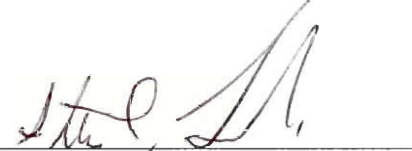


Defining the Obstacles to WPI's New Honor System

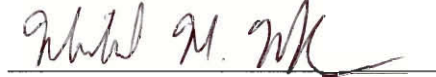
An Interactive Qualifying Project

**Submitted to the Faculty of Worcester Polytechnic Institute
In partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Bachelor of Science**

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Abstract

Our project identifies the obstacles that prevented the 1993-2001 Academic Honor Committee from being able to implement an honor code at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. It also makes recommendations on how an honor system could be implemented in the future. Our recommendations are based on interviews with faculty and students, an analysis of committee correspondence, and a formal survey of attitudes of current students.

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1.0 Introduction

In 1994 WPI's Dean of Student Life, Janet Richardson, conducted a survey of the campus. It identified the desire for higher standards of academic honesty among students and professors. Based upon the survey and additional background research, the Academic Honesty Committee was formed, consisting of faculty members and students. The committee initiated its process by educating the campus about academic honesty, but then decided to turn its focus toward drafting an honor code, hoping this would help meet the need for higher levels of academic integrity. After years of revision the honor code was presented to the Student Government Association (SGA). In 2001, SGA representatives said that they would not support the honor code. The committee saw this as a sign that the document would not gain campus approval. After eight years of work, the committee disbanded and the honor code was not implemented.

Our IQP has two purposes: to discover why the implementation of an honor code at WPI failed by identifying the obstacles to its adoption and to formulate practical recommendations for overcoming these challenges. To accomplish this goal we have interviewed Academic Honesty Committee and SGA members and analyzed the committee's correspondence. We have also surveyed other colleges to gain insight into the challenges they faced and the ways they overcame them. In addition, we polled the undergraduate population at WPI to find if the current student body's opinions differ from those of a few years ago. Our report is broken down into four chapters: background, methodology, data and analysis, and recommendations and conclusions.

Chapter two describes background information on WPI's failed honor code adoption process. In order to identify the obstacles that were faced during the

implementation, we identified the important figures in the process. This chapter also reviews academic honesty issues and defines two common types of honor codes. WPI intended to implement a modified honor code. Consequently, our background research focuses on schools that have this type of code. Additionally, we present a series of studies and articles to provide expert opinions about honor codes.

Chapter three provides a detailed description of the methods we utilized in performing our research. We begin the chapter with a list of the research questions we intended to answer. Additionally, we explain the various methods we needed for collecting and analyzing data. To ensure validity and reliability in our data, the collection process is based upon established techniques: surveying, interviewing, and concept analysis.

Chapter four presents the research data and the analyses. The chapter presents data that was collected through questionnaires sent to other colleges and through a careful survey of the undergraduate population at WPI. In addition, a concept analysis of a series of communications among committee members provided insight into the committee's process. Interviews with several faculty and SGA members provided additional points of view. The chapter concludes with a section defining and summarizing the obstacles to implementation that were revealed by analyzing these different sets of data.

The final chapter discusses recommendations. These recommendations are supported by the data and analysis of the previous chapter and by reference to experts on honor codes and academic dishonesty. Our recommendations are divided into two separate categories, content and process. The basis of the content and the process recommendations is educating various segments of the campus about academic

dishonesty. Our survey of undergraduate student opinions encourages immediate implementation of these recommendations.

2.0 Background

2.1 Implementation Attempts at WPI

Our project is based around the previous attempt of the Academic Honor Committee (AHC) to implement an honor code at WPI. In order for us to fully understand the obstacles that stood in their way we must first have a basic understanding of what the AHC was trying to achieve.

The previous attempt to implement an honor code was an eight-year process that ended unsuccessfully in 2001.

2.2 Former Academic Honor Committee Members

The former members of the Academic Honor Committee (AHC) and the Student Government Association (SGA) were a major resource in this project. Without their input it would have been difficult to properly identify the challenges that prevented them from installing an honor code. There are limited written records of implementation attempt available so it became necessary to interview members of the committee to best identify the problems they faced.

Professor Bland Addison, a current professor at WPI, was the Chairman of Academic Honor Committee. His input was vital because it gives us insight as both a member of the committee and a faculty member.

Janet Richardson, the Dean of Students at WPI, was also a member of the committee and represented the administration of WPI to the committee. Her knowledge was valuable because she is in charge of academic honesty issues on campus. Both Dean Richardson and Professor Addison were involved in the process from start to finish.

Several members of the committee were members of the student body. The SGA voted on the implementation of an honor code and their members, although constantly changing, provided valuable information. Although most are no longer attending WPI it was important that we contacted them to find out their perspective. SGA members that we contacted and interviewed were: Rachel Bowers, Janelle Smith, Pete DeBonte, Kate Shore, and Joe O'Boyle.

Rachel Bowers, class of 2002, was the president of the Student Body during much of the debate and was involved only late in the process. Janelle Smith, class of 2003, served as the voting member for the SGA, when the final revision of the honor code was given to the SGA. Pete DeBonte was involved early in the process. He attended Academic Honesty Committee meetings and added insight when he deemed it necessary and important. Kate Shore, class of 2000, was a member of the committee for two years (1999-2001). She attended a conference at Duke University in 1999 on honor codes and helped research honor codes at other institutions. She helped edit drafts of the proposed honor code and attended regular meetings of the committee. Joe O'Boyle, class of 2002, served as a representative of the SGA.

WPI Professor, Van Bluemel, was not actually a member of the committee, but was an important person to interview because he was an advisor to an IQP that studied the proceedings first hand. His insight into the matter is well respected and he has a personal experience as an undergraduate having attended an honor code university, California Technical Institute.

2.3 Definition of Academic Dishonesty

The term academic dishonesty can mean different things to different people. In order to maintain stability throughout the study of our project we will define academic dishonesty as it is described in the Academic Honesty and Dishonesty brochure from the University of Delaware's Dean of Student's Office: ¹

“Forms of Academic Dishonesty:

“Plagiarism”

Plagiarism is the inclusion of someone else's words, ideas, or data as one's own work. When a student submits work for credit that includes the words, ideas, or data of others, the source of that information must be acknowledged through complete, accurate, and specific references and, if verbatim statements are included, through quotation marks as well. By placing his/her name on work submitted for credit, the student certifies the originality of all work not otherwise identified by appropriate acknowledgements. Plagiarism covers unpublished as well as published sources. Examples of plagiarism include but are not limited to:

- Quoting another person's actual words, complete sentences or paragraphs, or entire piece of written work without acknowledgement of the source.
- Using another person's ideas, opinions, or theory, even if it is completely paraphrased in one's own words, without acknowledgement of the source.
- Borrowing facts, statistics, or other illustrative materials that are not clearly common knowledge without acknowledgement of the source.

