Academic integrity is an important component for a university, and the University of Waterloo already has many initiatives to support high levels of academic integrity. Nevertheless, we can always improve. In that regard, the Sixth Decade Plan states that “To highlight the importance of achieving and sustaining high academic standards related to academic integrity, UW will develop and implement a package of initiatives to educate and sensitize students, faculty and staff about academic integrity issues and appropriate behaviour.”

An Academic Integrity Committee, consisting of students, staff, faculty and administrators, submitted its report on July 31, 2007 entitled, Toward a Level Playing Field: Enhancing Academic Integrity at the University of Waterloo. In that report, 36 recommendations are provided related to three major aspects: (1) enhancing policies, procedures and structures, (2) educating the UW community regarding academic integrity, and (3) taking specific action related to individual academic programs, use of learning technologies, security for examinations, arrangements for deferrals of assignments due to health issues, assignments and exams for online and distance education courses, and selected aspects of cooperative education activities.

The Executive Summary of the report is attached to this memo for your information. To read the entire report, please go to the following URL:

On September 19, 2007, the members of Deans Council endorsed the report. Deans Council also was pleased to note that action already has been taken regarding some recommendations, such as to include academic integrity into orientation programs for new students and for new faculty, both of which occurred in early September.

Deans Council agreed that action will initially be taken to:

- Establish an Academic Integrity Office, under the authority of the Associate Provost, Academic and Student Affairs, to coordinate and facilitate institution-wide initiatives.
• Ensure a statement related to academic integrity is included in print and electronic media produced by UW targeted to prospective and current students and, as appropriate, to faculty and staff.
• Identify academic units wishing to participate in a pilot project to use Plagiarism Detection Assistance Software to screen course assignments, and then implement the project.
• Develop and implement an online academic integrity module to be completed by new students during orientation.

Other recommendations in the report will be implemented incrementally, with appropriate consultation.

On behalf of the UW community, I express my appreciation to all those who served on the Academic Integrity Committee, and to those individuals and units at UW who provided information and advice that informed the report. I particularly thank those who took the time to respond to the survey of undergraduate and graduate students, and faculty and staff, in October 2006.

AC/kg
TOWARD A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD:

ENHANCING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AT
THE UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Academic Integrity Committee
University of Waterloo
Waterloo, Ontario

31 July 2007
Academic Integrity Committee  
University of Waterloo  
200 University Ave., W.,  
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Contact Frances Hannigan  
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it if more copies are required.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to share what has been learned from a review of policies and practices, and an examination of perceptions and attitudes of students, staff, faculty and administrators, related to academic integrity at the University of Waterloo (UW), and to present recommendations to enhance academic integrity.

The University Committee on Student Appeals (2006: A21, A22) has reported that most students are responsible members of the University community but also that an alarming trend in cheating by first-year students has been observed, and also that some students consider it acceptable to cheat to further their academic careers. In addition, the UCSA believes that many more incidents of cheating occur than are reported, because some instructors turn a blind eye, rationalizing that cheaters eventually 'self destruct'.

UW respondents to a survey in October 2006 indicated the frequency with which specific student academic misconduct behaviours occur. The most notable were students working with others when asked for individual work; getting questions/answers from someone who had already taken a test; receiving unpermitted help on an assignment; copying a few sentences from a written source without citing; and, copying from an electronic source without citing.

Students and faculty were asked to indicate the seriousness of various academic misconduct behaviours. The percentages of respondents indicating behaviour representing either “moderate” or “serious” cheating were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>Undergraduates</th>
<th>Graduates</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working with others when asked for individual work</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting Q/A from someone who has already taken a test</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving unpermitted help on an assignment</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping someone else cheat on a test</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copying material, word for word, from a written source</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turning in work done by someone else</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the first three behaviours, a noticeable difference exists in views among undergraduates, graduates and faculty. In contrast, the views of the groups are very similar for the last three behaviours. The different responses by respondent groups highlight the opportunity and need for information and education related to academic integrity.

The Academic Integrity Committee believes significant opportunity exists to improve policies and practice related to academic integrity at UW, and to enhance a culture of academic integrity. Three foundations should underlie any initiatives: (1) academic integrity is a shared matter, meaning that students, staff, faculty and the administration are all responsible to support and achieve it; (2) any academic integrity initiative should be based on at least one of the Center for Academic Integrity’s five values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness and responsibility; and, (3) no one measure or approach is sufficient to facilitate or enhance a high quality culture of academic integrity, requiring a mix of activities extending from information and education to monitoring, detection and sanctions.
UW should emphasize what students, staff and faculty should do regarding academic integrity. Consequently, it is appropriate to develop and publicize a statement outlining expectations related to academic integrity at UW, and appropriate behaviour by individuals. The committee recommends that UW should use the following statement as its vision for academic integrity:

To create and promote a culture of academic integrity, the behaviour of all members of the University of Waterloo should be based on honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

This statement should be included in relevant UW publications and websites, and students, staff and faculty should be given specific examples of behaviour, consistent with such values through a range of venues such as orientation sessions, discussion groups and workshops.

Priority Actions

UW should focus upon three overriding areas to improve academic integrity. These are presented below, along with specific initiatives. Throughout the report, 36 recommendations appear, and are provided in Appendix 8.5, grouped into the overriding areas and initiatives.

Once a vision for academic integrity is prepared, the committee believes that UW should improve academic integrity by:

A. Enhancing policies, procedures and structures through:

- Completing revision of relevant University policies and procedures to enhance their effectiveness and efficiency, and ensuring information about such policies and procedures is readily available in clear language.

- Ensuring faculty understand academic integrity policies and practices, and report all academic misconduct incidents to appropriate Associate Deans.

- Creating an Academic Integrity Office to provide leadership, coordination and oversight.

B. Educating the UW community about and publicizing the expected values and behaviour related to a culture of academic integrity, and possible consequences of infringement of academic integrity through:

- Using a variety of means to inform and publicize expected values and behaviour.

- Introducing all students to basic concepts of academic integrity during orientation.

- Requiring all new students complete an on-line academic integrity tutorial module in their first academic term.

- Providing academic integrity information and education to all new and continuing faculty and teaching assistants regarding their role in informing and educating students, design of courses, volume of assigned work and requirements of dealing with academic integrity infringements when they do occur.
C. **Taking specific actions through:**

- Having academic departments, schools and Faculties review their procedures and practices to determine how they may support improved academic integrity.
- Continuing to expand the use of learning technologies to enhance academic integrity.
- Enhancing security arrangements for examinations.
- Enhancing arrangements related to deferral of assignments or examinations due to health reasons.
- Enhancing arrangements for assignments and examinations for on-line and distance education courses.
- Enhancing selected aspects of co-operative education vulnerable to academic misconduct.