Academic Integrity
Syracuse University/SUNY-ESF
Undergraduate and Graduate Student Survey

What specific changes would you like to see your school take in support of academic integrity? What role should students play in this process?

Five hundred thirty-two undergraduate and two hundred seventy graduate students provided responses to this question, with many offering multiple suggestions for change. There were consistent themes across undergraduate and graduate student responses, thus they are discussed collectively in the following analysis. Overall student responses focused on changes that the faculty, administration, and students could make in order to support academic integrity. A fourth theme indicated that changes in the current practices were not necessary.

The distribution of comments within the four thematic areas did vary slightly between undergraduate and graduate respondents. Approximately one-half of all undergraduate and graduate student responses focused on the faculty. The majority of the remaining graduate student comments addressed the administration, while the better part of the remaining undergraduate student remarks focused on the students.

Faculty

Nearly half of all undergraduate and graduate student responses focused on changes that faculty could make to support academic integrity. Three primary changes were noted by respondents.

The majority of these responses focused on faculty undertaking preventive measures to reduce opportunities for academic dishonesty. Students recommended a variety of strategies regarding exams, including assigning more proctors to large classrooms, actively monitoring students during exams, creating multiple versions of tests, utilizing larger or multiple classrooms during exams, and giving exams during smaller discussion sections rather than in the large lecture sections. A few students recommended giving exams that require students to use higher level thinking skills, as memorization promotes cheating. Other comments focused on the type and amount of work assigned. Respondents suggested that group work, projects, and presentations should count more heavily into their final grade than exams. These activities more closely simulate the work environment they will enter and provide a lower incentive for cheating. A few respondents noted that when students are overworked and stressed they tend to be more prone to cheating. Several students indicated that a handout on proper citation methods would be helpful, indicating that plagiarism is often unintentional and based on students lack of knowledge of proper citation methods. Suggestions included:

Fair reading assignments, the amounts of reading per course should be evaluated. I have one course with 19 books, another with five and another with four. Each teacher has added additional readings. Most of my classmates have not
finished the reading assignments on schedule at all. A teacher student forum on reading might help.

I think if tests were more conceptual and it was easy to get an A if you knew the material, people would study instead of cheating. Unfortunately, many professors seem to try and make students fail or get questions wrong, making cheating more prevalent.

I think it is ridiculous that tests are taken in lecture halls with students sitting right next to each other. You can clearly see the paper of anyone next to or in front of you, and it blatantly encourages cheating. I understand that in large classes it is difficult to seat hundreds of students for a test, but the university could be more innovative.

I think most courses should have a variety of ways in which a student can show the professor he/she has learned the material (i.e., tests, essays, papers, projects, presentations, etc.) I don’t think any class should be all multiple choice exams, or all papers, etc. It should vary more.

I think tests for huge lecture classes should be taken in small group sessions where TAs can pay closer attention to those taking the exam. Small groups make it easier to watch out for people who are cheating off of their neighbors’ exams.

I think that my school needs to have professors monitoring students during exams, not reading books or doing other work. Professors should make two forms up of the same test so that students next to each other don’t have the same tests.

I think the school should encourage professors to evaluate students’ understanding of material in ways other than exams which only teach us how to memorize. Projects and presentations are more likely to be used in the “real world” to evaluate our performances, not tests. When you don’t know something in the “real world” you can go look it up, instead of having to rely solely on your memorization skills.

I would like to see the school take a more active role in preventing cheating. In larger classes, it seems to be more of a problem because professors either do not care enough or do not have the resources to prevent cheating. Professors should ask students about course loads and assignment timing. Sourcing guides should be made available everywhere on campus. Some professors throw loads of work onto a student like that is only course they are taking. And if a student complains they say he/she lacks time management.

Other respondents indicated that faculty should increase their efforts in discussing academic integrity, the policy, and the consequences of dishonesty with students. Many students admitted not fully understanding what is acceptable and what is cheating, thus recommending that faculty discuss this early in the semester. Respondents were especially unclear as to the boundaries of cheating in regard to group work. Others suggested putting the policy in the syllabus and referring to it often throughout the semester, especially during high stress times for students. A few students suggested that faculty also address the seriousness of academic integrity with students.
Recommendations included:

Better defining what collaborative work is allowed. The extent to which students are allowed to convene with other students on projects/take-home exams. I know that we are expected to be honest—that is one of our core values—but they do not clearly explain what they mean or what they consider dishonest or contrary to academic integrity.