- Copying another student's essay test answers.
- Copying, or allowing another student to copy, a computer file that contains another student's assignment, and submitting it, in part or in its entirety, as one's own.
- Working together on an assignment, sharing the computer files and programs involved, and then submitting individual copies of the assignment as one's own individual work."

"Fabrication"

Fabrication is the use of invented information or the falsification of research or other findings. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Citation of information not taken from the source indicated. This may include the incorrect documentation of secondary source materials.
- Listing sources in bibliographies that are not directly used in the academic exercise.
- Submission in a paper, lab report, or other academic exercise of falsified, invented, or fictitious data or evidence, or deliberate and knowing concealment or distortion of the true nature, origin, or function of such data or evidence.
- Submitting as your own any academic exercises (e.g. written work, printing, sculpture, etc.) prepared totally or in part by another.

"Cheating"

Cheating is an act or an attempted act of deception by which a student seeks to misrepresent that he/she has mastered information on an academic exercise that he/she has not mastered. Examples may include:

- Copying from another student's test paper.
- Allowing another student to copy from a test paper.
- Unauthorized use of course textbook or other material such as a notebook to complete a test or other assignment.
- Collaborating on a test, quiz, or other project with any other person(s) without authorization.
- Using or possessing specifically prepared materials during a test, e.g., notes, formula lists, notes written on the student's clothing, etc., that are not authorized.
- Taking a test for someone else or permitting someone else to take a test for you.

“Academic Misconduct”

Academic misconduct includes other academically dishonest acts such as tampering with grades or taking part in obtaining or distributing any part of an un-administered test. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Stealing, buying, or otherwise obtaining all or part of an un-administered test.
- Selling or giving away all or part of an un-administered test, including answers to an un-administered test.
- Bribing any other person to obtain an un-administered test or any information

about the test.

- Entering a building or office for the purpose of changing a grade in a grade book, on a test, or on other work for which a grade is given.
- Changing, altering, or being an accessory to the changing and/or altering of a grade in a grade book, on a test, a “change of grade” form, or other official academic records of the university which relate to grades.
- Entering a building or office for the purpose of obtaining an un-administered test.
- Continuing to work on an examination or project after the specific allotted time has elapsed. ¹

2.4 Honor Codes at Other Schools

One of the best ways to understand the failure to implement an honor code at WPI was to examine honor codes at other schools. Do they have something included that WPI did not? Or did they not include something that the Academic Honor Committee did? First we had to define the two different types of honor codes: traditional and modified.

2.4.1 Traditional Honor Codes

Traditional honor codes “often mandate unproctored exams, a judicial process over which students have majority or complete control, and a written pledge requiring students to affirm they have completed their work honestly. Many traditional codes also place some level of obligation on students to report incidents of cheating they may observe among their peers although such clauses are infrequently enforced.” ²

2.4.2 Modified Honor Codes

A modified honor code is one in which the campus communicates academic integrity to the students. In addition, and of equal importance, is that there is student participation in all campus judicial or hearing bodies that review any infringements of the campus' honor code.²

2.4.2.1 Does an Honor Code Encourage Cheating?

The University of Maryland at College Park had recently implemented a modified honor code. This university's code has been used as an example for other schools, including WPI, researching into installing a modified honor code.

The University at Maryland at College Park had just recently amended its academic honor code. The university's website provided a written explanation of the procedures of the honor code and a background on the code, which can be used when examining what challenges the school faced. The University of Maryland's honor code contains an honor pledge which students are not required to sign. Despite this minor technicality, the students still must adhere to the rules and regulations regarding academic integrity in the honor pledge.

There have been speculations about an honor code encouraging cheating. The University of Maryland at College Park did a study on that very speculation. The article "Academic Honesty Increases 30%: The University of Maryland school newspaper the, "Diamondback," examined the myth that honor codes create more cheating. The article made a point that there are more cases of academic dishonesty being reported. The report indicated that academic dishonesty was up 30% from last year's reported total of 165 in

2000. The faculty body was alarmed at the total but believed that the total is higher because more people are being exposed. They also believed that the total will level off after the honor code has been implemented for a few years. Some people on campus felt that an honor code will allow students to more easily cheat, because of the possibility of unproctored exams. "In recent years, the university has attempted to create an environment of high academic integrity standards of its students as it pushes to become one of the top public universities in the country."³ The school continues to try to overcome and understand the obstacles of their honor code.

2.4.2.2 Georgia Tech's Academic Honor Code

The Georgia Tech Academic Honor Code was important to examine because WPI used it as a model when discussing its code. Additionally, the curricula at WPI and Georgia Tech are very similar. The web site for Georgia Tech's honor code provided information about its academic honor code and its present state.

Years after the Georgia Tech honor code was adopted, there continues to be skeptics about the system. Students are having trouble living up to the honor code's expectations and this is a result of the challenges not being dealt with during the implementation process. Some of the students believed that their challenging course load causes high stress levels and therefore forces them to cheat. "I feel that many people are tempted to break the honor code due to the stress level of Georgia Tech's challenging classes," said David Harris, a CMPE freshman.⁴

Certain members of the student body believed that the honor code was not a practical way to solve the problem of academic integrity. One student said that "the

honor code is a very noble idea, but it is not in any way effective," said Jared Dervan, a Mechanical Engineering sophomore.⁴

Some students also felt that they should not waste their time with the linguistics of the honor code but should use the code as a medium to achieving academic integrity. The administration wants the students to "see that the honor code represents much more than a set of rules that they are forced to follow, they will realize that they have something very personal at stake."⁴ The administration felt that students will eventually overlook the linguistics of the code and realize that the honor code can effectively promote academic integrity.

2.4.2.3 Honor System at Duke University

The existence of an honor system at Duke University is a recurring issue that has been debated from the earliest days of the university. In the inaugural year of the school in 1924, an honor system was in place. In 1930 the men of Duke University decided to abandon the honor system while the women continued to adhere to the system. The honor system issue was then brought to the forefront in 1963, when the women of the university wished for the men to adopt a system similar to theirs. A new Duke Academic Honor System was implemented for the school, but it only lasted a few years. In 1965 the men of the institution then dismissed the system. The major criticism of the honor system was explained by one professor: "The idea of being your brother's keeper just didn't go over."⁵ The "rat" clause, a clause that states you need to report a fellow student if you notice them being academically dishonest, was the major cause of the system's dismissal. An honor code, with out a strict "rat clause," has since been implemented, but

there continues to be mixed thoughts about its success.

Status of Honor Code in 1998

A major obstacle that Duke University faced with their honor system in 1998 is the “rat clause.” In the last two years, only one student had been reported by another student for academic dishonesty. Students almost never reported others cheating, which makes the “rat” clause useless. “Its very difficult as a student to take seriously an obligation to accuse one of our peers, because we’re all concerned about those relationships of trust. We can all ask ourselves: ‘If I caught my roommate cheating, then what would I do?’”⁶

Another obstacle that was discussed at the latest Honor Council-faculty meeting was the severity of the penalties. One faculty member at Duke mentioned that many of his colleagues, including him, don’t want to engage in the existing process because they believed the penalties are too severe.

