Strategies to Decrease Cheating

Promoting Academic Integrity in Online Courses

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Agenda

- Why it Happens…
- Why Should we Care?
- Types of Academic Dishonesty
- Strategies to Reduce Academic Dishonesty
- Dealing with a Case of Academic Dishonesty
For many students today – cheating is rational behavior

Think carefully about the amount of work you assign

A new morality?

Educate students about right and wrong
Why Should We Care?

- Effectively Educated Individuals = Effective Citizens
- Effective Citizens Who are Alums = Enhanced Perceptions of Institutional Quality
- Greater Perceptions of Quality = More Students
- More Students = More Resources to Create Effectively Educated individuals (our mission)
And...

- At PSC we genuinely care about each student’s development.
- We are all getting paid to manage academic quality and integrity – you have the support of PSC educational leadership in this endeavor.
Types of Academic Dishonesty

- Discussion Board Laziness
- “Over-collaboration” on Assignments
- Cheating on Tests
- Plagiarism
General Strategies to Decrease Academic Dishonesty

- Make your expectations clear in your syllabus (do your own work, all dishonesty will be addressed, consequences, etc.) and repeat expectations in assignment descriptions.

- Remind students of the importance of doing one’s own work (preparation for final exam, preparation for life, writing samples, etc.)
General Strategies Continued…

- Don’t make the entire course accessible at once – open assignments one or two weeks at a time.

- Ask questions about student submissions (e.g., That was an innovative topic for a paper, do you have some experience with that company? How did you become interested in …? )
“Unless directed otherwise, students are expected to do their own work on assignments and exams. Academic dishonesty will result in actions in accordance with the college’s disciplinary policy which can be found in the Academic Dishonesty section of the college catalog.” (H/O)
Reducing Discussion Board Laziness

- Use a grading rubric
- Indicate that being the last to comment and making statements that just reflect the answers of others is not appropriate (they’ll lose points)
- Comment on student comments (“You need to take your responses further and I’d like to see you be the first to comment and set the tone of the discussion next week”)

Dealing with “Over-Collaboration” on Assignments

- Set expectations in assignment posting
- Require written component to quantitative answers
- Have a unique variation requirement for each student’s qualitative answers
- Watch for coincidence in submission timing and answers and examine electronic file properties
Dealing with Cheating on Tests

- Use large m/c question pools
- Randomize questions selected, order of the questions, and order of the responses
- Limit window of time test is available (2-3 days, at least one being a weekend day)
- Limit window of time test is taken once started (1-2 minutes per question for m/c)
- Use more than four answers on m/c tests and increase answer complexity
Cheating on Tests Continued…

- Have one question appear at a time
- Use some short essay questions that are hard to copy (e.g., “Give an example from your experience of …”)
- Avoid true/false questions
- Watch for coincident test submission timing and answers
Cheating on Tests Continued…

- Avoid over reliance on tests to determine grade
- In the future … a code to disable the “right click to print” feature
- In the future … a proctored exam policy?
Dealing with Plagiarism

- Yet again, communicate expectations
- Define plagiarism and post citation guidelines and examples
- Develop unique writing assignments
- Break larger assignments into smaller pieces and suggest unique changes, new directions
- In the future … Turnitin.com
Currently there are three software approaches to identifying plagiarism.

The easiest thing to do is to perform a web search using the student’s topic or unusual key sentences that are not cited.

Contact Distance Education for a Demonstration of Turnitin and/or SafeAssign software, or see the resources posted on the Academics page.
Acting on a Case of Academic Dishonesty

- Save all files to your hard drive
- Print all records out and plan to save them for up to one semester following your course
- Discuss specific concerns with the student
- Ask for their explanation in writing
- Contact the Academic Dean for guidance on the appropriate sanction
In Conclusion, Be Ever Vigilant.....