I think that cheating policies should be outlined at the beginning of each class, especially if there is group work, so there is an understanding of what the perimeters are. I would like to be reminded of the stipulations throughout the course because I really have no idea where the boundaries are, especially with my class where teamwork is encouraged.

I would suggest that at the beginning and near the end of each semester that an email be sent to students informing them of the academic integrity policies of the University. When crunch-time is upon them, students sometimes are desperate and will try “easier” ways to finish their work.

In support of academic integrity I think the professors need to clearly outline guidelines in the beginning of class, before exams or papers (because students forget) and at the end of the semester before finals. I think it will help remind students and lead to less cheating if any on this campus.

Instead of telling us that plagiarism is wrong and not to do it—we should be explained how to cite everything properly with examples.

Simply educate people more. The biggest problem is lack of communication on current expectations and policies. You cannot always rely on common sense.

Students need to understand how serious an offense cheating is and why it is so serious. The policy, although clearly delineated, needs to be more available.

The rules and boundaries of plagiarism need to be discussed. The policy needs to be more centralized and more accessible to the students.

The students should be more informed of the consequences of cheating. They should also be given better guidelines on how to properly cite information they use.

Students called for faculty to strictly enforce the current policies and for consistent implementation by all faculty members. A few requested stricter punishments when the offense is clearly deliberate and for repeat offenders. Several students shared their frustration over doing their own work only to see others repeatedly cheat their way to better grades. Student suggestions included:

Faculty should be more equal in their enforcement of the rules from class to class and assignment to assignment.

I had a professor who said many times that he witnessed students cheating and that he would fail them the next time, but instead of failing someone, he kept making the same threats after every test. I would just like them to give a more severe punishment to the violators. It’s unfair for the other students so the cheaters should receive very harsh punishments.

I think each professor needs to keep and maintain the same policy: some professors look into plagiarism and cheating very extensively and intensely, while others leave it up to TAs to do the legwork and never check up on it.
I would like to see there be a stronger emphasis on not cheating and consistent punishments for those individuals who do choose to cheat. Stricter punishments in cases where the violation was clearly deliberate. Teachers need to take more action. More often then not they see cheating and simply warn students. This is not right, why is there a policy, if teachers do not follow it?

We have policies that are rarely, if ever, enforced! Teachers are way too forgiving! Why is that? Is it some performance criteria that might hurt the instructors’ evaluation? Is it because they’re afraid of making waves with some student who might be politically connected? Why? Try investigating the instructors! I’ve witnessed three cases of students being caught cheating. All ended with a “don’t do it again” the end. Try changing that! These slackers should be expelled, but instead earn a B cheating to my legitimate A.

Administration

About one-third of graduate responses and one-tenth of undergraduate responses centered on changes the administration could make to support academic integrity. Three major areas of change were shared by students.

Respondents suggested that the administration take a more active leadership role in educating the campus community on the importance of academic integrity. They noted that the role of the administration is to create a community where integrity is an integral part of the culture. A few students indicated that the administration is in a position to emphasize learning and appreciation of knowledge as appropriate outcomes of a college education and not just grades. Other educational suggestions included incorporating academic integrity into campus-wide programming initiatives, such as new student orientation, online training modules for students, and a required ethics course for freshmen. Suggestions included:

I think it would be beneficial for freshmen to learn in their orientation programs exactly what cheating entails (plagiarism, programs in a calculator, etc.) and the penalties that one receives as a consequence. I think there should be a session dedicated to simply that.

I would like the University to better stress the ethics of academic integrity. If the administration is concerned about the level of academic integrity at Syracuse, they should design a system whereby students explore ethics, cheating, and consequences individually.

Integrity is not thought to be an important characteristic of an individual’s persona. There needs to be a higher degree of stress on the importance of integrity for every person. Integrity means discipline, honesty, duty and selfless service. It is the basis for everyone’s character. Students need to have a higher knowledge of “true” integrity.

Maybe you should offer new students and freshman a “crash course” in cheating and academic integrity. I find that those who are most likely to cheat are people who haven’t been here at SU very long (either freshmen or transfer students).
They shouldn’t make students necessarily responsible, but they ought to make an online training session about cheating the way they do on alcohol awareness. It would make people more aware of things.