Another obstacle that the school’s honor system faced is the question of proctoring exams. Duke’s honor system requires the exams to be proctored, which is seen as hypocrisy by members of the faculty and student body.

In the second part of the four part article, the obstacle of understanding what exactly an honor code is and does was brought up. Many students don’t understand their honor code or the one being implemented, and therefore automatically dismiss it. They felt that it will be too severe and will negatively affect the social environment of the campus.

The third part of the article discussed honor codes and their implementation at

other schools. An obstacle that George Washington University faced was the debate over what constitutes academic dishonesty. Members of the student body, faculty, and the administration debated what constituted it and what penalties should result from each infraction. Peter Marquez, a member of the committee that formed the Academic Integrity Council and one of the five students on the judicial board, had this to say about the debate. “Many students were embarrassed that we had to be told exactly what we could and could not do.”⁷

A major obstacle for most institutions of higher learning is the “rat clause.” Most students have moral and social problems with turning in a friend or roommate who has cheated because they feel they will lose that friend as a result of the action taken against them. Student involvement was the essential aspect to installing a successful honor code at schools. Duke University has had problems with their honor code because half of the student body doesn’t want one. When the honor system was put in place in 1993, only 52% of the students approved of the code.⁷ People felt that peer reporting results in an unhealthy university atmosphere because students are afraid that someone will rat on them. They worried about someone peer reporting someone out of spite as opposed to an honest case of cheating. Kenan Ethics Institute’s Kiss, had a similar opinion of peer reporting as Duke University students and faculty. “Some people would say that because it’s so hard for students to report, we should drop reporting requirements from honor codes.”⁸

2.5 Important Studies and Opinions of Honor Codes

Several studies and articles have been written about academic dishonesty and honor codes. We chose to summarize several central concepts important to an understanding of honor codes and academic honesty.

“Rat” Clause

Peer reporting has had an influence on honor code and non-honor code environments. Research has been conducted, that highlights peer reporting in honor code and non-honor code environments. A random sample survey was conducted and distributed to college students. An important conclusion drawn from the literature is that a “rat” clause can become a major challenge to the implementation of an honor code. The survey also concluded that the transition period during the implementation is the most difficult time. The University must work to create an environment where peer reporting is an acceptable behavior.

Many institutions implemented honor codes over the past tens years and one of the main features of those honor codes was peer reporting, regardless of the opposition to it. It has been shown that, “all but one of the schools that reported having thought about and decided against an honor code mentioned opposition to reportage as a factor in the decision.”⁹

There are several identified reasons why students do not want to report their fellow students. Some of the reasons included: fear of losing a friend, fear of accusing an innocent person, social concern, and a belief that the person accused will never be prosecuted. In honor code environments students were much more willing to report a peer who is cheating. They considered it their responsibility. An investigation on whether peer reporting actually reduces cheating was done in order to see if the obstacle

of peer reporting was a necessary one to overcome. The report indicated that peer reporting was a debated issue before an honor code is instituted, but most students adapt to the new policy years after.

Differences in Honor Codes

Several people believed that an honor code makes cheating easier. Many students and faculty believed that traditional honor codes give the students too much freedom and this leads to increased academic dishonesty. A traditional honor code typically has unproctored exams, a judicial process consisting of many students, and a written pledge, which students must agree to and sign.

Another obstacle discussed very briefly in the article was the issue of a low level of peer disapproval of cheating. Some people believe that this low level results in cheating becoming more prevalent because students believe that peer reporting would not be enforced. The article said that this is one of the main reasons why some campuses don't have honor codes.

In discussing modified and traditional honor codes, the main difference between the two lies in the amount control the code gives to the students. The traditional honor code gave students near full control over enforcement of academic dishonesty.¹⁰

Role of School Loyalty

Many people questioned if an honor code is the answer to the question of academic dishonesty. Student loyalty to their school is a major condition to putting an honor code in place. Without school loyalty students were more likely to cheat because

they felt no connection with the school. The compared the honor system can be compared to a democratic society, because in each, the students or the population have a great say in the government and actions taken. Students who have loyalty are willing to put aside individual concerns when the good of the school or group is at stake.¹⁰

Punishment

Some people argued that it is not the specific honor code that helps reduce academic dishonesty, but the students' individual values. They believed that the students must have and use certain values in order for the honor code to work effectively. The authors believed that the main reason why students cheat is their personal value system. They believed that an honor code should allow the students to act upon their already existing values. A college must have had or created an environment where an honor code will work; otherwise it will never be established.

The role of punishment in the enforcement of academic integrity needs to be understood. Three theories of punishment exist: deterrent, rehabilitative and retributive theories. According to the deterrent theory, punishment is supposed to acts as a deterrent for others thinking about cheating. The rehabilitative theory allows punishment to have beneficial effects on the individual. Lastly, the retributive theory believes in exacting retribution for the offense being committed.¹⁰ The article went on to say that a major obstacle to strict honor codes and some modified ones is a "death penalty," which says that if a student is convicted of cheating he or she is automatically expelled from the school. This could act as an obstacle to schools trying to establish a modified code because some students don't know the details and assume that the code will have a "death

penalty“ clause.¹⁰

Negative Response to Honor Codes

Studies have been conducted on the effectiveness of honor codes in deterring academic dishonesty and conclusions have been drawn based on the data found. For an honor code to have success, a campus must have or make an environment where academic dishonesty will not be accepted. Students believed that if cheating is an acceptable way of passing, then it becomes more prevalent. Students had the attitude that if everyone is doing it then it is alright. “When most of the class is cheating on a difficult exam and they will ruin the curve, it influences you to cheat so your grade won’t be affected.”¹¹ A “just community” was discussed and is a community where academic dishonesty is an unacceptable behavior. In conclusion, an honor code and full academic honesty only works in “just community.”¹¹

Student loyalty to their school affects the ability to implement an honor code for some schools. Schools where the students talk of “we” instead of “they” are less likely to cheat. In a “they” atmosphere students care less about the university and are more likely to cheat because they felt the faculty and the school is out to get them.¹¹

3.0 Methodology

We used several different techniques to determine the obstacles that caused the adoption of an honor code at WPI to fail. Each facet of our project required different methods in order to ensure both validity and reliability in our data and results. The following section describes the methods we used in order to achieve this.

3.1 Research Questions with Techniques

1. What were the obstacles that stopped the WPI Academic Honor Committee from proposing an Honor Code?

We interviewed members of the Academic Honor Committee, SGA, and other faculty to attain first hand information on the process and obstacles. A concept analysis was also performed on the correspondences of the Academic Honor Committee to enhance our realm of resources.

