Tips to Encourage Academic Integrity

General Preventive Steps

- **Discuss the honor code with your students**: Research by the Center for Academic Integrity has determined that faculty engagement with students is one of the most significant steps to reduce cheating.[1] At the start of the semester and before each important assignment or exam, discuss the honor code with students and your mutual obligations under it (*i.e., they* should not cheat, and *you* must report violations).

- **Require students to sign an honor statement**: Require students to include and sign an "honor statement" at the start of all graded work. For example: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on this assignment [exam]." Having students handwrite a pledge in their own words may be even more effective.

- **Enlist student support in maintaining the Honor Code**: Our code is largely student-administered. Encourage students both to discourage cheating by colleagues and to share with you, on a confidential basis if desired, reports of cheating. We have no formal requirement that students report their classmates, but that does not mean students should ignore their moral obligations.

- **Set clear standards for assignments and grading**: When handing out assignments, remove ambiguity regarding whether you permit students to work together on assignments and whether students may use outside sources, include AI. Provide explicit instructions in your syllabus and interpretations, especially those uniquely applicable to specific circumstances in your class. This practice can avoid unnecessary arguments later (the Writing Center provides clear guidelines regarding what constitutes plagiarism, and they have online exercises for students to improve their competency). Encourage students to ask for clarification of any point of confusion.

For model syllabus language, see http://www.wm.edu/sarp "Resources for Faculty"

- **Report violations**: The honor code is only as effective as your willingness to support it through formal reporting. Doing so permits us to respond consistently and fairly and reduces the chance of recidivism, as we are able to maintain accurate and complete records and can know when a student's act is an isolated one. Our process is primarily educational and developmental (90% of cases last year resulted in an outcome that did not involve separation from school).

- **Sweat the small stuff.** Confronting small acts of integrity violations is crucial, as it allows us to place student learning at the forefront of our response, allows the student to learn new strategies to avoid violations, and gives us a means to track violations so we can identify repeat violations and address them appropriately.

Preparing and Monitoring Exams (Especially for Large Sections of Courses)

- Use 2-4 versions of the test with questions in different sequences. Although you have no obligation whatsoever to announce this to your class, consider doing so to create an environment of open communication.
- Put essay questions, which are harder to copy, on the top of exams. Place multiple choice and true/false questions at the bottom of the page.
- Use alternate seating, if available. If not, consider reserving two rooms for an exam to space students out more
- Before the exam begins, request that students place all papers in backpacks or other places where others cannot see them during the exam.

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[1] McCabe, D. L. (2005). It takes a village: Academic dishonesty & educational opportunity. *Liberal Education, Summer/Fall,* 26-31

- Prohibit the use of cell phones, iPads, and smart watches during the exam (or, at a minimum, require that they be turned completely off). Ask students to place these items in their backpacks and out of reach.
    - You can require students place all electronic devices at the end of their row or securely in their bags/backpacks. Instruct them to power down their phones. Note that students can use text messaging and screen shots as a form of cheating on exams.
        - Be aware that students can send and receive messages on their cell phones in seconds! Many know how to type messages on their phones without even looking at them.

- If you use bluebooks, you should consider several alternatives to avoid students bringing in unauthorized material:
    1. Ask students to turn their blank bluebooks in to you before the exam starts. Examine them and redistribute them at the start of the exam.
    2. Ask students to begin writing on a certain page (other than page 1) in their bluebooks (prevents students from using pre-filled books).
    3. Ask students to begin writing on a line other than the top line in their bluebooks.

- Where students can use computers to type their exams, prohibit students from connecting to the network during the exam (have them turn off Wi-Fi). State in writing on the exams that students must open a new file and cannot close it until the end of the exam.

- Be present during the exam (proctoring is permitted and recommended) and be conspicuous. Look for wandering eyes or unauthorized talking. In large classes, walk around the classroom at random times during the exam. Do not allow students to wear hats during the exam, as they prevent you from seeing the student's eyes.

- We have encountered students using the bathrooms as a place to store textbooks and notes or to use their phones. If this is a concern for you, we recommend inspecting the bathrooms after distributing the exams and watching for excessive bathroom breaks.

- Number each exam and put each student's name on the exam. Count exams as students hand them in to ensure that you receive one exam from each student.

- Collect exams from students while they remain seated rather than have them hand exams in at the end of the period. In a particularly brazen case, a student took another's test from a stack of completed exams, copied the answers, and handed it in as the student's own.

- If you have suspicions that someone may be a "ringer," ask the person to provide identification during the exam. If the student refuses or cannot provide an ID, confiscate the exam and write a detailed description of the person taking the exam.

- Have a consistent "loss-proof" method of transporting papers between class, office and home (e.g., locked briefcase). Keep your office and desk locked.

Post-Exam Steps
- Have the same person grade all answers to the same question(s).
- Look for common patterns in the answers to exam questions.
- Mark wrong answers or blank spaces in **ink** with an "X" or slash mark.
- Scan copies of the graded exams to keep in your records—students have, on occasion, changed answers and requested a regrade, claiming the instructor erred in grading.
- Have one person review all requests for re-grades.
- Update exams on reserve so that you do not inadvertently repeat previously asked exam questions.