

FACULTY EXPERIENCES WITH STUDENT CHEATING: A PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

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ABSTRACT

The overall goal of this study was to determine college professors' perceptions towards academic dishonesty and how they have dealt with these issues throughout their careers. Data were gathered from an online survey sent to 21,912 professors across the United States. The results revealed that 94.8% of the 2,667 professors who responded to the survey said that they had encountered an instance of cheating in their teaching career. Of those professors that stated they had encountered cheating 77.8% encountered it on writing assignments, 69.5% encountered it on exams, 51.1% on homework, and 23.8% encountered cheating on group assignments.

During exams, the most common method of prevention was visual observation with 33.9% of professors using observation. Following this was the use of different versions of the exam with 28.3%. For homework, the most frequent form of prevention was grading and comparison of assignments or learning a students writing style. Other topics covered in the survey include the use of honor codes and the practice of overlooking academic dishonesty by professors.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to discover current professors' attitudes towards student cheating and how they manage it in their classrooms. We wanted to learn how many professors had experienced academic dishonesty, how they disciplined students when it was discovered, and what measures professors implemented to prevent academic dishonesty. We also wanted to assess the impact an honor code has on academic dishonesty.

This paper begins with a brief review of faculty perceptions towards student cheating followed by a set of research objectives. The study design is presented next followed by the results in table-narrative format. We conclude with an analysis and study limitations.

BACKGROUND

Student cheating has been an ongoing problem in higher education for decades. Research on the topic has been ongoing for the past seventy years (Etter, Cramer, & Finn, 2006). However, the first major comprehensive study on the subject was conducted by Bill Bowers in 1964. In his work, over 5000 students at 99 U.S. institutions of higher learning were surveyed. The results found that three fourths of

the students had taken part in some form of academic dishonesty (Bowers, 1964). Thirty years later, McCabe and Trevino (1997) conducted a similar study and found a modest increase in cheating over the Bowers study. They also noted an increase in cheating among female students. In addition to conducting this study and many others, McCabe also founded the Center for Academic Integrity (CAI) in 1993 (Gallant & Drinan, 2006).

The latest inventions in this digital age have made it easier for students to cheat (Sterngold, 2004). However, this technology has also given professors better ways to discover if cheating has occurred in their courses. For example, websites such as Turnitin.com allow professors to compare student papers with a large database of previously written papers. The website highlights potential plagiarized parts (including information from the original source) of the paper for further investigation.

Professors state some students do not think that they are cheating even when they are. Some of this confusion arises on the protocols for citing references. They say that students do not think copying and pasting a few sentences from a website constitutes cheating (Selingo, 2004). Professors also feel that students learn this behavior in high school and that nothing is done to correct the problem, so they carry it over into college. Professors are also employing tactics such as randomly assigned seating, numbered exams, handing out different tests during a testing period, and using class lists and ID's to identify students. A growing body of research indicates that the adoption of an honor code will aid in the prevention of cheating (McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 2002).

The reasons professors gave for not reporting cheating is that there is not enough evidence to prove that the student was cheating and they are afraid of what will happen to them if they turn the student in (Keith-Spiegel, Tabachnick, Whitley, & Washburn, 1998). There have been several cases when a professor turned a student in for cheating and was pressured by the administration to let the matter drop (Lambert, 2005). Other reasons professors give for not turning students in is because the process is perceived to be bureaucratic (McCabe, Trevino & Butterfield, 2001). Dr. John Barrie, the founder of Turnitin.com, feels that professors do not report cheating because they want to protect the school's image and name.

Donald McCabe conducted a study on student cheating and asked 800 professors at 16 institutions if they had ever reported cheating: 40% said "never," 54% checked "seldom," and 6% picked "often" (McCabe & Trevino, 1996). This study found that professors handle cheaters quietly and quickly with a stern warning. In instances when a student copies homework, the professor made them redo the assignment. When the student plagiarized a paper, the student received a failing grade.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The following research objectives were identified for this study.