2. What were the obstacles, if any, that were overcome by other schools who have implemented an Honor Code?

To determine obstacles encountered by other schools, we distributed a survey to 62 other schools.

3. Would the views of the campus today allow an implementation of an honor code?

A campus wide survey was distributed to the undergraduate population to discover the current status of the population regarding academic honesty and the implementation of a future honor code.

3.2 Reviewing the Committee

3.2.1 Researching the Obstacles

In order to properly define the obstacles we must understand the past efforts of the Academic Honor Committee. We learned proper researching techniques to attain reliable and validity data. These techniques allowed us conduct an accurate review of a series of correspondences, interview SGA members and faculty, and survey WPI's undergraduate population and other schools.

3.2.2 Concept Analysis

We used a process known as concept analysis to obtain obstacles from certain sources. The purpose of this process is to distinguish between the defining attributes of a concept and its irrelevant attributes. We used the following steps of concept analysis to achieve our goal of attaining the obstacles of implementation:

1. We chose our concept to be the obstacles the hindered an honor code from being implemented at WPI.
2. We determined our purpose to be to extract all the relevant obstacles from the sources we had.
3. We went through our sources and found all instances of an obstacle being mentioned or discussed.
4. We compiled all the results and created a list of all the obstacles.

The process of concept analysis allowed us to accomplish two things. It allowed us to efficiently and effectively extract the obstacles from the sources that we had.

Secondly, it provided us a way to ensure that both the obstacles we had extracted and the means by which we had found them were valid.¹²

3.2.3 Reviewing the Correspondence among Members of the Committee

When reviewing the correspondence of the committee, we used the process of concept analysis as described above. Our background research (Chapter 2) had revealed some of the possible challenges to implementation. Throughout the process of collecting data we were able to further narrow the obstacles to implementation. At the time of the review, we looked for emails that had some reference to the obstacles: “rat” clause, environment/cultural changes, communication, faculty accountability and misunderstanding

Much of the dialogue between faculty, administration, and students was through email during the process of attempting to adopt an honor code at WPI. By reading through and analyzing these emails, certain obstacles were identified in their proper context. Many of the emails had no relevance to such matters, but some were informative for identifying obstacles. We chose to classify all of the emails in two different ways. First, we looked through all of the emails and tallied how many were written by each person. Secondly, we classified the emails based upon what obstacle was discussed. We then chose to examine five emails that containing relevant material on the obstacles.

3.3 Interviewing

Preparation was an important aspect of conducting our interviews. We learned proper interviewing techniques which enabled us to ask clear and concise questions. We were able to make the interviewee feel comfortable, while avoiding non-responses. The order of the questions was important because the interview needed to flow from issue to issue. We had to ask the tough questions, but not pressure the interviewee for answers. This made the interviewee more comfortable and more likely to give us an in-depth portrayal of the obstacles and problems with the proposed honor code. We conducted the interviews in a specific order, because in some cases we did not need to interview a person if we already obtained all the information we needed from another person. For the kind of project we had undertaken we were more interested in having one-on-one interviews rather than focus groups. We decided that interviewing people individually was more beneficial. Therefore, each interview was its own entity, with questions specifically chosen for that individual.

The goal of interviewing was two-fold: verification and discovery. We wanted to be able to verify that we have found obstacles relating to the honor code and that the former Academic Honor Committee members agreed that these were obstacles. The other goal of interviewing was to discover new obstacles that the members saw as problematic but that we had not extracted from the sources available to us.¹³

3.3.1 Faculty Interviews and SGA Questionnaire

We interviewed three different people, Professors Van Bluemel and Bland Addison and Dean of Students Janet Richardson. Our SGA questionnaire was not conducted using the methods described under this section. The questionnaire was five email interviews. The purpose of these interviews was to obtain information on the challenges to implementation. We created all our questions around this goal.

3.4 Understanding other University Honor Codes

Understanding the difference between strict and modified honor codes was important in identifying the obstacles associated with installing an honor code. Realizing that the WPI campus is specific to itself, there needs to be an honor code molded for the campus. Does it need to be a strict one or a modified one? Every university campus is its own unique environment. Therefore, there is no specific format given to an honor code each must be adapted to their environment. However, by understanding how others shaped their honor code, we can better understand how WPI should shape theirs.

In order to understand other university honor codes we researched different schools and presented this information in the background. We also surveyed different schools across the country with some form of academic honesty policy in place. The survey techniques used are outlined in the proceeding section. With the use of these sources we were able to obtain a level of understanding of other university honor codes.

3.5 Surveying

The most effective surveys include specific measurable objectives, sound survey

design, sound survey sampling, reliable and valid survey instruments, appropriate survey analysis, and accurate survey reports. Measurable objectives ensure clarity amongst the results of the survey and add to the simplicity of obtaining these results. A good definition for measurable is that two or more people can easily agree on all the words and terms used to describe the purpose.

A sound survey design is creating an appropriate surveying environment. We chose the WPI community as our surveying environment. This was appropriate because it was the focus of the Academic Honor Committee.¹⁴

A sound survey sampling needs to be present in order to make sure that you get an accurate representation of the population. When creating the surveys we used reliable and valid instruments to measure the sample. We also analyzed the data so that the analysis could be used properly summarizes the sample and, hopefully, represent the entire WPI community.¹⁵

In our process of defining the obstacles to the implementation of the honor code we used two different surveys. The first was a survey of the undergraduate student body of WPI (see Appendix E). The second was a survey sent to colleges across the United States and Canada (see Appendix A). Both of these surveys proved useful for our definitions and especially for our recommendations.

3.5.1 WPI Undergraduate Survey

Our purpose, or measurable objective, to our undergraduate survey (See Appendix E) was to discover if an honor code would be plausible at WPI today. We asked the

undergraduates questions that related to the obstacles. We used these responses to determine if the same obstacles exist today and based some of our recommendations on the results of the survey.

We stratified the results based upon major and year of graduation. We chose this stratification to ensure that the data was accurate and representative of the entire undergraduate student body. Our target number of responses was 20% of the undergraduate population, or approximately 550 undergraduates. This would provide a sample size that would allow us to say with 95% confidence the results were representative of what the total population believes.¹⁶

Our survey was tested on Dean Paul Davis and Dean Janet Richardson because they have previous survey experience. Our survey was also tested on random students from different universities for validity. To ensure reliable results and to avoid repetition in responses, we required students to log in with their username and UNIX password. This restricted students from logging in with different usernames and completing the survey more than once. To obtain the necessary sample size, one follow-up email was sent to the undergraduates. We also collected responses by setting up a table in the campus center to allow students to fill out the survey on a computer using their UNIX username and password.

