolling campaign of positive academic integrity messaging on campus, using mechanisms such as banners, information screens, lab screensavers, e-mail newsletters, and the University website / social media spaces.
3. Engage all members of the University community (students, academics and professional staff) in an ongoing effort to eliminate inappropriate messaging on campus and in our online spaces.
4. Develop and distribute advisories to assist students in distinguishing between ethical educational service providers and fraudulent providers.
5. Add explicit mention of Macquarie’s academic integrity values to all mission statements, unit guides, and marketing material.
6. Make discussion and analysis of academic integrity values and challenges a standing item on the agendas of Academic Senate, its key Committees, and all Faculty Boards.
7. Encourage greater openness in regard to academic integrity and disciplinary processes. This might include the frequent and prominent publication of aggregate statistics on the numbers of cases notified and penalties applied, how those notifications were handled, ways in which technology is used to detect cheating, proactive steps taken by Faculties to apply educational strategies that encourage ethical practice, and how data on cases is collected, stored and used.

Formal academic integrity education
Workshop participants spent a little time surveying the current state of the University’s programs to provide formal academic integrity training. Primary issues identified included a lack of a coherent strategy, inadequate provision of training resources, underfunding of existing programs, and a lack of integration with the broader curriculum.

Historically, much of the formal academic integrity training provided to students by the University has been delivered by the learning skills team of the Learning and Teaching Centre. Initially this activity focussed upon workshops which, while stressing the broader importance of academic integrity, concentrate largely upon developing skills to assist students in understanding plagiarism and writing to avoid related breaches. These workshops have always been voluntary in nature and, as a result, participant numbers have varied widely over the years, following no predictable pattern and leading to compromised effectiveness of the program. Indeed, anecdotal evidence provided by those running these workshops indicates that students generally attended when they felt they were at risk of being caught in a plagiarism breach or, indeed, after they had been notified that they were being investigated for such.

More recently the learning skills team, working in collaboration with a network of interested academic staff, has developed a pair of online academic integrity training modules for staff and students. These modules are designed to raise student and staff awareness of responsibilities and rights in regard to academic integrity, and to provide some guidance in regard to acceptable and unacceptable academic practice. While this may be beneficial and informative for students, it was acknowledged that this module largely confines itself to instructing students what to avoid rather than on assisting them to create a collaborative academic integrity culture. Likewise, the staff module has been largely built only to support staff in interpreting and implementing policy.

While the completion of the student module is not a compulsory requirement, all new students are automatically enrolled into it when they join the University. The module itself was largely designed only as a learning resource, rather than as an assessed activity, and the University has not implemented an effective mechanism to assess outcomes or monitor student completion. Consequently, it is hard to gauge the extent of its positive influence on the broad student body.

In passing we might note that a fully assessed variant of this module, called AWE (Academic and Workplace Ethics), was developed early in 2015. This work was undertaken in response to the discipline cases arising out of the MyMaster case, and successful completion of this AWE module is now required of all students found culpable of an academic integrity breach by the University Student Discipline Hearing Panel. As things stand, however, the delivery of AWE is a labour intensive process and it is not suited for scaling beyond participation rates of 200-300 students per year.

It is also worth observing that at various times individual Faculties have also developed and applied their own academic integrity training modules. While these have seen some significant local successes, this dispersed activity has
often been hard to sustain. Certainly none of these have led to wider institutional initiatives, and the University has found it difficult to sustainably capitalise upon these investments.

Workshop participants concluded that these initiatives were valuable, but that they had all suffered from a lack of effective, strategically motivated institutional buy in and direction. They had often been developed and run by local enthusiast teams, and had not been supported by strategies and policy to encourage students and staff to use the resources provided. Furthermore, a lack of overall coherence had led to some doubling up and waste of already scant resources.