- To determine how wide spread student cheating currently is based on the experiences of college-level educators that have witnessed acts of academic dishonesty during their teaching careers.
- To discover in which activities students tend to be dishonest. Also, out of those activities, which assignments yield the most dishonesty.
- To find out how professors discipline academic dishonesty. Also, is there a preferred disciplinary action in similar situations?
- To discover the preventative measures professors' use during different academic assignments to prevent cheating.
- To find the effect an honor code has on the number of students involved in dishonest activity.

- To learn if any professors ignore the issue of academic dishonesty. We also wanted to know the reasons why some professors overlook the issue

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

We used descriptive research to discover professors' attitudes about cheating. We chose this method because we felt that the professors' experiences with cheating would cover a wide range of topics. We felt most professors would agree that cheating is not acceptable, but we wanted to know how each individual professor handles cheating and their thoughts on improving the situation.

DATA COLLECTION FORMAT

Our data collection format consisted of an online survey with thirty-two questions. We used email to contact our respondents, giving them a link to the survey. The professors' emails were obtained from a website that listed all of the colleges in the United States. After obtaining the websites for each college we went to the site to locate the professors' email. The addresses were compiled and the email requests were sent. We sent out the first set of email requests from May 15th through May 29th, 2006. To those that did not respond, a second requests were sent out between June 1st through June 25th, 2006.

We used a structured-undisguised survey. All respondents received surveys with the same wording and questions in the same order. We used fixed-alternative questions and open-ended questions. We used these two options because we felt that it was important to give the respondents fixed choices but also allow them to voice their opinions freely.

POPULATION

The population for this project was any college professor/instructor in the United States. Obviously, the total number of college professors across the entire United States is quite large. Therefore, the sampling unit became college professors who had their email address readily available on the Internet, usually through their college's website. Some schools did not disclose the email addresses, but most were obtainable either through a college-wide directory or by searching through each department. As a result, the sampling unit was a convenience sample. Our final email list contained 21,912 email addresses.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The results of selected questions appear next. For each question, a table is provided and additional comments are offered.

Have you ever had an instance of student cheating during your teaching career?

Response	Number (%)
Yes	2,529 (94.8%)
No	138 (5.2%)
Total	2667 (100.0%)

In which of the following activities have you had instances of cheating?

Activity	Number (%)
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Writing assignments	1,967 (77.8%)
Exams	1,757 (69.5%)
Homework	1,293 (51.1%)
Group assignments	603 (23.8%)

The respondents were able to select multiple options from this question. Therefore, the percentages total more than 100%. Of the respondents who have had instances of cheating, 77.8% have witnessed cheating on writing assignments, 69.5% on exams, 51.1% on homework, and 23.8% on group assignments.

During the following activities, what forms of cheating have you encountered? Choose all that apply. (2,529 responses)

	Cheat Sheet/Hidden Notes	Whispering in class	Plagiarism	Copying from another student
Exams	924 (36.5%)	430 (17.0%)	213 (8.4%)	1,417 (56.0%)
Homework	15 (.6%)	18 (.7%)	768 (30.4%)	1,055 (41.7%)
Group Assignments	9 (.4%)	18 (.7%)	348 (13.8%)	468 (18.5%)
Writing Assignments	18 (.7%)	22 (.9%)	1,910 (75.5%)	864 (34.2%)

For this question, the respondents were given a chart and they marked which forms of cheating they have encountered on various assignments. They could mark all that applied, although some of the options would not be applicable. An example of this would be “Whispering in class” on Homework. As the chart shows, 75.5% of respondents have come across plagiarism on writing assignments, so plagiarism is definitely an issue. The next highest percentage, 56.0%, stated that respondents have seen students copying from other students during an exam.

On average, how did you handle each of the following situations on an exam? Choose all that apply. (1,757 responses)

	Verbally warned the student	Lowered grade	Failed the student	Referred incident to honor court/administration	Overlooked the incident
Cheat Sheet/Hidden Notes	478 (27.2%)	422 (24.0%)	431 (24.5%)	323 (18.4%)	70 (4.0%)
Whispering in class	536 (30.5%)	89 (5.1%)	27 (1.5%)	35 (2.0%)	57 (3.2%)
Plagiarism	531 (30.2%)	737 (41.9%)	671 (38.2%)	568 (32.3%)	36 (2.0%)
Copying from another student	803 (45.7%)	826 (47.0%)	571 (32.5%)	471 (26.8%)	97 (5.5%)

