

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Some of the following material is taken from the Academic Integrity Office's "Academic Integrity: Teaching Assistant Essentials" handout:

TAs have a special responsibility to safeguard the integrity of scholarship. You're on the front lines, in the sense that you're meeting with students in small groups, grading exams and assignments, and as a student yourself, you understand many of the stresses, pressures, and goals that your students have. Your responsibilities include the following:

1. Explain cheating and academic integrity to your students.
2. Clarify rules and expectations with the instructor on behalf of the students.
3. Prevent cheating.
4. Observe and report cheating when it happens.

Okay, so what does all this mean? What can we actually do to promote an atmosphere of integrity in our classrooms? Here are some pro tips for what you can do:

- Talk with your instructor at the start of the quarter to make sure you know what the instructor considers cheating.
 - Are students allowed to collaborate on homework?
 - If they do collaborate, is it okay if their answers are the same?
 - If your class uses Piazza or a similar tool, are students allowed to discuss solutions to problems there?
 - Will calculators or note sheets be allowed on exams?
 - Pass this information on to your students.
- Observe and report suspicious acts.
 - Do two homework or exam solutions look identical, in a setting where this is unlikely to happen by chance?
 - Did a student directly copy homework solutions from a solutions website?
 - Is a student looking at another student's test sheet during an exam?
 - Are unauthorized testing aids being used?
 - If you're not quite sure what you're looking at, ask the professor or another TA to keep an eye on a suspicious student.
- We don't always know when integrity violations are occurring. Encourage students to report anything they notice to you!

- Tell students that if they see something suspicious going on during an exam, they can write a note on their blue book, raise their hand as if asking a question, and show you the note. This is a discrete way for them to alert you without being identified as the whistleblower by their peers.
- Reasons why your students should care about integrity:
 - If they do their homework by reading solutions rather than coming up with them, that's all they'll be learning to do. When the exam rolls around (which is worth much more of their grade!) they won't be prepared to come up with a solution from scratch.
 - Cheating doesn't just impact one person. Especially in a curved class, false improving your grade winds up unethically hurting someone else's.
 - Academic dishonesty devalues the university and prestige of the degree as a whole.
 - Cheating creates an atmosphere of distrust. This is why instructors need to see "proof" of an illness (doctor's notes).
- What to do when you suspect cheating:
 - Discuss what you saw with the professor and document everything as best you can. This could mean anything from taking notes at the scene to making copies of homework assignments or exams of the parties involved.
 - The professor has the option to talk directly with the student (or may allow you to talk directly with the student) before any action is taken, however this is not necessary.
 - The professor (or you!) should fill out a report as soon as possible. Reports can be filled out here: https://ucsd-advocate.symplicity.com/public_report/index.php/pid613517?rep_type=1001. A link to the reporting website can also be found on the Senior TA website.
- Some common misconceptions:
 - Reports are filed but nothing gets done.
 - * Not true! The Academic Integrity Office investigates each report it receives. If the student doesn't admit to any violation, it will proceed to the Academic Integrity Review Board (AIRB). 66% of cases that were heard by the AIRB resulted in holding the student accountable for an integrity violation.
 - If I report that a student was cheating, I'll ruin their life.
 - * There are a wide range of consequences for students. All students in violation of academic integrity policy must undergo Academic Integrity Training. On top of that, sanctions range from receiving a warning to suspension to dismissal, depending on the severity of the violation.
 - I shouldn't report if I don't have absolute proof that cheating occurred.

- * You don't need to be totally sure. If you believe it is more likely than not that an academic integrity violation occurred, you should report it. If you're unsure about what to do, feel free to give the Academic Integrity office a call for a consultation!
- The student will never admit to cheating, so the case won't go anywhere.
 - * Not true! According to data from the past 3 years, 69.48% of cases were resolved by the student accepting responsibility. One reason for this is that the consequences are more severe for students who try to cover up a violation once it has been reported. For more information on the point system behind the administrative sanctioning guidelines, visit <https://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu/process/consequences/sanctioning-guidelines.html#Criteria-#5:-Additional-Consider>.
- Finally, a few things to keep in mind:
 - A report **MUST** be filed before any administrative or academic sanction can occur. In other words, the professor cannot simply fail the student without writing a report. If you see this happening, let someone know!
 - Every student has the right to know what they have been accused of, and the right to respond to the accusation. This notification will happen automatically after you (or the professor) has submitted the report.

Good luck, and I hope you all continue to excel with integrity!