

2008 ACADEMIC INTEGRITY SURVEY RESULTS



Academic Integrity at USF as reflected by Students and Faculty

In the spring of 2008 an Academic Integrity (AI) Survey of both faculty and students was conducted at USF as an effort to gauge the level of honesty and integrity in students' academic practices by soliciting the opinions of USF faculty and students about the current state of academic integrity. The results will be used to craft and implement an Academic Integrity policy at USF that reflects the mission, values and goals of the University.

Methodology

The survey instrument was developed by Don McCabe from Rutgers University and has been used to collect data about academic integrity from over 165,000 students at 160 colleges and 18,000 faculty at 110 colleges. It is a self-reporting anonymous web-based instrument. The

surveys were divided into three parts: Academic Environment, Specific Behavior (considered cheating by most) and Demographics.

Population/Sample/Respondents

At USF all 8194 students, graduate and undergraduate, and 920 faculty, full- and part- time, were invited to participate by the Deans of their various schools. There were 916 student responses or 11% and 214 faculty responses or 23%. These numbers are consistent with the other national returns for these surveys. Faculty and students self selected. Students were encouraged to participate in an iPod Shuffle drawing; 10 iPods were randomly awarded as prizes for those who entered the drawing after completing the survey.

Of the 916 students responses, there were 385 graduate student responses and 531 undergraduate student responses. Data will be reported using this breakdown:

Undergraduate, graduate and faculty

Respondents:

	Total invited to participate	# Who returned surveys	Percentage Of return
Students	8194	916	11%
Undergraduate		531	
Graduate		385	
Faculty	920	214	23%

Demographics:

Seventy-two percent of the undergraduate students were female. Ninety-five percent of the undergraduate participants had GPAs of between 2.5 and 4.0. The majority of these students (52%) were from the College of Arts and Sciences.

Eighty-one percent of the graduate students were female, the majority 70%, had GPAs of 3.5-4.0 and were from the School of Education.

Fifty three percent of faculty was male, fifty-four percent were full-time and the majority were instructors. Fort- one percent of the respondents were from the College of Arts and Sciences and fifty-eight percent had been at the university for nine years or less.

Students

N=916	Undergraduate	Graduate
Gender		
Male	28%	39%
Female	72%	81%
Class standing		
First Year	17%	
Sophomore	27%	
Junior	28%	
Senior	28%	
GPA		
2.50-3.49	50%	27%
3.40-4.0	45%	70%
College:		
SOBAM (School of Business)	19%	12%
SON (School of Nursing)	18%	8%
A&S College of Arts and Sciences)	52%	18%
CPS (College of Professional Studies	8%	17%
SOE (School of Education)	<1%	28%
Law	1%	18%

Faculty:

N=214	% Responding
Gender	
Male	53%
Female	47%
Status	
Full time	54%
Part time	46%
Rank	
Instructor	36%
Assistant Professor	18%
Associate Professor	18%
Full Professor	19%
Other	9%
College:	
SOBAM (School of Business and Management)	14%
SON (School of Nursing)	15%
A&S (College of Arts and Sciences)	41%
CPS (College of Professional Studies	4%
SOE (School of Education)	6%
Law	
Length of time teaching	
<5 years	26%
5-9 years	27%
10-14 years	15%
15-19 years	13%
20 or more years	18%

Summary of Responses

Undergraduate Students

Although the majority of UG students rated the severity of penalties for cheating as high to very high at USF they did not rate themselves as either having strong understanding nor strong support of the policy. Conversely, 85% stated that they knew the academic integrity policy. They also indicated that faculty support and understanding of the cheating policy was high to very high. The majority of students learn the most about the policies from their faculty but stated they learn little from first-year orientation. The students felt that their instructors often discussed policies related to plagiarism but did not discuss much related to other cheating issues. Seventy-nine percent relate that they think that plagiarism, inappropriate group sharing on assignments and cheating on exams seldom to never occur at USF and fifty-three percent have never seen another student cheat on an exam/test. Over 85% denied that they personally copied from another during a test with or without the other's knowledge, and over 90% denied the use of electronic help (texting) during a test. Over 70% of all students responding to the survey denied specific incidences of cheating and most of those who responded indicated that any incidence of cheating was serious. The only exceptions to that were working with others when instructors asked for individual work, receiving unpermitted help on assignments, and falsifying or fabricating a bibliography. Less than 25% saw these instances of cheating as serious; most saw these as trivial or moderately serious.

Ninety-five percent of students have never reported another student for cheating and only 29% would anticipate doing that. Students were split on whether other students would disapprove if they saw them cheating but 95% said their parents would object.