To show sincerity, provide a one day, once a semester, seminar on the academic integrity and for incentive, provide a 1-credit compensation for attendance. A possible chance to obtain 8 credits within four years for something that needs to be implemented strongly.

Students called for administrative support in establishing an honor code, honor pledge, and/or a standard university-wide policy on academic integrity that could be consistently implemented across all schools and colleges. They stressed the importance of student input in academic integrity policy making and students sitting on academic integrity hearing committees. Student comments included:

An accompanied statement with a signature proclaiming the integrity of the work being submitted.

I think students should be part of an honor board.

I think students should play a large role in this process because student’s should be able to have input in the policies that are going to affect them and are the ones who really know how faculty are dealing with academic integrity.

I would also really encourage the University to adopt a student run and strict honor code so that cheating would not be acceptable to anyone and then an atmosphere of trust could develop, allowing something like un-proctored examinations.

Perhaps it would be wise to collaborate with students about clearly defining the terms of cheating (with should come with update with students every few years), and ask students ways they would like themselves and their peers educated, charged, or punished (for lack of a better word). I am not implying that these suggestions be the final word on how academic integrity should be handled, but merely consider the voice of the student body. I think that students will both respect and appreciate policies they have a hand in creating. Perhaps also have students help in peer education of these policies!

Students should play an active role in the process of developing a policy.

There should be an honor code, upheld by the school and supported by students.

It should be clear and known to all, faculty and students alike.

Several students indicated that the administration needs to be more selective in the hiring of faculty. Faculty who do not have a good command of the English language and those with poor teaching abilities leave students frustrated and lacking in basic content knowledge. When students are faced with an exam on material that is not understood, the likelihood of them exercising the cheating option is enhanced. Related comments included:

Maybe teach the courses better or have teachers that can speak English, therefore more students would comprehend it, and cheating would go down. In my classes where the teacher gets the information across well nobody does and we take him serious, but my [name] class where the woman doesn’t speak a
lick of understandable English, then yes everyone cheats because no one understand a single thing were learning. Spend more time making sure the teachers and TAs can speak English and teach a class effectively and then students won’t have to cheat. I have one class where I can’t understand anything the teacher is saying. More emphasis should be put on teaching, not catching people cheating.

A much smaller number of comments addressed the administration’s responsibility in making the academic integrity policy more readily available to students, publicizing the outcomes of academic integrity hearings, monitoring the “supposed” cheating of sororities and fraternities, and applying the same academic integrity standards to all groups of students. Several students mentioned the need for an anonymous silent reporting system through which students could easily report the dishonest behaviors of others.

**Students**

Approximately one-fourth of the undergraduate responses and very few graduate responses focused on the students’ role in academic integrity.

Most students who commented on their role in the academic integrity process stressed that they are not responsible for reporting other students’ acts of academic dishonesty. They noted that this was the responsibility of the faculty and teaching assistants. Concerns associated with reporting other students included fear of physical and social reprisals, the creation of hostility between students, the possibility of the process being used as a form of revenge by students, the risk of losing a friendship, and the addition of unneeded stress to their lives. Several students commented that each individual should be held responsible for upholding their own academic integrity. Student comments included:

I don’t think students should have anything to do with ensuring academic integrity in others. Each individual should be responsible for their own actions.

I have seen a few people cheat but have failed to report them because I like many other students are afraid of the social repercussions of being known as the “tattle-tale”, if we do report students.

I think it is unfair to expect students to participate in the process; students should only have to worry about themselves and not cheat. Teachers and faculty should be responsible for stopping the cheating or else students can be put in awkward situations with other classmates.

I think students should only be responsible for their own academic integrity, and not be expected to tell on other students.

I think that it is the faculty’s responsibility to monitor the students and cheating.

A much smaller number of students felt that it was their responsibility to participate in the process of ensuring that academic integrity is upheld and violators are actively pursued and punished. They indicated that students reporting other students is necessary for a culture of integrity to be attained. A few noted, however, that this scenario would be ideal, but shared that in actuality students will not turn in their peers.
Responses included:

I think that students should be just as involved in promoting academic integrity as the faculty here is. Students must be the main monitors of this situation however, and I believe that they do a good job of it for the most part. Students should take more initiative to report cheating when they see it/hear about it happening. Students should turn in peers if they see them cheat, but that is a lot to ask of a peer.