This chart allowed the respondent to select how he/she disciplined common forms of cheating on exams. Since only 1,757 respondents have seen cheating on exams, the percentages are based on the number in the box divided by 1,757. The most common form of discipline for cheat sheets/hidden notes was a verbal warning with 27.2%. For whispering in class, the highest was a verbal warning again with 30.5%. For plagiarism, the most common form of discipline was lowering the grade with 41.9%. Finally, copying from another student was most commonly punished by lowering the grade with 47.0% or respondents choosing this option. 5.5% of respondents overlooked copying from another student on exams.

On average, how did you handle each of the following situations regarding homework? Choose all that apply. (1,293 responses)

	Verbally warned the student	Lowered grade	Failed the student	Referred incident to honor court/ administration	Overlooked the incident
Cheat Sheet/Hidden Notes	116 (9.0%)	144 (11.1%)	58 (4.5%)	43 (3.3%)	21 (1.6%)
Whispering in class	135 (10.4%)	44 (3.4%)	11 (.9%)	13 (1.0%)	19 (1.5%)
Plagiarism	542 (41.9%)	682 (52.7%)	417 (32.2%)	313 (24.2%)	42 (3.2%)
Copying from another student	681 (52.7%)	821 (63.5%)	336 (26.0%)	247 (19.1%)	85 (6.6%)

The respondents could select as many options as necessary because more than one form of punishment is used on cheating. 63.5% of respondents lowered the grade on the homework if one student copied from another. 52.7% gave a verbal warning if copying was an issue. For plagiarism, 52.7% lowered the grade and 41.9% gave a verbal warning. 6.6% overlooked copying from another student.

On average, how did you handle each of the following situations regarding group assignments? Choose all that apply. (603 responses)

	Verbally warned the student	Lowered grade	Failed the student	Referred incident to honor court/ administration	Overlooked the incident
Cheat Sheet/Hidden Notes	58 (9.6%)	56 (9.3%)	22 (3.6%)	13 (2.2%)	15 (2.5%)
Whispering in class	68 (11.3%)	34 (5.6%)	10 (1.7%)	5 (.8%)	18 (3.0%)
Plagiarism	289 (47.9%)	376 (62.3%)	181 (30.0%)	140 (23.2%)	29 (4.8%)

Copying from another student	346 (57.4%)	441 (73.1%)	155 (25.7%)	115 (19.1%)	42 (7.0%)
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This chart showed how the 603 respondents who have seen cheating on group assignments handled certain incidents. Slightly over 73% punished copying from another student by lowering the grade and 57.4% gave a verbal warning. For plagiarism on group assignments, 62.3% lowered the grade and 47.9% gave verbal warning. 7.0% of respondents overlooked copying from another student on group assignments.

On average, how did you handle each of the following situations regarding writing assignments? Choose all that apply. (1,967 responses)

	Verbally warned the student	Lowered grade	Failed the student	Referred incident to honor court/administration	Overlooked the incident
Cheat Sheet/Hidden Notes	64 (3.3%)	86 (4.4%)	60 (3.1%)	34 (1.7%)	9 (.5%)
Whispering in class	76 (3.9%)	42 (2.1%)	19 (1.0%)	10 (.5%)	9 (.5%)
Plagiarism	847 (43.1%)	1,152 (58.6%)	993 (50.5%)	819 (41.6%)	51 (2.6%)
Copying from another student	551 (28.0%)	764 (38.8%)	546 (27.8%)	401 (20.4%)	41 (2.1%)

This chart shows how respondents handled certain cheating techniques on writing assignments. The percentages are based on the 1,967 respondents who indicated they have seen cheating on writing assignments. With writing assignments, plagiarism seemed to be the biggest issue. 58.6% lowered the grade when plagiarism occurred and 50.5% of respondents failed the student. Only 2.6% did nothing about plagiarism.