3.5.2 College Survey

The purpose of our survey (See Appendix A) was to obtain information about other universities that have academic honesty policies. We stratified the universities

based upon attributes of their policies, period of time for implementation, and groups that participated in the adoption process. We sent the survey out to 119 colleges and universities that had some sort of academic honesty policy. Our target number of responses was ten schools. We wanted to limit the time for schools to respond back and therefore chose ten as an attainable number of school responses. We intended for this survey to provide us with data that we could use to make recommendations, but we didn't intend to make generalizations based upon the results because of the low response rate. We tested the survey on both Dean Janet Richardson and Dean Paul Davis. Several follow-ups were sent to the schools, in order to obtain results.

The first part of the survey was designed to get an overall look at what was included in each institution's academic honor code. The second part of the survey was designed to get an overall look at how each school resolved the obstacles faced at WPI. After gathering the data from the second part of the survey, we then selected institutions that reported having obstacles to implementation and sent them a follow-up survey.

4.0 Data/Analysis

4.1 Correspondence of Honor Committee

As described in the methodology (Section 3.2.2), our review of the honor committee's correspondence separately counted how many were written by each person and which obstacles were mentioned

Here are the results of our findings:

Table 1: Correspondence Stratification

Total Emails: 169				
<u>Person</u>	<u>Number</u>		<u>Obstacles</u>	<u>Number</u>
Bland Addison	59		Adjustments, Workmanship	34
Van Bluemel	5		Exhaustion	2
Janet Richardson	19		Environ./Cultural Issues	3
Honor Committee	7		Communication	1
Others	79		Faculty Accountability	12
			"Single Sanction"	10
			Other	114

Due to the overwhelming number of emails Bland Addison sent out, a case could be made that he may have tried to push his opinions. However, although Professor Addison sent a lot of emails, it did not often seem like he was trying to push his personal opinions. Most of his e-mails were meeting reminders or reviews of meetings/issues or articles in relation to the topic at hand (See Table 1(cont.)).

Table 1 (Cont.): Emails, Omitting Routine Business

<u>Person</u>	<u>Number</u>
Bland Addison	15
Van Bluemel	5
Janet Richardson	10
Honor Committee	4
Others	45

When we went through the material we were specifically looking for information and background on the obstacles faced in the process. Out of all the discussion that took place via email, there were five emails that had the most information on the obstacles shown in Table 1.

The first email was a correspondence that Bland Addison sent to the Academic Honesty committee on September 22, 1999, (see Appendix C), over the inclusion of a “rat clause.” Addison made the point that there is an apparent problem over the question of peer reporting. The students felt that an honor code needed to have one, but felt that it was too restrictive. There was a sense that a “rat” clause would negatively effect the environment and students would be unwilling to change their surroundings. Addison personally felt that there was a need for accountability, but wasn’t sure how to ensure it without student support for peer reporting. “Our problem seems to arise from the indefiniteness of confronting the student by which a student may be held accountable for an honor code violation.”

A group of emails that outlined the obstacle of faculty accountability occurred on October 7, 1999, (See Appendix C). The committee, Addison, and WPI professor Christopher Larson discussed the issue. Addison felt that it must be made clear to the faculty that they are to adhere by the honor code rules. He felt that faculty couldn’t make their own academic dishonesty standards, because the honor code would now become ineffective. “In such a case of academic dishonesty, he or she must report the incident to the Honor Council.” Christopher Larson said that the code enacts a “higher standard of proof” to convict students. He felt that the standards must be lowered for the faculty to accept. On December 1st of that year, Addison responded to the issue of trust. He

reiterated the point that “judgments about academic dishonesty are the responsibility of the Academic Honor Council.” It is clear through these correspondences that faculty accountability is a challenge that the honor committee and the faculty were not able to overcome.

Angel Rivera, the chair of the Committee on Academic Operations (CAO), sent an email on October 19, 2000, (see Appendix C), that described the implementation issues. The CAO had some concerns about the signing of a pledge that would require students to “police” each other. Faculty accountability was also discussed as an implementation issue. The CAO felt that what is upheld by students should also be upheld by faculty. “WPI is a learning institution that involves both student and faculty, especially with IQP’s and MQP’s.” Rivera talked about the proposed honor code as a document and said that it should be an educational policy. The CAO expressed concern about the clarity of the document: “Some CAO members expressed a concern about having a clear articulation of how to deal with violations to an academic honor code.” The CAO felt that it shouldn’t have legalistic overtones and must be clearly articulated, and felt that the code must have clear definitions of the violations.

The final correspondence was a report on an academic honesty meeting on March 23, 2001 (See Appendix C). According to the account, it was perceived that WPI students would have to agree to change the campus environment to match the academic integrity of the honor code. The committee felt that SGA would have to approve and also felt that there must be some sort of classroom responsibility placed on the students and the professors must learn to trust the students. “That everyone, student and professor alike, had the ethical responsibility to do something when they witnessed an act of

academic dishonesty.” Until everyone agrees to champion these cases an honor code does not seem likely to work.

The obstacles that are presented through the correspondences are faculty accountability, student mistrust, environmental questions, and the “rat” clause.

4.2 Student Government Association Questionnaire and Faculty Interviews

In order to gather information from people involved in the development and adoption process, we distributed a questionnaire to five students from WPI. These five students were either a part of the academic honor committee or a part of SGA. Four of those members responded to our questions, Janelle Smith, Rachel Bowers, and Pete DeBonte, and Kate Shore. We didn’t get a response from Joe O’Boyle. In addition, we conducted an informal interview with Professors Bland Addison and Van Bluemel of WPI. The questions for the SGA questionnaire are shown in Appendix B. The questions with the two professors are not shown because the interview essentially became an information session.

Professors Addison and Bluemel were involved throughout the process. DeBonte was a contributor and involved in the honor code process fairly extensively. Smith, Bowers and Shore became involved later in the honor code process and therefore only experienced some of the processes first hand.

The main purpose in talking to these people was to gather information to determine the challenges the proposed honor code adoption faced. The students and the professors were each asked to identify certain obstacles to its installation. The students gave similar responses. DeBonte believed that the students felt they didn’t need a code

and weren't about to allow one to come into their campus. He mentioned that the "ultimate problem is: You can try to control their behavior, but you can't legislate people's hearts." Bowers believed that the main challenge was the issue of students not believing there was an academic dishonesty problem at WPI. As a result of a perceived lack of need of an honor code, students felt that the honor code would negatively change the environment. Smith agreed with the other students and felt that it wasn't necessary. Shore said that the main obstacle was the lack of support of the entire community. She felt that if the honor code didn't have full support it would "end up being just another set of ideals on paper that do not really mean anything."

Professor Addison saw some additional obstacles to the honor code's adoption. He felt that there was a misunderstanding surrounding the code. He felt that people weren't properly informed about what the honor code would do. He also felt that the "rat" clause became a problem because SGA felt that there was a need for self enforcement, but felt that a "rat" clause would negatively effect the environment. The third obstacle that he identified was the same one identified by the students, the perception that there was no need for an honor code. Professor Bluemel compared the WPI campus to the campus at his alma mater, California Technical Institute, where an honor code has existed for many years. He felt that WPI's environment was the major obstacle to the honor code's failure. Based upon his experiences at California Technical Institute, where an academic honor code was established in 1906 and is still in use today, he saw a difference in the student body's and faculty's trust in each other.