Beyond problems identified in the delivery of these dedicated programs, a far greater issue appears to be a lack of routine integration of academic integrity education into the broader curriculum. It was a commonly held experience that students, at all levels, knew little about academic integrity beyond a passing acquaintance with plagiarism. Appreciation of academic integrity as a positive value appears to have taken second fiddle to a pragmatic appreciation of adverse consequence avoidance. This response clearly indicates that we have been far less than effective at articulating this key value as a routine part of our academic programs, that we have tended to focus that training on a functional appreciation of the single issue of plagiarism, and that the coverage of this training is by no means universal.

However, workshop participants were not generally in favour of addressing this lack of universal educational coverage through the imposition of a requirement to complete a one-size-fits-all academic integrity module. Instead, most felt it would be more effective to mandate that all programs meet a minimum standard of academic integrity training, supported by the provision of centrally developed resources and training materials. Not only would that approach ensure that this training could be adapted to local discipline conditions, but it would also ensure that a much wider group of staff were actively engaged in academic integrity education.

Recommendations:

1. Develop and implement an institutional strategy for academic integrity education, to encompass a coherent and sustainable program to design and deploy educational modules, learning resources, and staff training materials.
2. Redesign the University’s academic integrity educational modules to de-emphasise their focus on plagiarism and to concentrate instead on community building, the value of academic integrity, and a broader range of environmental challenges (contract cheating, essay mills, and so forth).
3. Scale the AWE module so that it may be applied to all students found culpable of a breach of academic integrity.
4. Ensure that academic integrity is prominently featured in all of the support materials delivered to students as they settle into the University community. In particular, ensure the student “getting Started”
homepage and ‘Orientation’ pages clearly articulate academic integrity as a shared value.

5. Devote at least one lecture and/or tutorial to the topic of academic integrity in every first year (undergraduate and postgraduate) unit. Introduce mechanisms to encourage student engagement through the assessment of their understanding of academic integrity principles and practice.

6. Establish a prominent single-point-of-truth web resource to deliver information and advice, contemporary research findings, and support materials to inform staff and student understanding of academic integrity issues.

Enabling students to lead

One of the most stimulating sessions of the workshops was that devoted to the topic of student engagement in academic integrity matters. In analysing the current position at Macquarie, participants agreed that students had been regarded only as passive recipients of academic integrity education or as recidivist offenders. As we reconsider the University’s approach to Academic Integrity, it is the perfect opportunity to begin listening to students, partnering with them, and empowering them to lead cultural change within their networks.

It was noted that the research corpus in this area strongly supports the thesis that active engagement in, and leadership of, community academic integrity values and processes is a strong predictor of behavioural improvement. It was agreed that Macquarie should move decisively to encourage students to be partners in, rather than passive recipients of, academic integrity education, values and processes.

One should note that this position is also implicitly mandated by the University’s new Learning and Teaching Strategy, which insists that students should be made partners and co-creators in their learning. Consequently, we should ensure that students are given an opportunity to contribute to the academic integrity conversation, that they are empowered to influence policy on academic integrity, and that they are given a key role in shaping the academic integrity culture on campus. They should also be invited to contribute to discipline processes, through routine membership of hearing panels and involvement in the departmental processes that apply to more minor breaches.

In a move towards greater student partnership, the University established the Academic Integrity Matters Ambassadors (AIMA) in February 2014. This is a student led society which aims to improve academic integrity culture and to empower students to lead in this space. Funding for this group was initially provided under the auspices of an OLT funded academic integrity research project hosted at Macquarie University and led by A/Prof. Abhaya Nayak of the Department of Computing. Under this project Ambassadors were supported to conduct surveys, create and share academic integrity resources, develop awareness campaigns, and assist in community outreach and education before new students arrive at University.
Much of this activity was led by Ms Sonia Saddiqui in the Learning and Teaching Centre, who provided day-to-day support to the student ambassadors and conducted much of the research associated with those activities. While honour codes and societies are common on US campuses this was, and still is, the only student led academic integrity society at an Australian University. As such it has received a fair amount of, highly positive, national press attention. We are also aware of a number of other institutions who are currently well advanced examining the practicalities of supporting the establishment of similar societies on their campuses and of networking those across Australian Universities.