Approximately how many instances of cheating have you observed in your classes? Question was open-ended. (2,667 responses)

Category of Instances	Number (%)
Light (1-3 per year)	1,884 (70.6%)
Medium (3.01-7 per year)	212 (7.9%)
Other	183 (6.9%)
None	138 (5.2%)
Heavy (7.01+ per year)	136 (5.1%)
Too many to count	55 (2.1%)
Not many	32 (1.2%)
Did not answer	27 (1.0%)

Some professors listed how many instances they have seen across their whole careers while others gave a number per year or per semester. Since we neglected to put a time frame on this question and we did not know exactly how many years each professor had taught we had to analyze this question differently. Therefore, we developed a system broken down by instances per year as seen in the above table. A later question asks how many years the professor has been teaching on a ten year basis. So, if the professor gave a number for this question (such as 12) and said they have been teaching 1-10 years; we divided 12 by the median number between 1 and 10, which is 5.5. As a result, $12/5.5=2.18$ instances of cheating per year and that would be added to the “Light” category.

What methods do you use to prevent cheating on Exams?

Question was open-ended. (2,667 responses)

Method	Number (%)
Observation or proctoring	905 (33.9%)
Different versions of exam	756 (28.3%)
Seating arrangements	707 (26.5%)
No outside materials	310 (11.6%)
Did not answer	257 (9.6%)
Open ended questions	256 (9.6%)
Other	225 (8.4%)
Warnings	205 (7.7%)
Change tests often	188 (7.0%)
Honor Code or signed honest pledge	102 (3.8%)
Open book or allow cheat sheet	85 (3.2%)
None/NA/Do not give	64 (2.4%)
Keep old exams	61 (2.3%)
Comparison or Grading	37 (1.4%)
Answer was irrelevant	32 (1.2%)
Different or no make-up test	26 (1.0%)
Students must use cover sheets	27 (1.0%)
Take home tests	26 (1.0%)
Students cannot leave the room	24 (.9%)
Timed tests	19 (.7%)
Study guides or give questions ahead of time	19 (.7%)
No talking allowed	14 (.5%)

This question was open-ended and the respondent could list as many ways as they wanted to show how they prevent cheating on exams, which is why the percentages total more than 100%. As the above chart shows, various ways of preventing cheating on exams are used by the respondents. Observation/Proctoring had the highest percentage with 33.9%. 28.3% of respondents use different versions of the exam and 26.5% use some form of seating arrangements. Other answers with a relatively high response rate included “No Outside Materials” with 11.6% and Open-Ended Questions with 9.6%. Also, 9.6% of the respondents did not answer this question.

What methods do you use to prevent cheating on Homework?

Question was open-ended. (2,667 responses)

Method	Number (%)
Did not answer	975 (36.6%)
None/NA/Does not count for much	393 (14.7%)
Warning	293 (11.0%)
Grading/comparison/learn writing styles	278 (10.4%)
Individualized assignments	181 (6.8%)
Other	141 (5.3%)
Specialized or unique topics	113 (4.2%)
Allow group collaboration	96 (3.6%)
Honor code or pledge work	65 (2.4%)
Turnitin.com or other software	59 (2.2%)
Answer was irrelevant	58 (2.2%)
Change assignments often	57 (2.1%)
Internet or search engines	45 (1.7%)
Check or require works cited	45 (1.7%)
Teach about plagiarism or citing	36 (1.3%)
Follow up in class	34 (1.3%)
Keep old assignments	22 (.8%)
Require drafts or make students show all work	14 (.5%)

This question was similar to the previous one except it asked for cheating prevention methods used for homework. Again, many unique responses were given. A large number of respondents, 36.6%, chose not to answer this question and 14.7% said “None,” “Not applicable,” or “Homework does not count for much.” 10.4% responded that they use grading or comparison of homework assignments to prevent cheating on homework. The next highest total was 6.8%, which was for individualized assignments.

What methods do you use to prevent cheating on Group Assignments?