No Need for Change

About one-fifth of the responses shared the students’ perspective that current academic integrity policies and procedures are adequate and nothing needs to be changed. Respondents mentioned that faculty effectively communicate the academic integrity policies and consequences for infractions to students. They reported that cheating is minimal and is adequately dealt with when it does occur. Comments included:

I do not think that there any changes that need to be made because I feel that my professors have a lot of knowledge about what could go on, and know how to recognize and deal with it.
I do not think that we have a problem with cheating on this campus. The instructors are very clear about not tolerating plagiarism.
I think SU is doing a good job supporting integrity.
I think that this school is of the highest integrity and I wouldn’t change anything.
I think the academic integrity policies on campus are fine the way they are, and students are fully aware of how serious consequences are.
The policies in place now are effective and fair.

Please provide any comments you care to make, or if there is anything else you would like to tell us about the topic of cheating.

Three hundred ninety-one undergraduate and one hundred seventy-eight graduate students provided responses to this inquiry, with many offering multiple suggestions. The themes were consistent across undergraduate and graduate student responses, thus they are discussed collectively in the following analysis. Overall student responses focused on actions faculty could take to reduce the occurrence of academic dishonesty, whether a cheating problem exists at SU/ESF, and students’ perspectives on cheating.

Faculty

Approximately one-third of student comments addressed five topic areas in which faculty could take action to reduce the incidence of academic dishonesty. Students identified the areas of communication, exams, assessment of student learning, enforcement of the current academic integrity policy, and course work load.
Students recommended that faculty communicate the academic integrity policy and the consequences for violation of the policy, as well as educating them on what constitutes academic dishonesty. They requested information on proper citing of sources. Students commented on their confusion over the boundary between cheating and collaboration with other students and sought to have this resolved. Respondents indicated that faculty communication on academic integrity is variable. Comments included:

Do a better job of teaching proper sourcing—some classes do this very well and others don’t. Sourcing style should be as uniform as possible throughout campus, and mandated for classes.

I feel as though they do a really good job outlining the expectancies of academic integrity, and that their expectations are reasonable and well-thought out. Every syllabus I received explains the university’s academic honesty policy.

I have never had a professor discuss cheating in a group-work environment. In all of my classes it has been stressed repeatedly how strict the University’s academic integrity policy is. Usually a copy or an excerpt of the policy is even stated in the syllabus.

In every class since freshman year, the professors have clearly stated and reiterated the policy that any cheating is not tolerated by the University and the consequences of any such violation will be serious and detrimental to a student’s standing.

Perhaps it would be wise for writing programs to focus more on internet sources and how to site them, rather than books. It is not that difficult to site a book because there are sources on how to do that that are very clear. How to site internet sources is not all that clear to many students.

Professors make a big deal out of cheating, especially plagiarism, but do not explain how not to plagiarize or how to find information on this subject. It makes it hard for a student to figure out what is right and what is wrong.

The cheating policy needs to be made more known to the students through direct contact of the professors to the students. The consequences should also be made clear when going over the cheating policy and the professors must enforce strictly.

The term cheating should be specified more in depth for students. What I might not consider cheating, a teacher probably would consider it severe cheating.

Students indicated that faculty can reduce cheating on exams by taking preventive measures. Their responses centered on exams given in large lecture rooms and included vigilant monitoring of students, using multiple versions of tests, and changing exams yearly. Suggestions included:

Faculty needs to pay attention to the students’ calculators, textbooks (during open notes/book exams), and the floor when in a large lecture hall. I’ve seen students shuffle notes and papers around on the floor during a closed notes exam.

I consider myself to be a very hard working and honest student, but when it’s so easy to cheat (when you take a test in a lecture hall where you can see everyone’s answers) it’s hard not to.

I have never had an exam in [name of school/college] in which I did not see someone cheat either off another student or from a piece of paper on the floor.
or nearby. It makes me sick. I am disgusted with the University for permitting such behavior. I am appalled that students do this. I work hard for my grades and this devalues them!

I have seen so many instances of cheating this semester that it makes me sick. Making different exams is not enough anymore, professors need to take other measures to ensure that cheating is not going on and actually proctor the test. It’s not excusable for a professor to assign a test on a certain day and not be present to administer it. Professors need to actually walk around the room to make sure that no one is cheating.

I recently took a class were there were over four hundred students. During quizzes students would blatantly discuss the questions and the answers. I should not be responsible to report them, the professor should have taken precautions prior in this situation to reduce the cheating.