Despite best efforts, however, the AIMA program has struggled to sustain itself beyond the end of the OLT grant, and with the closure of the Learning and Teaching Centre it has now lost its primary sponsor. The research literature, including that arising from Macquarie’s own OLT project, clearly indicates that such activities can only thrive if supported by staff sponsors with an active interest in academic integrity and closely integrated with other student mentoring activities. In the past 6 weeks, we have initiated a process to integrate AIMA more closely with the Mentors@Macquarie program but without expert and committed sponsorship it is likely to lose its focus and identity within the larger mentor pool.

Beyond Mentors@Macquarie, AIMA members should also be supported to take a more influential role in student and academic governance. Indeed, AIMA members are already demonstrating their commitment to our community by standing for election to groups such as the Student Representative Committee. They have also shown a great willingness to contribute actively in peer to peer communication of academic integrity values, an extremely powerful driver of student behaviour. To do this effectively, however, our student leaders need to be supported and trained and staff need to take the lead in this.

Recommendations:

1. Renew the University’s commitment to the AIMA society and implement a support plan to ensure its sustainability. This would include consideration of how we might ensure it is supported by an appropriately expert and committed staff sponsor.
2. Support AIMA through the provision of Academic Integrity mentorship training.
3. Commit strategically to developing close relationships between AIMA and other student leadership groups such as Mentors@Macquarie and the Student Representative Committee.
4. Provide AIMA with regular opportunities to address academic governing bodies at University and Faculty levels and to contribute to the work of those bodies.
5. Engage AIMA in the development and execution of the on-campus and online campaigns discussed above.
6. Appoint Academic Integrity student class representatives in all departments and sign them up to AIMA.
7. Ensure that every discipline panel includes a student member, preferably drawn from the membership of AIMA. Also encourage collaboration between Academic Integrity class representatives and those executing department level discipline processes.

Who should take responsibility?

Cultural change cannot be achieved without everyone taking responsibility and ownership for making it happen. Too often we view academic integrity as the student’s problem, without considering how other stakeholders might play a role, either in the problem or in its potential solution. This is also not just an issue to be pursued by academic staff, the University is a single community in which every part carries responsibility for upholding our shared values.

“Academic communities of integrity rest upon foundations of personal accountability coupled with the willingness of individuals and groups to lead by example, uphold mutually agreed-upon standards, and take action when they encounter wrongdoing…

Responsibility for upholding the values of integrity is simultaneously an individual duty and a shared concern. Every member of an academic community – each student, faculty member, and administrator – is responsible for safeguarding the integrity of its scholarship, teaching and research…. Shared responsibility both distributes and magnifies the power to effect change.”

(Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity 2nd Ed, ICAI 2013)

For example, those who tend our grounds and buildings should also see it as part of their role to be active in the removal of inappropriate advertisements from walls, lamp posts and public notice boards. In a similar fashion, those who develop and manage our web and marketing presence should be proactive in countering postings from essay mills and promulgating messages that promote ethical practice. Ultimately, by raising the profile of academic integrity as a central Macquarie value, we might hope to encourage everyone to ask how they might contribute to upholding that value.

In her keynote address10 at the 7th Asia Pacific Conference on Educational Integrity, and in her recent presentation to Academic Senate, A/Prof. Tracey Bretag identified several ways to promote shared responsibility:

As an institution:

• Make integrity central to every function of the university, from marketing and recruitment through to graduation and absolutely everything in between.
• Identify key stakeholders, both internal and external, to be champions of academic integrity.