Question was open-ended. (2,667 responses)

Method	Number (%)
Did not answer	1,204 (45.1%)
None/NA/Do not give	451 (16.9%)
Peer evaluations	214 (8.0%)
Warning	185 (6.9%)
Individual accountability/classroom presentation	128 (4.8%)
Other	119 (4.5%)
Comparison/grading	92 (3.4%)
Specific or unique assignments	82 (3.1%)

In class or monitoring	70 (2.6%)
Honor code or signed pledge	52 (1.9%)
Answer was irrelevant	50 (1.9%)
Groups self-police themselves	44 (1.6%)
Teaching about plagiarism or citing	41 (1.5%)
Each group has different assignment	40 (1.5%)
Turnitin.com or other software	36 (1.3%)
Require works cited	30 (1.1%)
Internet or search engine	29 (1.1%)
Change assignments often	22 (.8%)
Keep old work	9 (.3%)

Similar to the previous two questions, this question was open-ended and asked for methods of preventing cheating. This question involved group assignments. A high percentage, 45.1% did not answer this question and 16.9% said None/Not Applicable/Do not give. Eight percent of the respondents said they use peer evaluations to deter cheating on group assignments and 6.9% give a warning.

What methods do you use to prevent cheating on the following Writing Assignments? Question was open-ended. (2,667 responses)

Method	Number (%)
Did not answer	474 (17.8%)
Warning	443 (16.6%)
Comparison/Grading/Learn writing styles	374 (14.0%)
Specialized or unique topics	370 (13.9%)
Turnitin.com or other software	325 (12.2%)
Internet or search engine	319 (12.0%)
Require works cited	311 (11.7%)
Teach about plagiarism or citing	256 (9.6%)
Drafts or show all work	170 (6.4 %)
Na/None/Don't give	118 (4.4%)
Personal reflection or opinion questions	102 (3.8%)
Honor code or signed pledge	87 (3.3%)
Change assignments often	81 (3.0%)
Other	81 (3.0%)
Answer was irrelevant	79 (3.0%)
Students have different topics	69 (2.6%)
Keep old copies	53 (2.0%)
In class or observation	50 (1.9%)

This question dealt with the prevention of cheating on writing assignments and was open-ended. Almost eighteen percent (17.8%) of the respondents did not answer this question. Over sixteen percent (16.6%)

of the respondents discourage cheating on writing assignments by giving a warning. Fourteen percent said they use comparison/grading/learn writing styles to prevent cheating. Almost fourteen percent used specialized or unique topics. Turnitin.com was used by 12.2% or other plagiarism software and 12.0% use the Internet or search engines to prevent cheating. Finally, 11.7% require a works cited page.

In your opinion, what would be the appropriate punishment/discipline for a student caught with a cheat sheet during a test? Assume that this is a first time offense.

Question was open-ended. (2,667 responses.)

Method	Number (%)
Fail the exam or give the students a zero on the exam	1,604 (60.1%)
Refer incident to dean or administration	464 (17.4%)
Fail the course	381 (14.3%)
Warning	305 (11.4%)
Letter grade reduction	215 (8.1%)
Give the student another test	146 (5.5%)
Discuss with the student	127 (4.8%)
Expulsion or suspension	115 (4.3%)
Depends on the student or situation	92 (3.4%)
Answer was irrelevant	78 (2.9%)
Other	78 (2.9%)
Take test away from the student	67 (2.5%)
Failure	50 (1.9%)
Do not know/No opinion/NA	47 (1.8%)
Did not answer	34 (1.3%)
Give additional assignment	17 (.6%)
Public humiliation	6 (.2%)

This question was open-ended and allowed the respondent to say what they would do if they caught a student cheating on a test for the first time. They could list as many disciplinary techniques as they wanted. Some respondents put multiple answers, so the percentages total more than 100%. 60.1% said they would give the student a failing grade or a zero on the exam. 17.4% would refer the incident to the dean or administration. 14.3% of respondents would fail the student for the entire course and 11.4% stated that they would give a warning.

Why do you think some professors overlook some occurrences of cheating? (Choose all that apply).
(2,667 responses)

Reason	Number (%)
Not enough time to pursue matter	1,502 (56.3%)
Lack of support from administration	965 (36.2%)
Other (see next table below)	876 (32.8%)
Cheating wasn't serious	548 (20.5%)
Difficult to prove	429 (16.1%)

Punishment is too severe

368 (13.8%)

This question was an opinion question in chart form regarding the issue of why some professors overlook cheating. The respondents could choose any of the selections that they thought were relevant. 56.3% said there is not enough time to pursue the matter. Next, 36.2 % said lack of support from administration, 32.8% said other, 20.5% said cheating was not serious, 16.1% said cheating is difficult to prove, and 13.8% said the punishment is too severe.