When looking through the various responses to the same question the obstacles became quite apparent. The lack of need for an honor code was identified by all the

students, even from Pete DeBonte who was involved through most of the process. They also harked upon the need for a change in the environment and opinions of individuals. The two professors identified the environment, communication, and the “rat” clause as the obvious impediments to the honor code adoption.

We asked all of these people whether or not they felt the student body had enough say in the process. DeBonte felt that there wasn't much student involvement and felt that students didn't get enough information about the proposed honor code. Bowers, Shore, and Smith, the three students that were involved in the process later, have slightly differing opinions. Bowers and Smith felt that the student body did have some say in the process, but not enough. Bowers mentioned that students were included in the process, but because of the process length, students came and went. The rapid turnover of the students led to the perceived lack of involvement. Smith felt that the issue wasn't broadcast across the campus, but did not see this as the fault of SGA. “I feel that the student government did a good job handling the situation, but I think the issue was not broadcast across campus enough, for there was a general lack of knowledge amongst the student body.” Shore felt that the students had enough say and felt that “the student representatives were promoting the viewpoint and concerns of the general student body.” Professors Addison and Bluemel felt that there was a lack of communication between students and faculty, which led to the lack of student involvement.

In addition to the questions relating to the implementation process, the questionnaire and interview asked the question: Can these obstacles be overcome and how? DeBonte believed that there is some need for change here, but an honor code may take a generation or two. Smith believed that an honor code can work, but there needs to

be more student involvement. She felt that the students must be made aware of the need for a change in the academic honesty policies. Bowers felt very strongly about the lack of need for a change of environment and feels that an honor code will only negatively impact the campus. Bluemel felt that an honor code will only work at WPI if there is a change in environment. At the current state, Bluemel felt that another attempted honor code will fail if the environment is not changed. Addison also stressed the environmental question.

It seems that the three students that weren't involved very long felt that there was some student involvement, but not enough. Pete DeBonte indicated that the students didn't have enough say in the process. Professors Addison and Bluemel attacked the question from a different way. They seemed to conclude that there was a communication problem between the students and faculty. A fair conclusion that can be drawn from the results is that students need to be more involved. The amount of student say in the old process differs depending on how long the individual was involved in the adoption process. Communication seems to be critical to the processes. If the people felt that students didn't have enough say then it can be perceived that the student body wasn't successfully made aware of the honor code proposition. Better communication might have led to an honor code being adopted at WPI.

These five people seem to agree on one point: when looking at the future of an honor code at WPI, students need to be made aware of the current state of academic dishonesty at the school. The professors and the students felt with the current environment, education, and communication level, an honor code at WPI will not work.

4.3 Interview with Janet Richardson

The IQP team chose to interview Dean Janet Richardson because she was an original member of the Honor Code Committee. Although we have reviewed notes and correspondences from the committee meetings, Dean Richardson offered insights to the committee's work that was not evident in the available notes.

Professor Bland Addison and Dean Janet Richardson were the only original committee members who remained until the committee was dissolved. According to committee notes, the first meeting of the committee was in 1993 and the final meeting was in 2001. Dean Richardson shared her personal feeling that after 8 years the committee was exhausted. When Professor Addison met with SGA Representative Joseph O'Boyle in 2001 and he and Janet Richardson learned that the SGA would not support the committee's latest recommendations. She felt that there was little energy left to continue the process and the Honor Code Committee immediately dissolved.

According to Dean Richardson, another concern raised by the committee was the question of faculty buy-in. In an e-mail from Angel Rivera, head chair of the Committee on Academic Integrity (CAO), dated Oct. 19, 2000 to the committee, there was discussion of the feeling that the honor code should be a "two-way street." This meant that whatever was expected of the students should also be expected of the faculty. As a result of this discrepancy the proposed honor code did not meet his criteria. The committee was unable to overcome this obstacle.

Under academic freedom faculty have the right to teach and test students in whatever way they feel best serve their needs. According to the WPI Faculty Constitution, the tenants of academic freedom are:

1. Faculty members are entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of other academic duties; but research for pecuniary return should be in accordance with established WPI policy.
2. Faculty members are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subjects and evaluating their students, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subjects.
3. College and university faculty members are citizens, members of learned professions, and officers of an educational institution. When they speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As persons of learning and as educational officers, they should remember that the public may judge their profession and institution by their utterances. Hence, they should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that they are not institutional spokespersons.
4. During their probationary period, untenured members of the Faculty have the same academic freedom enjoyed by tenured faculty members.¹⁷

The committee felt that including a clause in the honor code that required professors to give unproctored exams, for example, might be seen to professors as a violation of academic freedom. Thus, in turn, professors may not support the new honor code. It was noted that many schools with honor codes similar to the proposed WPI honor code, do require teachers to give students unproctored exams. This is based on the belief that there is mutual trust between faculty and students.

The third and final issue that Dean Richardson brought up was the “rat” clause. This clause was one of the SGA’s leading reasons for not supporting the proposed honor code. The committee itself was spilt over this issue as well; however the honor committee came to a compromise on the issue. The compromise was that if a student saw someone acting in violation of the code, they had to do something affirmative. They could either

tell the professor that they had witnessed cheating (without naming the student) or they could confront the student, telling him/her that they had seen him/her cheat. Still the SGA felt as though this required students to “police” each other and that this should not be a responsibility of students who pay to go to this institution.

4.4 WPI Undergraduate Students Survey

We received 550 responses to our undergraduate survey. We obtained our target response number and were thus able to evaluate the data according to a 95% confidence interval. The survey itself, as seen below, had seven questions relating to academic integrity. On March 3, 2003 we had obtained about half of the required responses, so we then sent out a follow-up message. The last 50 responses were obtained by polling the students in the campus center.

Table 2: Undergraduate Questions

1. Do you feel that WPI is an institution that promotes academic integrity?
2. Do you find that you are less likely to cheat or do something academically dishonest if other students hold you accountable for your actions?
3. Do you find that you trust or distrust your professors at WPI?
4. Do you find that they trust or distrust you to be academically honest?
5. Do you find that they trust or distrust other students to be academically honest?
6. Would you like to see WPI develop a student academic integrity committee?
7. Would you be in favor of developing higher academic integrity on the WPI campus?