10 “Who is responsible for educational integrity?”
• Induct, orient and train students in values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness and responsibility.
• Do the same for all staff – administrators, managers and academics.
• Commit real resources to teaching - it’s the heart of what we do.
• Provide pedagogic professional development to teachers – use peer review, performance management and promotion to reward good teaching, particularly in relation to academic integrity.
• Establish academic integrity policy and procedures based on best practice recommendations (see www.unisa.edu.au/EAIP)
  o Consistently follow through on all breaches of academic integrity.
  o Publicise outcomes of breaches to enhance community awareness & confidence.

As teachers/academics:

• Take teaching seriously
• Take advantage of professional development opportunities.
• Commit to transparent and consistent assessment processes.
• Be available to your students: be interested in their world.
• Remind yourself that not every student is a “cheater”
• Model ethical practice (eg. how you use and cite sources)
• Utilize widely available resources on teaching academic integrity (eg www.aisp.apfei.edu.au and www.unisa.edu/EAIP )
  o Make academic integrity the focus at key assessment points
  o Don’t be afraid to (consistently) address academic integrity breaches.

Beyond the need for everyone to play a serious role in promoting academic integrity, there is also a clear need for the University to ensure that these distributed responsibilities and activities are centrally sponsored and co-ordinated. An increasingly popular model in this regard is the appointment of “Tsars”, at faculty or university level, to co-ordinate and promote academic integrity initiatives.

For example, the University of Sydney taskforce on academic misconduct and plagiarism, chaired by its Vice-Chancellor, has recently recommended the appointment of such an individual, at the university level. Its report11 suggests tasking that individual with responsibilities including to:

• Champion and promote academic integrity for coursework students in the University.
• Serve as a point of contact and coordination for matters concerning academic integrity.
• Lead the development and implementation across the University of practices promoting academic integrity.
• Provide academic and relevant professional staff with professional learning and support relevant to academic integrity.

• **Support the development and use of learning resources and learning experiences for students**: including the University-endorsed online education modules mentioned in Recommendation 1.

• **Monitor trends within the University and the higher education sector relevant to academic integrity and use these to inform development of educational materials, policies, and so forth.**

The University of Sydney has also appointed the outgoing Chair of its Academic Board to head its educational directorate, in which role he will carry responsibility for implementing the recommendations outlined in that report.

Workshop participants concluded that the appointment of an academic role of this kind was also a high priority for Macquarie. Its view was that such an individual should report to the DVC (Academic) and would carry the responsibilities outlined above. It was felt that such an appointment would also have a subsidiary benefit as a concrete totem of the University’s ongoing commitment to academic integrity as a core value.

**Recommendations:**

1. Appoint an “Academic Integrity Tsar” reporting to the DVC-A and responsible for promoting academic integrity values and co-ordinating academic integrity initiatives across the University.
2. Develop and publish a stakeholder matrix documenting responsibilities of all staff in regard to contributing to academic integrity values and initiatives.
3. Ensure that academic integrity is given a prominent place in all student matriculation and orientation ceremonies.
4. Ensure that induction processes prominently feature academic integrity as a core Macquarie value: “This is just what we do!”

**Staff support**

Our primary task in supporting staff is to assist them in translating existing, strongly held values of academic integrity into action in the classroom and on campus. Of course, the great majority of staff already model good practice to their students, adhere to high standards themselves, and take the time to reinforce the importance of good ethical practice in tutorials and lectures. They have, however, often done so without clear and explicit support, and they often find it difficult to know how to respond effectively when issues arise.

The under-reporting and under-detection of breaches of academic honesty remains a challenge for all Universities. In the introduction to this report we considered some of the baseline statistics in regard to the numbers of cases of cheating we might expect from a student body of 42,500. Those, rather alarming, numbers compare quite starkly to the total number of discipline cases reported and prosecuted each year. For example, in 2015 the total number of discipline cases reported and heard at Macquarie, either at Faculty or University level, was a relatively modest 523, of which 84 were general conduct or forgery breaches largely unrelated to academic conduct. It should
be said that this number encompasses all breaches pursued in that year, not just those of a serious nature. In other words, with only 1.1% of the student population interacting with the discipline process in a given year, and given the statistics we have seen in regard to baseline levels of misconduct, we might conclude that academic cheating is a relatively cost free activity. Under current circumstances we might worry that the probability of being caught cheating is far too low, rendering our discipline processes only a weak deterrent.