Other – This response category from the previous question was open ended and is presented below. (876 responses)

Reason	Number (%)
Do not want to confront or afraid of lawsuit	199 (22.7%)
Too lazy or the process is too time consuming	176 (22.5%)
Want to get a good evaluation or be liked	82 (9.4%)
Procedure or policy does not work	76 (8.7%)
Other	76 (8.7%)
Do not care	66 (7.5%)
Want to give another chance or feel bad for the student	60 (6.8%)
Lack integrity themselves or are bad professors	53 (6.1%)
Cheating will not help the student anyway or the cheating will hurt them in the long run	43 (4.9%)
Do not look for cheating or lack knowledge to deal with cheating	42 (4.8%)
Feel student does not know what cheating is	23 (2.6%)
Not enough proof	18 (2.1%)
Do not know	15 (1.7%)
Do not overlook	7 (.8%)

This table is from the 876 respondents who said “Other” to the previous question. If they selected “Other,” then they could type what they wanted to justify the selection of the “Other” option. Of the 876 respondents, 22.7% said professors do not want to confront or are fearful of a lawsuit. Other answers included other professors are too lazy (22.5%) or the process simply takes up too much of their time. Almost ten percent (9.4%) said professors want to be liked or get a good evaluation.

When do you discuss your cheating policies with students on the following topics? Choose all that apply. (2,667 responses)

	Do not discuss	In a syllabus	Per assignment	Other	Not relevant for my courses
Plagiarism	66 (2.5%)	2,205 (82.7%)	1,185 (44.3%)	547 (20.5%)	101 (3.8%)
Group assignments	160 (6.0%)	1,177 (44.1%)	839 (31.5%)	265 (9.9%)	607 (22.8%)
Proper citation	57 (2.1%)	1,605 (60.2%)	1,468 (55.0%)	511 (19.2%)	196 (7.3%)
Exams	205 (7.7%)	1,885 (70.7%)	1,003 (37.6%)	430 (16.1%)	114 (4.3%)

This question was in chart form and allowed the respondent to select as many options as they desired on when they discuss issues pertaining to cheating. For plagiarism, group assignments, proper citation, and exams, the syllabus was the option with the highest percentage. In fact, 82.7% said they discuss plagiarism in the syllabus. That was the highest percentage on the chart. 7.7% of the respondents do not discuss a cheating policy for exams.

Based on your experience, which gender has had a greater tendency to cheat?

Answer	Number (%)
No difference	1,327 (49.8%)
I have not had enough experience to give a conclusive answer	620 (23.2%)
Male	596 (22.3%)
Female	117 (4.4%)
Did not answer	7 (.3%)

This question was in chart form. Nearly half, 49.8%, of the respondents said there is no difference in regards to which gender has the greatest tendency to cheat. Interestingly, 23.2% of respondents said they have not had enough experience to give a conclusive answer. On a gender level, 22.3% said males have a greater tendency to cheat, while only 4.4% of respondents said females do. A very small percentage (.3%) chose not to answer this question.

Do you think cheating is a problem on your campus?

Answer	Number (%)
Yes	1,758 (65.9%)
Not sure	609 (22.8%)
No	296 (11.1%)
Did not answer	4 (.1%)

This question was a chart that allowed the respondent to select Yes, No, or Not Sure. A sizeable number of respondents (65.9%) said that cheating is a problem on their campus. Over twenty percent (22.8%) of respondents were not sure and only 11.1% said cheating was not a problem.

How would you evaluate the cheating policy on your campus in regards to its effectiveness in minimizing cheating?

Answer	Number (%)
Very strong	187 (7.0%)
Strong	1,032 (38.7%)
Indifferent	799 (30.0%)
Weak	467 (17.5%)
Very weak	116 (4.3%)
Did not answer	66 (2.4%)

Seven percent of respondents believed their school has a very strong cheating policy and 38.7 % said their school's cheating policy was strong. Thirty percent of the respondents were indifferent, 17.5% reported a weak cheating policy, 4.3% said very weak, and 2.4% chose not to answer this question.