Table 3: Undergraduate Stratification by Major

BBI:	8	(1.5%)
BBI/BE:	1	(0.2%)
BBT:	6	(1.1%)
BBT/IN:	1	(0.2%)
BBT/ST:	1	(0.2%)
BBT/TC:	2	(0.4%)
BC:	19	(3.5%)
BC/HU:	1	(0.2%)
BC/IN:	1	(0.2%)
BE:	20	(3.6%)
BE/EE:	1	(0.2%)
BE/IN:	1	(0.2%)
BE/TC:	1	(0.2%)
BIO:	33	(6.0%)
BIO/HU:	1	(0.2%)
CE:	31	(5.6%)
CE/EV:	1	(0.2%)
CE/NC:	7	(1.3%)
CH:	5	(0.9%)
CH/CM:	2	(0.4%)
CM:	27	(4.9%)
CM/ME:	1	(0.2%)

CS:	66	(12%)
CS/ECE:	1	(0.2%)
CS/EE:	4	(0.7%)
CS/HU:	3	(0.5%)
CS/MA:	4	(0.7%)
CS/MG:	1	(0.2%)
CS/MGE:	1	(0.2%)
CS/PH:	1	(0.2%)
CS/TC:	1	(0.2%)
EC/IN:	1	(0.2%)
ECE:	42	(7.6%)
ECE/HU:	2	(0.4%)
ED:	1	(0.2%)
EE:	41	(7.5%)
EE/HU:	2	(0.4%)
EE/ME:	4	(0.7%)
EE/ME/NC:	1	(0.2%)
EE/PH:	1	(0.2%)
HU:	4	(0.7%)
HU/ME:	2	(0.4%)
IE:	3	(0.5%)
MA:	11	(0.5%)

MA/ME:	1	(0.2%)
MA/PH:	4	(0.7%)
MAC:	4	(0.7%)
ME:	116	(21%)
ME/MFE:	1	(0.2%)
ME/MG:	1	(0.2%)
ME/NC:	2	(0.4%)
MFE:	3	(0.5%)
MG:	2	(0.4%)
MGE:	2	(0.4%)
MIS:	23	(4.2%)
NC/TC:	1	(0.2%)
ND:	3	(0.5%)
PH:	13	(2.4%)
SD:	1	(0.2%)
TC:	5	(0.9%)

Number of Responses:
550

Table 4: Undergraduate Stratification by Year

2003:	106	(19.3%)
2004:	159	(28.9%)
2005:	151	(27.5%)
2006:	134	(24.4%)

Tables three and four show the respondents stratified according to major and year of graduation. Table four shows a fairly even distribution of data between the four classes. Tables three and four show that the data we collected is not skewed and is representative of the student body views, shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Current WPI Population¹⁸

Major	
Engineering	
Biomedical	112 (4.1%)
Civil	162 (5.9%)
Chemical	108 (3.8%)
Electrical	458 (16.9%)
Fire Protection	
Industrial	29 (1.1%)
Mechanical	664 (24.5%)
Manufacturing	14 (0.5%)
Materials	
Undeclared (ENGR)	62 (2.3%)
Sciences	
Biology/Biotech	213 (7.8%)
Biochemistry	56 (02%)
Chemistry	22 (0.8%)
Computer Science	510 (18.8%)
Math	65 (2.4%)
Physics	49 (1.8%)
Undeclared (SC)	8 (0.3%)
Other	
Econ/Soc Sci Tech	7 (0.23%)
Humanities	6 (0.22%)
Interdisc	7 (0.25%)
Management	100 (3.7%)
Undeclared	28 (1%)

Class Year		
2003	727	26.80%
2004	674	24.80%
2005	645	23.80%
2006	558	20.60%

Table 6: Undergraduate Survey Results

#	Question Summary		
1	Does WPI Promote Integrity	No: 43 (7.8%)	Yes: 507 (92.2%)
2	"Rat" Clause	No: 94 (17.1%)	Yes: 456 (82.9%)
3	Professor Trust	Distrust: 22 (4%)	Trust: 528 (96%)
4	Personal Academic Integrity	Distrust: 37 (6.7%)	Trust: 513 (93.3%)
5	Student to Student Trust	Distrust: 81 (14%)	Trust: 469 (85.3%)
6	Student Academic Integrity Committee	No: 314 (57.1%)	Yes: 236 (42.9%)
7	Higher Academic Integrity	No: 205 (37.3%)	Yes: 345 (62.7%)

Table 7: Undergraduate Confidence Intervals*

Question 1	No: 5.6% to 10 %	Yes: 90% to 94.4 %
Question 2	No: 14% to 20.2%	Yes: 79.8% to 86 %
Question 3	Distrust: 2.4% to 5.6 %	Trust: 94.4% to 97.6 %
Question 4	Distrust: 4.6% to 8.8 %	Trust: 91.2% to 95.4 %
Question 5	Distrust: 11.8% to 17.6 %	Trust: 82.4% to 88.2 %
Question 6	No: 53% to 61.2 %	Yes: 38.8% to 47 %
Question 7	No: 33.3% to 41 %	Yes: 58.7% to 66.7 %

***With 95% confidence we can say that these % represent total population views**

It is clear from the results that undergraduates feel that WPI is an institution that promotes academic integrity. They feel that they would be less likely to cheat or do something academically dishonest if other students were to hold them accountable for their actions. They trust their professors and trust themselves to be academically honest. They also trust other students to be academically honest. Students were divided over the question of WPI developing a student academic integrity committee to promote integrity on campus. The respondents were split over the idea of developing greater academic integrity on the WPI campus. These results then became an integral part of our recommendations.

4.5 College Survey

To accurately prescribe solutions to the failure of implementing an academic honor code at WPI it is necessary to get information from other colleges and universities. This allowed us to discover what obstacles other schools encountered and we were then able to determine if WPI faced the same challenge. We sent a survey, see Appendix A, consisting of two parts, out to 119 collegiate institutions across the United States and Canada. Out of those 119 institutions only ten responded.

All ten institutions responded to the first part of the survey. Ten out of ten institutions have their students involved in the judicial process and nine out of ten institutions promote academic integrity across their campuses. The other results were just about even. Five out of ten institutions have a written pledge, six out of ten institutions have peer reporting, and six out of ten institutions have unproctored exams.

Some institutions did not respond to the second half of the survey, because they had their academic honor code years ago and the information was no longer available to the school.

The results of the survey are shown in the chart below:

Table 8: College Survey Results

<u>School Survey Results</u>			
Attributes at Other Schools			
	Have	Don't Have	# Schools Responding
Written Pledge	5	5	10
Peer Reporting	6	4	10
Students Involved In Judicial Process	10	0	10
Unproctored Exams	6	4	10
Campus Acad. Integ. Communication	9	1	10
Obstacles			
	Had	Didn't Have	# Schools Responding
"rat" clause	4	5	9
Included it in their code	5	4	9
Student/Faculty/Administration Mistrust	7	1	8
Overcame it	6	2	8
Cultural/Environmental Issues	4	4	8
Overcame it	2	6	8

The obstacles outlined in Table 8, show that about 50% have a “rat” clause and 50% do not have one. Seven out of eight schools replied that they had mistrust issues, but six out of eight were able to overcome it. Lastly, the cultural issues were an obstacle in half of the schools surveyed and a large number of those schools continue to face the problem.