The reasons for this under-reporting appear to be many and varied. There are, of course, technical limitations to detecting breaches; no software for this purpose is perfect. Unfortunately, we do not routinely analyse statistics on the use of the Turnitin software, but we do know that its use is certainly far from ubiquitous and we know that the reports that it generates are open to a wide variety of interpretations and responses. Those serving on discipline committees will be very aware that in some parts a similarity rating of 30% is regarded as a major breach whereas in others ratings as high as 50% are routine.

When participants in the workshops were asked to identify reasons for under-reporting, their concerns centred on the ways in which staff were supported to undertake detection and reporting activities. Many quoted additional workload concerns, lack of support from those in leadership roles, or lack of understanding/knowledge of university policies and practices. They identified consistency in the application of these policies as a major issue, with a lack of broader discussion of shared values and aspirations driving significant differences in reporting practice from department to department and unit to unit.

It was observed that some of these issues could be addressed through the provision of formal training and professional development. However, participants questioned the effectiveness of such programs, citing the common experience of self-selected, enthusiast attendance in existing L&T training programs and a lack of coverage of the casual and sessional workforce. As our classrooms shift further and further into the era of casualization, this itinerant workforce has become the primary academic integrity frontline and it demands the greatest level of (work loaded) support.

Discussions and training in regard to academic integrity need not be formal; indeed, there exists substantial evidence to support the thesis that it is more effective to build this in as part normal faculty and departmental business. This requires approach no extra (explicit) time commitment from staff, encourages strong faculty ownership of integrity, and protects academic integrity from being seen as a burdensome compliance issue. The challenge in this approach, however, is that of identifying and empowering local academic champions, in faculties and departments, to keep the academic integrity discourse alive and to act as source of advice, support and expertise.

Discipline processes themselves remain a significant disincentive to reporting. Many staff report significant stress arising from the management of academic misconduct cases, and they find that this role is at odds with their role as
pedagogue and mentor. Committee processes are a relatively heavyweight mechanism to apply to more minor first offences, and the preparation of such cases imposes a significant workload on unit convenors. Consequently, it is often argued that such minor cases should simply be handled through educative means, which generally go unmonitored by our formal processes. In the minds of many students this approach can translate to a belief that blind eyes will be turned to offences so long as they are “relatively minor”. Experiential and research evidence, however, clearly demonstrates that early engagement with a formal discipline process and the imposition of a clear, but nevertheless relatively minor, penalty for a first offence acts as by far the most effective disincentive to future breach behaviour.

The University’s new discipline process allows for minor offences to be handled at departmental level, so long as a student is a first offender who agrees to accept a penalty for a minor misdemeanour. That procedure calls for appropriately trained staff in departments to undertake investigations into such minor cases, to interview students and to agree penalties. Those staff, however, have not as yet been identified and appropriate training programs have not been rolled out. This is an intensive, specialist activity that needs to be appropriately supported and work loaded.

To address these dual issues of minor breach handling and the local promotion of academic integrity culture and expertise, the University should consider appointing Academic Integrity Champions / Officers in each department. These individuals would act as a common point of department level advice and expertise in the handling of discipline cases, and would be responsible for encouraging and assisting unit convenors in the detection of breaches and the preparation of cases. Dually these officers would also be tasked with advising lecturers and tutors on methods to “cheat proof” assessments, apply plagiarism detection software, restructure units to reduce the stresses that can drive undesirable behaviour, and so forth. They would also be expected to act as “chalk face” champions of the Macquarie culture of academic integrity. They might also be tasked with sponsoring the integration of AIMA initiatives into departmental activities and with mentoring AIMA members in their department’s student cohort. These champions would be networked across the University, to share best practice and ensure consistency of decision making, and would have a dotted reporting line to the Academic Integrity lead in the DVC-A office.