Does your school have an honor code?

Answer	Number (%)
Yes	1,423 (53.4%)
No	807 (30.3%)
Not sure	428 (16.0%)
Did not answer	9 (.3%)

Over half of the respondents (53.4 %) said their school has an honor code while 30.3% said their school does not. Surprisingly, 16.0% of the respondents did not know if the school they are teaching at has honor code or not. Some respondents did not answer this question.

Do you think the existence of an honor code aids in minimizing cheating?

Answer	Number (%)
Yes	886 (33.2%)
No	726 (27.2%)
Not sure	1,047 (39.3%)
Did not answer	8 (.3%)

Slightly over one-third (39.3%) said they were not sure if an honor code aids in minimizing cheating. One third (33.2%) said it does help minimize cheating, while 27.2% of respondents stated that it does not. Only .3% chose not to answer this question.

Please indicate your gender.

Answer	Number (%)
Male	1,429 (53.6%)
Female	1,216 (45.6%)

Did not answer	22 (.8%)
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How many years have you been teaching at the undergraduate level?

Answer	Number (%)
0-10 years	1,029 (38.6%)
11-20 years	784 (29.4%)
21-30 years	477 (17.9%)
31+ years	260 (9.7%)
Did not answer	117 (4.4%)

This chart shows 38.6% of the professors who took this survey have taught for 10 years or less at the undergraduate level. Almost thirty percent (29.4%) of respondents have taught between 11-20 years, 17.9% have taught between 21-30 years, 9.7% have been teaching at the undergraduate level for 31 years or more and 4.4% did not answer this question.

ANALYSIS

According to our research, it was clear that an overwhelming amount of instructors have witnessed cheating at the college level. In fact 94.8% have seen an act of academic dishonesty, leaving only 5.2% who have not. The results of our first objective were what we expected. It seems logical that an educator would come across at least one dishonest person during the course of their career.

Second, we wanted to discover during which activities were students most likely to be dishonest. We found that writing assignments had the highest level of dishonesty with 77.8%, followed by exams with 69.5%, homework with 51.1%, and group assignments with 23.8%. The reason we believe writing assignments were the most cheated on activity is partly because they are usually out of the classroom projects. This means there is no direct supervision during the writing of the paper, leaving more room for temptation. Writing assignments typically involve the use of the Internet or other outside sources to gain knowledge of a subject. While researching online, students can find a completed paper on a wide range of topics online and reframe it as their own work.

We believe exams were second in frequency because cheating in this instance is sometimes done on impulse. The panic of being unprepared for an exam overwhelms students and they then begin to cheat in hopes of passing the exam. Homework also had a high percentage for mostly the same reasons as writing assignments. It too, is rarely done in the classroom and some instructors use homework as more of a teaching tool rather than counting it for a sizeable grade. This may lead students to think that the lack of a grade for the assignment also relaxes the rules on academic dishonesty. Group assignments probably had the lowest percentage because many professors do not give group assignments. Also, group assignments tend to limit the amount of cheating for two reasons. The first reason is multiple people are working on a project and that makes the workload lighter, which lowers the urge to be dishonest. Secondly, the presence of others helps keep an individual who would ordinarily cheat honest in order to avoid criticism from the group.

During exams, 56.0% of professors of who have had an occurrence of cheating have witnessed students copying from another's paper. This could be the top reason because it is the easiest way to cheat if the cheating was unplanned. If the students found themselves unprepared, it would be an easy opportunity to try to improve their exam score. The method of using cheat sheets came in second with 36.5% of

respondents saying that they have seen this. This finding suggests that the dishonest act was planned, so that means a significant number of students make an active decision to cheat on exams. The third most common method was whispering in class with 17% of professors having witnessed this. The final form was plagiarism which came in at a low 8.4% because it would mostly likely be used on take-home exams which are given less frequently than traditional exams.

During homework activities, the most used means of cheating was copying from another student's paper with 41.7% of professors reporting this infraction. This was expected because homework is an out of class activity and students have more of an opportunity to be dishonest about their work.