Students reported that the type of assessment tools used by faculty can influence the level of student cheating. They shared that tests that require only memorization are most likely to lead to cheating. Essay tests not only promote less cheating, but allow students to function at a higher cognitive level. Some students noted that assessing student learning through projects and papers would allow them to function at levels of higher cognition than exams that require memorization, and would present a greater cheating challenge.

Other students indicated that faculty who assess students with only a limited number of grades encourage them to cheat, particularly if they do poorly on one of the assessments. They suggested providing students with numerous ways and opportunities to show their understanding of the content. This would make students feel as though they have a chance to succeed in the course without having to rely on cheating. Remarks included:

Cheating is wrong and immoral, but for the most guys have done it. There are classes where 40 percent of your grade is based on pop quizzes or 50 percent of the grade is based on a midterm. Grading needs to be fair and kids should have a shot to get an A in the class in numerous different ways by essay, by participation, or by test and if not then teachers are just paid not to teach but to interrogate.

Cheating only cheats the cheater, rigorous examinations that test not only knowledge but intuitiveness work better, in addition, most information is readily available in today society, thus testing facts and trivial work is unnecessary. Tests should be an assessment of one’s problem solving skills and concept understanding.

Classes that only have a few grades for the semester encourage it more than classes with a variety of ways to earn points. When there is pressure just on a midterm and a final, there is more room for unethical scholarship.

I think some exams rely too much on memorization. When we get out into the “real world” we will be able to reference books and other sources. Exams should focus on a broad grasp of a subject and not on definitions of words. If teachers didn’t ask students to memorize everything, a lot less cheating on exams would take place.

I think that the classes where professors rely more on projects and papers are more realistic as far as “real world” situations go and it is much harder to cheat on those.
I think that in courses where there is little opportunity to raise a grade other than exam scores and papers, cheating will be more prevalent. With one paper, one midterm, and one final exam in a course, there can be the mentality that if you screw up once you’re pretty much in the red zone, which makes students desperate to pick up the grade any way possible.

Students shared their disappointment with the lack of faculty enforcement of the academic integrity policy. They reported that the cheating they see either goes unnoticed by the faculty or receives little, if any, punishment. Concerns included:

Currently, the faculty and TAs are indifferent to academic integrity. Most are pretty lazy in presenting the course material, let alone making efforts to assure academic integrity. Most consider it a superfluous subject or topic. They have the attitude that it is going to go on anyway, and there’s nothing they can do about stopping it, so why bother.

During my freshman year, a girl on my floor plagiarized a 10-page paper. She took a students’ paper from a previous year and copied it word for word. When she got caught, she had to rewrite the paper. The point of this story is that if professors are going to say cheating is a serious issue and you can get kicked out of the University for it, then you have to follow through.

I once had a professor in [name of school/college] say, “I see that you are cheating and you better stop or I’ll do something next time.” On the next exam the same thing happened and the same thing was said.

Last year I reported it when I found out that two students from one of my classes repeatedly wrote papers collaboratively and turned in papers that other students wrote. […] In the end, however, they just had to rewrite one paper each. They did not fail the class and they were not held accountable for the previous papers that they plagiarized. I was disappointed that these students both received good grades in a class where they did not work.

Last year my friend cheated on a chemistry test, got caught, but his punishment was nothing. Obviously these ‘rules’ they tell us are just scare tactics. After the first week all students learn this and cheat to the max. It makes it frustrating for people like me and my other friends who pride themselves in doing work on their own.

People cheat on papers all the time. The professors do not have time to thoroughly investigate the originality of each paper. Please adopt a system that allows the review of each paper.

Students brag about how they cheat, that they have been caught, and how nothing is done when they do get caught. Pathetic!

Students commented that unrealistic course work loads promote cheating. When students felt that they could not adequately complete the work, they turned to cheating in order to meet the faculty’s demands. This results in copying of homework assignments, problem sets, papers, and dividing work among a group of students and then compiling the answers. Related comments included:

I believe if our workload wasn’t so overwhelming then there would definitely be less cheating. Sometimes you can’t possibly read a book, a couple of
chapters and have written work due everyday in a week. It’s overwhelming to try to complete assignments properly and to fully understand the concepts. I think that the drive that is maintained towards a cheated education (for lack of a better phrase) is upheld due to the enormous amounts of work expected of us. Professors are smart, they know their stuff. We are just learning. When they expect us to put a minimum of 10 hours into each weekly homework set (when it definitely takes much longer), multiply that by four more [name of program] courses. And yes, you have a situation where cheating thrives.