Some of those who spoke at the workshop were also concerned that the reporting of academic integrity breaches could be viewed in some quarters as evidence of poor teaching performance. To counter this perception, it is important for the University to acknowledge openly that academic dishonesty is ubiquitous and that high reporting rates are more likely to indicate vigilance rather than poor teaching. Indeed, in our quality assurance framework it would be prudent to red-flag large units that are not reporting cases of suspected academic misconduct.

Recommendations:
1. Appoint work loaded Academic Integrity Champion(s) within each department, who would be responsible for discharging minor breaches, supporting the preparation of cases for referral to discipline committees, assisting staff in implementing educational and assessment processes, liaison with AIMA members and support of AIMA sponsored activities, and promoting positive academic integrity culture within departments.

2. Develop protocols to ensure that casual and sessional staff are trained to act as academic integrity leaders, primed to recognise and respond appropriately to undesirable academic behaviours, and are appropriately supported when they report suspected breach cases.

3. Incorporate information on academic integrity breaches into the quality assurance processes for units and programs, and establish standards that call for further investigation when these numbers are abnormally low or high.

Policy responses

It is very important to have a policy base that is carefully designed to underpin and safeguard academic integrity and to articulate shared values. Macquarie’s current policy base is more focused on the punitive aspects of student discipline, rather than on communicating positive messages in regard to the ethical behaviours that we expect all University citizens to model. Workshop participants were strongly of the view that that negative language featured far too prominently in our current academic integrity policy base. Those policies that attempt to articulate these values are often inconsistently worded, poorly articulated and lacking in clear guidelines for application.

Academic Integrity needs to be embedded in every aspect of University life, and academic integrity should be made a key focus in the review and development of any Learning and Teaching policy. Over the past year we have already made important to strides in that direction and, significantly, the Assessment Policy has just completed a major review which explicitly acknowledged, and responded to, the significant role that good assessment design and implementation plays in promoting academic integrity. University Council and Academic Senate have also completed a thorough overhaul of Student Discipline rules and procedures, to streamline processes and ensure a level of robustness to legal challenge.

The Academic Honesty Policy is now the next chicken to be pulled from the policy coop (or battery barn). Workshop participants concluded that the introduction of a separate rule base to govern discipline process made this the ideal time to evolve this into a positive statement of academic integrity values. That would then become the cornerstone expression of our shared academic integrity values, and could then be used as a key document in on-boarding, induction, and matriculation processes, for example.

"Exemplary policy is not enough. Policy requires constant revision based on an institutional commitment to academic integrity. It requires feedback from breach data, academic integrity breach"
Currently, Macquarie does not have a central data repository that could be accessed routinely and directly by hearing committees and academic integrity champions. Information about proven breaches is stored on student records and Governance Services maintains a database of those cases considered by hearing committees, but it unlikely that these mechanisms can scale to a regime that incorporates department level decision making. These technological limitations make it very difficult to gain a complete and accurate understanding of how students are performing in their program of study. Effective recordkeeping and a searchable database are essential parts of ensuring that cases of repeated misconduct are detected and dealt with appropriately.

Recommendations:

1. Develop a new Academic Integrity Policy (or statement) and associated support materials. This should complement the Student Discipline Rule and Procedure, by articulating Macquarie’s shared academic integrity values and providing staff and students with greater detail in regard to the application of those principles.

2. Establish protocols to ensure that academic integrity is an explicitly considered factor in all learning and teaching policy development.

3. Invest in a record keeping system, with appropriate access control and permissions, which can scale to a distributed misconduct handling regime.

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