INTEGRITY ACTION TEAM

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Opportunities for Improvement Report
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Introduction
This document contains recommendations of the Integrity Action Team. Using a “best practices approach,” the Team recommends that UCO develop a website which students, faculty, and staff will find receptive and conducive for learning about an array of issues relating to integrity. No one on the committee felt comfortable in website design. Therefore, the Team decided to compile and share what other institutions are doing to help students and faculty maintain their academic integrity. The Team recommends that the website might include:

1) an on-line video for students illustrating real-life examples relating to integrity,
2) an animated tutorial for students discussing issues relating to integrity,
3) an on-line quiz that students in lower division classes could complete and obtain a certificate of completion,
4) information about workshops relating to academic integrity,
5) links to outside sources that provide students, faculty, and staff with the opportunity to learn more about topics relating to integrity, and
6) links to relevant offices on campus that provide information relating to policies, guidelines, and support offered to the UCO community.

The Team concluded that current methods employed to inform and educate students, faculty, and staff at UCO about issues relating to academic integrity are in some cases ineffective and offer opportunities for improvement. In addition, it was the consensus of the Team to use several of the recommendations included in the most recent Integrity Action Team report which was submitted in April 2007. Please note that this report includes some of the same comments as recommended in the previous report.

Report Design
The present document is organized in 3 sections:

1) overview of the meeting process of the Team,
2) recommendations relating to information which might be included in an academic integrity webpage, and
3) recommendations for improvements to the current program.

SECTION I

Meeting Process
The Action Team began meeting in late fall 2008 to investigate and discuss the current academic integrity policy at UCO and how students, staff, and faculty are informed about issues relating to academic integrity. In addition, the Team spent a considerable amount of time identifying which recommendations were, or were not, implemented from the most recent Integrity Action Team report submitted in April 2007. All meetings during the spring 2009 semester were spent examining and discussing the mechanisms, processes, and approaches that other institutions are using to address issues of academic honesty and integrity on their campuses. We began by examining our recognized peer group. As a result of finding a limited amount of useful and
meaningful information, the Team later broadened our efforts to include any institution of higher education. Finally, using a best practices approach, the committee identified several novel and innovative approaches that we agreed should be included in the final report.

SECTION II

Recommendations for the development of an Academic Integrity webpage.

After much discussion, the Team concluded that a webpage dedicated to educating students about the university’s expectations and policies regarding academic integrity be developed. This webpage should include all relevant links to offices on the UCO campus which educate, monitor, and enforce university policy regarding academic integrity. The page should also include links to outside resources that relate to a broad array of integrity-related topics (i.e., ethics, links to centers at other institutions that address ethics and integrity, alcohol and drug abuse, university counseling, etc.) that would be appealing and informative to a diverse audience (see Section III).

The best web link that the Team discovered is one developed by Oklahoma State University (http://ra.okstate.edu/provost/academic/integrity.html). The Team concluded the 13 minute video covered all relevant aspects of academic integrity and found that the information was presented in a way that would invite and encourage student engagement. The video included a message from the Provost and used students and faculty as actors in the video. The main points included in the video were:

- An overview of academic integrity
- Expectations of students
- Value of integrity
- Examples of common violations
- Sanctions
- Process after a violation of academic integrity is filed
- Important tips to students
- Suggestions if a student is experiencing trouble academically

The Team recommends that a similar video be produced and implemented at UCO. The Team envisioned that the video would be shown and discussed in courses populated by first-time students (freshman and transfers) on the UCO campus. For example, this might be a requirement for courses associated with Success Central.