Only 15% of students participating in the survey believe that cheating is a serious problem on this campus and most are either unsure or disagree with this statement. A majority of students did not feel that students should monitor each other for academic honesty.

Graduate Students

The majority of graduate students rated their and their faculty's understanding and support of the USF cheating policies as medium to very high and the severity of penalties as high. They learn the majority of information about these policies from faculty. The most commonly discussed policies include proper citations both written and from the internet and the least discussed were those related to falsifying lab or research data. Seventy-seven percent of these graduate students stated that plagiarism very seldom to only sometime occurs, 86% stated that they have never seen a student cheat on a test and 5% claimed that they have reported a student for cheating. Up to 96% of those responding did not engage in specific behaviors related to cheating and some saw specific behaviors related to cheating as trivial, e.g. falsifying or fabricating a bibliography, working with others when asked for individual work, using sources without citing them. The majority of students would not report an incident of cheating especially if it was a close friend. In general, students did not want to monitor each other and either were unsure or disagreed that cheating was a problem at USF. The majority did not think their friends or acquaintances would object to their cheating but their parents would.

Faculty

Seventy-six percent of the faculty who responded to the survey believed that the severity of cheating penalties at USF was in the low to medium range and that the faculty and student understanding and support of the policy were moderate. Most faculty stated that they discuss

plagiarism, group work collaboration, written and internet source citing in their course syllabus and at the start of each semester. It is also done before individual assignments. Faculty learn about student integrity primarily in the faculty handbook. In general, faculty believe that plagiarism on written assignments and inappropriate sharing on group assignments and cheating on a test/exam occurs very seldom to only sometimes. Over 70% of faculty have never seen a student cheat during a test or exam but if they do, they give a grade of "F" on the test or assignment. Thirty percent of faculty have ignored an incident of cheating in a course because of lack of proof. 39% of faculty have referred a suspected case of cheating (no indication was made of to whom they referred the student), over 64% were satisfied with the outcome but 17% were very dissatisfied.

Thirty-eight percent of faculty believe that cheating is a serious problem at USF and most are unsure if the investigation of instances of cheating is fair. Faculty are generally mixed regarding students monitoring other students' integrity and most are unsure whether faculty report suspected cases. When asked about safeguards to reduce cheating, 74% of faculty indicate that the syllabus has the information for students, 69 % say that they discuss their views on integrity with the classroom and, 57% closely monitor tests/exams and change their exams regularly.

Cheating Behaviors—Self-selected

	U.S.		USF	
	UG	Grad	UG	Grad
Copying during a test from another with or without their permission	6-9%	1-2%	7-8 %	1-2 %
Fabricating or falsifying bibliography	7-9 %	4%	9%	1%
Collaborating when asked to work alone	38%	4%	39%	11%
Using unpermitted crib notes	8%	4%	6%	3%

Plagiarism—Undergraduates

	U.S. 2002-2007		USF	
	UG	Grad	UG	Grad
Written cut and paste	26%	16%	27%	7-8%
Written plagiarism	4%	1%	3%	1%
Internet cut and paste	27%	18%	29%	18%
Internet plagiarism (paper mill)	2%	<1%	1%	0

Cheating Behaviors—Self-selected by college

	SOBAM		A/S		Nursing		CPS	
	UG	Grad	UG	Grad	UG	Grad	UG	Grad
	N=101	N=46	N=276	N=69	N=95	N=30	N=43	N=99
Copying during a test from another with or without their permission	0	2.3%	10-15%	5%	4-8%	0	0	0
Fabricating or falsifying bibliography	0	3.1%	18.7%	2-5%	10%	0	0	0
Collaborating when asked to work alone	50%	6.5%	52%	21.1%	39%	10.3%	33.3%	0
Using unpermitted crib notes	0	1.2%	7.7%	2.4%	6.5%	1.9%	14%	0

Cheating Behaviors—Self-selected by college

	SOE	Law
	N=108	N=69
Copying during a test from another with or without their permission	0	3.7%
Fabricating or falsifying bibliography	0	3.6%
Collaborating when asked to work alone	11.3%	21%
Using unpermitted crib notes	7.9%	3.7%

In addition to the quantitative questions in the AI Survey, participants were asked to respond to an open-ended question regarding “*suggested changes to the academic integrity policy*” at USF. There were 265 student responses to this question. These responses were divided into nine categories most frequently cited by students. Not all students spoke to each category. In general, students are aware of the academic integrity policy at USF; however, they maintain that it is not fully enforced. A considerable number of students mention that they have witnessed unethical behavior by other students and stated that USF and/or the faculty did not discipline most of these cases properly.