Some teachers need to work on time management of their own and understand life is a lot different then it was when they were a student. Some professors understand that and they are the ones with the majority of students who do well in their course because they have their assignments spaced out and they are able to gain the students’ attention and trust, not be the guy who speaks for two long hours then tells them to read chapters 1-9 by tomorrow.

Students cheat when they feel like they can’t physically get everything done on time and panic.

Students generally understand that they aren’t learning anything from cheating, but with the pressures and overwhelming amount of work, especially now as a junior in [name of program], sometimes it comes down to failing out or cheating and getting by with a C. Failing out is not an option.

Cheating at SU/ESF

About one-fourth of student responses focused on whether cheating is a problem at SU/ESF and if students should report others for acts of academic dishonesty.

Respondents were equally divided over the question of whether cheating is a problem on campus. Students who relayed that cheating is not a problem shared experiences in which they have not encountered students cheating, their exams have been well proctored, and their professors rarely mention any occurrences of cheating in the course. Their experiences included:

At the level of classes I’m in, most people realize that they are here to learn and that they can only learn by doing, not by cheating.

I don’t really see it as a problem on campus. I never have and haven’t witnessed anyone in my classes doing it either.

I don’t think cheating is an issue in Syracuse University because all exams are proctored in a well manner. The professors are also good at noticing when someone cheats on assignments.

I haven’t ever seen or heard of an instance of serious cheating, so apparently the system is working.

I personally haven’t witnessed any cheating since coming to SU, though I haven’t exactly been looking for it. I do want to say that my teachers have been very good about talking and warning about plagiarism.

Students who revealed that cheating is a problem shared experiences in which students routinely cheat on exams, copy homework assignments, turn in plagiarized papers, forge lab books, and falsify data. They relayed various cheating scenarios and shared their
frustration that they work hard, maintain academic integrity, and receive lower grades than those students who cheat. Their experiences included:

Cheating is a despicable act and too many students are getting away with it on this campus. It is time for the newly inducted Chancellor and staff to reassess the school’s policy while informing students and faculty what is expected from them.

Cheating is one thing about this school I can’t stand. It upsets me so much that I work so hard when other people were out drinking the night before and receive a better grade because they copied off the person in front of them. Something has to be done about this issue.

Cheating on SU campus is something that is done on a day to day basis. A lot of my friends cheat and get better grades than me, the one who puts in a lot of extra time. That needs to be stopped as much as possible. That is what annoys me the most.

I notice that there are always one or two students who cheat continuously on practically every exam or homework, and always get a better grade than myself, even though they hardly understand the concepts at hand.

Syracuse is inundated with students who cheat. It is a serious problem and it must be curbed. The classes that I have noticed the most cheating in are large lectures or classes where the tests are either multiple choice or involve numbers.

Although cheating upsets many students, most reported that they do not feel responsible for reporting other students for academic dishonesty. Several noted that the peer pressure on campus is too great to report others. Some students commented that individuals need to be responsible for their own integrity. Remarks included:

Cheating occurs, but because of the policy that both the one cheating and the one he/she is getting the answers from are both punishable parties—as the handbook states—a lot of students are less likely to report cheating.

In my experience, kids don’t rat on other kids so it is impossible to ask them to be responsible for policing the act of cheating.

It is incredibly unlikely that any student would turn in another student for cheating. 1) It gains them nothing. 2) There’s a social stigma on “ratting out” someone else. 3) Other social implications if one was ever found to be the one who told on a peer. 4) Many of us would not want to feel responsible (guilty) for ruining the grade/academic career, etc. of another student.

You can’t expect it to be students’ responsibility to report cheating. Not only students are unlikely to tell on each other, they are even less likely to do so if that someone is their friend. In our school it’s faculty’s responsibility to catch cheaters and I think that’s the way it should be because students themselves will not be of much help.

**Perspectives on Cheating**

Approximately one-fifth of responses shared students’ general perspectives on cheating.
Students addressed the issue of *fairness* in regards to students who succeed through academically dishonest behavior. Respondents felt cheated and questioned the value of their work and degree. Remarks included:

I don’t think students on this campus take their educations as seriously as they should. Many people seem to be here to party and drink and have fun which is not entirely bad, but they should come to college prepared to learn as well. It leaves serious students feeling like all they do is work and get little recognition or distinction from the students that slack off.