Another example that the Team found appealing was an animated web page developed by Ryerson University (http://www.ryerson.ca/ai/). This site educates students about integrity by using real-life scenarios common to college students during their educational experience. The Team felt this was a creative and non-threatening approach to educate students about issues relating to academic integrity. As an alternative to an animated approach, the Team felt a video depicting students in real-life examples would also be effective. Examples might include a student working in the library or their dorm room writing a paper, a student taking an exam, or a student completing their lab report. Ryerson University offers workshops through their Academic Integrity Office; workshops are led by faculty/staff in the Learning Success Centre, the English Language Support Office, the Library, and the Writing Center.
A common practice of other institutions is to offer an on-line quiz for students that address important issues of academic integrity. Two institutions recognized by the Team that provided on-line quizzes were: University of Maryland University College (http://www.umuc.edu/cip/vail/home.html) and Empire State College (http://www.esc.edu/academicintegrity). The Team discussed the benefits of completing a short on-line quiz after watching the video in a classroom setting, computer lab, or from their personal computer at home. Once students pass the quiz, they would be provided a certificate of completion which could be printed and provided to the instructor of the course.

While searching for ideas employed at other institutions, the Team noticed that several institutions have developed “centers” for academic integrity. Some notable examples are:

- Emory Center for Ethics, Emory University (http://ethics.emory.edu/index.html);
- The Kenan Institute in Ethics, Duke University (http://kenan.ethics.duke.edu/education/ethics-certificate-program/);
- Center for Academic Integrity, Clemson University (http://www.academicintegrity.org/useful_links/index.php); and
- Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities, University of North Texas (http://www.unt.edu/csrr/development/integrity.html).

The Team was very impressed with the Emory Center for Ethics, Emory University, because of the approach they employed to encompass a broad array of topics for students, staff, and faculty. They also supported lectures from several prominent scholars and leaders in the realm of academic integrity and ethics.

Other useful links/publications (listed on a number of website at other institutions relating to integrity):

- Center for Academic Integrity
  http://www.vhc.edu/external/honorcode/Faculty.html
  http://www.academicintegrity.org/fundamental_values_project/pdf/FVProject.pdf
- Council of Graduate Schools
  http://www.scholarlyintegrity.org/

SECTION III

The Team agreed with many conclusions stated in the report submitted in 2007. We agree that the current UCO documents relating to academic integrity, even though full of necessary information, are seldom read by students. Students therefore lack even a simple understanding of academic integrity. It was the conclusion of the Team that a new website with a video and interactive quiz be developed (Section II). The Team feels this approach of educating UCO students, faculty, and staff about academic integrity would be more appealing and effective than the current approaches.

1. The Team recommends that, besides the links to the on-line video, quiz, certificate of completion, and any training seminars/workshops presented on the UCO campus, the following hyperlinks be included on the Academic Integrity web page:
Academic Affairs
   http://www.uco.edu/academicaffairs/
Code of Student Conduct
   http://www.ucok.edu/conduct/code.html
Conduct Office FAQs (Includes both appeals processes and grievance process)
   http://www.ucok.edu/conduct/studentfaqs.html
Employee Handbook
   http://administration.uco.edu/viewPage.php?e=emh
Enrollment Management
   http://www.uco.edu/registrar/
Faculty Handbook
   http://www.busn.ucok.edu/academicaffairs
Office of Legal Services
   No webpage available; 752-3377
Student Affairs
   http://www.ucok.edu/ssvp/
Student Counseling Services
   http://www.uco.edu/student_counseling/
Staff Handbook
   http://administration.ucok.edu/employeehandbook/index.htm
Student Conduct Hearing Outline
   http://www.ucok.edu/conduct/hearings.html
University of Central Oklahoma
   http://www.uco.edu/

The Team recommends that the Academic Integrity URL be included on the Syllabus Attachment for all courses offered at UCO. UCO needs to develop measureable objectives relating to integrity and academic honesty that can be assessed on an annual or bi-annual basis. In order to “change the culture” to provide more legitimacy to the importance of academic integrity, guest speakers need to be invited to give university-wide presentations regarding the importance of academic integrity and related issues. In addition, the guest speakers could share their experiences with developing and implementing university policies relating to academic integrity. All student organizations should be encouraged (or required in order to receive funding for next academic year) to send representatives who could then report back to each organization about the information disseminated during the university-wide meetings.