1. Students’ overall perspective: Of the 147 responses that involved student responsibility regarding cheating, most maintain that it is the students’ responsibility not to participate in cheating or any type of unethical behavior. They also see faculty as the primary means for preventing cheating through the coordination of both groups. Some methods mentioned by students that faculty could use to prevent cheating include that professors: discuss the academic integrity policy and also focus more in the student’s learning process rather than the amount of work given in class; should make use of different devices to control unethical behavior such as the use of websites to discover plagiarism in assignments, or the prohibition of electronic devices during exams; and that unethical behavior starts when faculty recycle old exams and assignments which influence students to copy this material. Also, 30% of the responses note that USF has influenced them not to participate in cheating and that the school has a good integrity policy but from their comments students are not fully aware of the policy.
2. Learning: Many of the students who spoke about learning indicated that students see a strong relationship between the learning process and cheating on assignments or exams. Students declare that they are more concerned with passing the class than in learning the material due to the belief that some topics are not useful in their professional lives. Students also report that time pressures in some assignments and courses are not enough for their learning and that it drives them to cheat. Some responses maintain that it is the professors’ responsibility to monitor the process as well as specify clearly the rules in each class.
3. Devices: Of those students who spoke to this issue, responses maintain that students should be banned from using any form of electronic devices during exams. They also felt that that faculty should use some devices and/or procedures that help them monitor students and prevent them from cheating. Examples include the use of bigger classrooms during exams, not leaving students by themselves, and being aware of their behavior. Getting extra help from TAs to monitor students during exams or checking for plagiarism on assignments is also suggested
4. Rules: Students who addressed this issue stated that USF rules are not well understood and that major enforcement is required and that it is USF who has to clarify and specify the academic integrity policy (rules) in order to enforce the proper behavior by students.
5. Penalties: Students speaking to this issue maintained that students should be held accountable and penalized whenever they cheat. Some stated that USF should enforce and be consistent with the policies; in most of these responses, students reported that USF has not penalized students properly and in many cases has ignored occurrences of cheating.
6. Report: Responses state that students have witnessed some sort of unethical behavior; however, they believe that it is not the student’s responsibility to report this but that it is the faculty who should be in charge of controlling, reporting and penalizing integrity infractions.
7. Assignments: Students maintain that the way professors assign homework or papers might influence students’ behavior stating that students might cheat in assignments due

to an overload of class work as well as the availability of assignments from previous semesters.

8. Classes: Some respondents state that students have taken classes in which the academic integrity policy was not clearly explained. Also, students maintain that many classes overload them with work that is perceived as not relevant to their learning process, which leads some students to cheat. On the other hand, some students maintain that the way faculty develop classes and enforce the rules from the very beginning impacts academic integrity at USF.
9. Exams: Those who spoke to this issue mention that faculty should monitor exams better, or prepare new material for testing students' knowledge while others state that faculty should enforce the proper behavior, such as banning electronic devices, not allowing students to leave the classroom during exams, and not leaving students by themselves while taking a test.

Outcomes:

The results of the AI survey of faculty and students do not demonstrate that a major problem exists regarding cheating on the USF campus and that we are consistent with the results of other schools and colleges in the U.S.. However, it does indicate that there needs to be a widely communicated Academic Honesty Policy that is used by faculty in all colleges and that has the understanding and support of the faculty and student communities. The policy, when crafted, will reflect the role of faculty and students in maintaining academic integrity and in preventing academic dishonesty at USF. The policy and rules will be communicated in all written information and in the classroom.

In general, this survey reinforces some principles identified by the AI Task Force:

1. Administration, faculty and students must craft an academic honesty policy to ensure responsibility and accountability for the policy.
2. Administration, faculty and students must define academic honesty
3. Expectations of faculty and students' role in academic integrity must be clarified
4. Faculty and students must demonstrate understanding and support of an academic integrity policy
5. Faculty and administration must respond to academic dishonesty in a fair and consistent manner when it occurs.
6. Faculty and students must assume responsibility each in their own way for academic integrity.
7. Academic integrity must become the cultural norm

Faculty procedures can be put into place such as discussion of USF policy, college and course views on integrity in the classroom; monitoring students during test-taking; written information in the catalog, and student and faculty handbooks; enforcing the academic integrity policy fairly and consistently.

Student incentives can be put into place which include would help in developing a peer environment at USF which supports academic integrity as a cultural norm, strengthen sense of self respect and developmental values, view learning as a stepping stone for life and also learn the consequences for breaches in academic integrity.

If as a community we believe in the mission, value and goals of USF, then the Academic Integrity Policy should reflect those foundations.

Pat Lynch, Chairperson
Academic Integrity Task Force