Group assignments had lower numbers overall, but the most used form of cheating during this activity is copying from another student with 18.5% of the professors reporting this activity. This could be viewed as group members cheating from each other or one group cheating from another group. The second most used measure was plagiarism with 13.8% reported from the respondents. This was also not surprising because most group projects include a written report and that would allow for plagiarism to sneak into the project. Whispering in class was mentioned with .7% and cheat sheets were also included with .4% of professors having witnessed this form of cheating. These numbers are low because this type of assignment does not lend itself to this form of cheating.

Writing assignments easily lend themselves to plagiarism, so it was not a surprise when 75.5% of the professors who have had an instance of cheating reported plagiarism on writing assignments. Again, this is a large percentage because this form of assignment can easily be found on the Internet. The second most common form of cheating was copying from another's paper, with 34.2% of professors citing this reason. Whispering in class and cheat sheets had a small percentage at 9% and .7% respectively.

We also wanted to know how educators tried to prevent cheating from occurring. During exams, the most common form of prevention was observation with 33.9% of professors using this form. Following this was using different versions of the exam with 28.3% of professors using this intervention. The third most used method was using seating arrangements with 26.5% and prohibiting outside materials also had 11.6%. The top responses to this question are the things that are easiest for the professor to control. Therefore it is logical that those would be the most popular forms of prevention.

During the activity of homework, the most used prevention system was simply warning the students not to cheat with a usage rate of 11%. The second prevention technique was grading and comparing the assignments at 10.4%. This is not actually a preventative measure, but a sizeable number of the professors gave that response.

Cheating was most often prevented on group assignments by peer evaluations with 8% of professors using that. Warning the students had 6.9% of professors preferring that method. The peer evaluation method is a great way to prevent cheating as well as insuring that group members do their share of the project.

Preventing academic dishonesty during writing assignments was most commonly done with comparison during grading or learning writing styles with 14.0% of professors choosing this method. Even though this could be considered looking for cheating instead of prevention, 14.0% still mentioned it. This prevention method was followed by specialized and unique topics at 13.9%. Next, 12.2% of professors report they use Turnitin.com or some other anti-plagiarism software. Also, 12.0% said they use the Internet or search engines. We consider that more of a way to discover cheating instead of preventing it. The answers to all of the prevention techniques were quite varied because there are many ways to prevent cheating.

Another objective was to discover if professors believe honor codes have an impact on the number of students that cheat. Of the educators we surveyed, 39.3% said they were not sure, 33.2% said that they believe an honor code minimizes cheating, and 27.2% of professors said that honor codes did not minimize cheating. Professors state that 53.4% of them have an honor code at their institution while 30.3% do not have one. Also, 16% of professors were unsure if their school had an honor code, which was a surprisingly high number.

We also wanted to know if some professors overlook the issue of academic dishonesty and if so, why would they do this. The above results show that a very small percentage of educators actually overlooking the issue, but some do. The professors were asked why they believe some instances of cheating are overlooked. The most common response was that the professor does not have enough time to pursue the matter with 56.3% of professors choosing this as a reason. The other top reason educators may overlook cheating is a lack of support from the administration with 36.2% claiming that this is why some overlook cheating. According to our survey, very few professors overlook cheating. However, there are still some professors that will overlook cheating and this is a problem that needs to be addressed.

The survey was also designed to gather other statistical information. One question we asked was the gender of our respondents. According to our results, 53.6% were males and 45.6% were females. Some respondents chose not to divulge their gender for various reasons. We also asked which department the educator teaches in. The departments that had a sizeable response rate were Social Sciences, Business, English, Science, Fine Arts, Math and Computer Science, Education, Physical Education, and Nursing. Finally, we wanted to know how many years they had been teaching. Our respondents who had teaching experience between 0-10 years were 38.6%. The range of 11-20 years had 29.4%, the 21-30 year range was at 17.9%, and 31+ years had 9.7%.

CONCLUSION

The results of our survey show professors recognize student cheating and are constantly dealing with it. This survey was designed to allow professors across the United States to give their opinions on student cheating. The 2,667 respondents to this survey helped give insight about types of cheating, methods of prevention, and disciplinary action that occurs if a student is caught. This survey proves that cheating is a very important issue that needs to be dealt with seriously. The data also lends itself to multivariate analysis, which will be addressed in a later study.

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