I have done very well in my college career, and I feel cheated myself when other students get ahead by not doing the work I am doing. I don’t really know how many students get ahead by cheating, but we must make it an unacceptable option.

I strongly dislike people who cheat because it is not fair to the rest of us when they get better grades, but put less time in to understanding the material. So many people at this school get through the cracks because students and professors alike either are afraid to accuse students of cheating or feel that the “higher ups” will not take their accusations seriously and, therefore, do not make the effort to complain in the first place. I feel that the value of my degree is being compromised by many students at this school who fall into the slipping through the cracks category and somehow get into the [name of program] world and do not possess the skills that supposedly a Syracuse graduate should possess. That reflects badly on a person like me, who earned their grades through honest hard work.

Some students take pride in doing good, honest work, and it is for those individuals that the academic integrity of the school must be treated very seriously.

Students noted that *cheating is inevitable*, everyone engages in cheating to some extent, and SU/ESF is not unique since cheating occurs on all college campuses. Responses included:

Cheating is a problem on any campus, and I don’t think it is any more or less relevant on Syracuse University’s campus.

Cheating is something that really can’t be stopped. If you find a way to stop a certain aspect, people will find another way to do it.

Everyone cheats to a certain extent. There is no way to eliminate it all. I don’t think that cheating will ever go away completely but steps can definitely be taken at Syracuse to decrease its frequency.

I think academic integrity will always be a problem because students just do not want to put the work necessary to do good without cheating.

*Society* was cited by students as a source of academic integrity issues. Our society is competitive in nature and focused on getting ahead at all costs. Dishonest behavior is often a long-standing, common practice engrained in students long before their arrival on campus.
Insights included:

Cheating (of any form) is something that will always exist as long as society places such a high standard on striving for success. People get so caught up in statistics (GPA, class rank, etc.) that they will utilize any means they can to reach the top.

Cheating is something that has been a distilled moral beginning at an early age, and I feel it is difficult for students that have been getting away with it for years to just stop because someone asks them to. There needs to be a boost in and re-evaluation of character education at SU.

I think academic integrity means little to students because integrity means little in our society.

I’m sure a certain amount of cheating takes place, but serious cheating is endemic of our society. How is it more important to be academically honest than it is to be honest in filing your taxes? Or in selling a product? Or in presenting a case for war to the American people. Dishonesty is an accepted method of obtaining a goal in this country, whether we choose to say it out loud or not.

In a culture where so much emphasis and value are placed on grades rather than the learning process itself, it’s not surprising that people feel the need to cheat.

Surprise was shared by several students over the *indifference* that some students exhibit towards academic dishonesty. Comments included:

As a returning older student, I am scared by the attitude towards cheating that I’ve heard from a few students, in that they don’t feel anything is wrong with it, anything to get the work done attitude, as quickly as possible.

Many traditional students don’t look at it as cheating—they look at it as a means to an end. They want to get their 4-year degree and get out—to many it doesn’t matter how they achieve that goal.

Most students that I know don’t care about cheating; it’s not that big of a concern to us. If I saw someone cheating, I wouldn’t care.

Students acknowledged that cheaters are only *hurting themselves*. They noted that dishonest students chose to not benefit from the opportunity for a good education and, consequently, may face problems in their professional careers. Responses included:

I don’t think it is that big of a problem. College is all about choices, and what you want to get out of your education. People who receive higher grades through cheating without gaining knowledge are making a personal decision to not become educated.

There really isn’t any need to change anything because in the end, the students are paying for their education through time and money. If they decide to cheat, they aren’t learning anything. Their time and money is going to waste, and it’s up to them to realize that and do something about it. They will not be prepared for the real world when they graduate. They will learn a hard lesson.

We come to this school to learn. In the long run, if a student cheats, they are only cheating themselves.
What you get out of college is proportional to the effort you put in. I think we should let things stay the same as they are now. Not perfect, but good enough for those who keep their integrity and put forth the effort to succeed easily—and those who don’t keep that integrity to ultimately wish they had made better decisions and learned more during their academic career.

**Other Comments**

About one-fourth of responses addressed items related to the survey instrument, expressed gratitude to the university for undertaking this academic integrity initiative, and included a variety of nonrelated miscellaneous comments. Some respondents also indicated they had nothing additional to add.