4.5.1 College Follow-up Survey

From the schools that responded we analyzed the data and sent follow up surveys to six institutions. We individually selected colleges to be further probed and devised questions that would pertain to each college’s obstacles. These follow up surveys were based on overcoming each challenge presented in the second part of the survey.

Three schools responded to the follow-up survey: the University of Alberta, Lyon College, and Stanford University. We took the information they presented and incorporated their suggestions in our recommendations to WPI. We learned that schools have obstacles that they were never able to overcome. We learned from Stanford University that they continue to face the problem of mistrust, but attempted to overcome this obstacle in 1997 with the creation of a new system of student judicial affairs. The University of Alberta continues to face environmental issues and believes that they can only overcome this by having older students positively influence new students. Finally, Lyon College provided us with information about their “rat” clause. They told us that they continue to face the obstacle, but feel that it is an integral part of their honor code.

4.6 Identifying the Obstacles

After reviewing 169 e-mails exchanged by AHC members, interviewing committee and SGA members involved in the process, surveying schools, students, and others, we were finally able to extract the obstacles that prevented the WPI campus from successfully implementing an honor code. The five obstacles that blocked the honor committee’s path were: cultural/environmental issues, the “rat” clause, exhaustion, misunderstandings, and faculty accountability. Based on section 4.4, these obstacles can be divided into two categories: content and process. Content obstacles are those that pertain to the actual honor code itself. Process obstacles relate to the implementation of an honor code at WPI.

In reviewing the honor code through committee discussions via email, Section 4.3, we discovered two content obstacles. The first obstacle was a peer reporting clause, or a “rat” clause. Our interviews with certain SGA members, Section 4.2, revealed that they saw peer reporting as a threat to the implementation of the honor code because they viewed it as a competition oriented policing order. It was shown, through interviews with SGA members, that students felt a “rat” clause would negatively affect their environment.

The second content obstacle was the issue of faculty accountability. The honor code presented many challenges to students. It required students to have integrity for their own work and their peers’ work. However, students on the committee felt that the code did not include the equivalent requirements for professors. Many felt that the honor code should be a “two way street” in this aspect. Dean Janet Richardson in Section 4.4 pointed out the committee’s discussion of academic freedom and how it could seem in conflict with requiring unproctored exams and full faculty accountability.

We believe that content obstacles are a result of the process obstacles. The first process obstacle faced was an issue of culture and environment. Every college campus has a different type of atmosphere based upon the students, faculty and administration, and educational environment presented by each institution. Professor Addison and Van Bluemel, in Section 4.2, believe that WPI’s campus is especially different from most campuses due to the WPI Plan. It is designed to teach science and technology so that students “experience these subjects in a potent and often life-changing way, in a program that takes them far beyond the boundaries of the classroom.”¹⁹ In Section 4.2, it was demonstrated by the Professor Addison, that the ideas of this plan encourage group

learning through projects such as the IQP and MQP and create an atmosphere at WPI that is in many ways radically different from most campuses.

WPI faced the problem of adjusting student attitudes to an honor code. They struggled to show the students that an honor code environment would benefit them and follows the ideas presented by the WPI plan. In section 4.2, Professor Van Bluemel makes the point that implementing an honor code requires a particular environment. He and Professor Bland Addison both agree that there must be a transition period from the present atmosphere to an honor code atmosphere. The honor committee never achieved a change in attitude and helped result in the SGA members not accepting the honor code on behalf of the students.

Another process obstacle was misunderstanding and miscommunication during the entire process. There were many instances during the implementation process where the ideas of the committee were misunderstood. As presented in the e-mail from Angel Rivera on behalf of the CAO in Section 4.3, there was a feeling that the honor code might have been presented as an idea with more legalistic overtones than as a way to increase academic integrity. The lack of communication between the committee and student body caused the students to believe that there was no need for an academic honor code and that the WPI community would in no way benefit from one. In order to foster a healthy environment the university must communicate effectively. Without communication between faculty and students the environment can not reach its full potential. "Good communities foster internal communication."²⁰ An honor code can not be successful without internal communication.

The last process obstacle that played a factor was exhaustion. In section 4.4, Janet Richardson believed that the process went on for too long. She felt that the length of the process, the complexity of the issue, and the other commitments of the members of the honor committee took its toll. The process created overworked committee members and as stated earlier there was little energy left from the committee.

Together, these obstacles each contributed to the inability to implement an honor code to the WPI community. There may have been other obstacles in addition to these, but our research did not uncover them.

5.0 Recommendations and Conclusions

5.1 Recommendations

In the previous chapter we outlined the challenges faced when attempting to adopt an honor code at WPI. The goal of this chapter is to formulate solutions to the obstacles identified. The data collected and the analysis of that data gives us the necessary information to make valid and accurate recommendations. The college survey received responses from ten schools. The follow-up survey sent to these ten respondents provided information about how each institution overcame the obstacles to an honor code it had encountered. The SGA and faculty interviews indicated that the current environment, level of education about honor codes, and communication patterns at WPI all prevented the adoption of an honor code. The interview with Dean Janet Richardson introduced the concept of content versus process, which is the basis for our recommendations. The review of the committee's correspondence revealed that faculty buy-in and the "rat" clause were content challenges. These challenges arose from a lack of communication. The undergraduate survey indicated that the current climate of student opinion would make adopting an honor code at WPI feasible.

We have come to the conclusion that the honor code was not implemented as a result of a failure in the process of adoption rather than in the content of the code. The academic honor committee presented the campus with a product that did not have a significant selling point. Many of the students and faculty at that time felt that academic dishonesty was not a problem at WPI and therefore that an honor code would not benefit the community. The committee only spent the first few years educating the community while the rest of its eight-year tenure focused on writing the code. When the honor code

was presented to the SGA, the campus was not educated about the current academic dishonesty level, nor was it made aware of the benefits of an honor code. We recommend that the committee focus on the promotion of an honor code to the community.

The process challenges the committee faced involved changing the environment, the communication level, and the duration of the process of drafting and adopting a code. The adoption of an honor code at WPI requires a cultural transition that will change student attitudes about academic integrity and the level of trust between faculty and students. The lack of communication between faculty, committee, and students led to misunderstanding of the content of the honor code and its purpose. Finally, exhaustion set in because the process became an unexpectedly arduous and lengthy task.

Our recommendations include reorganizing the academic honor committee, which can lead to a simultaneous solution to two process challenges, cultural adjustment and miscommunication. We recommend that the committee be divided into two subcommittees. One subcommittee will focus on educating the campus while the other writes the honor code. This division educates the community while the code is being written. The previous committee concentrated too much on the writing of the code.

We recommend that the committee be comprised of faculty, administrators, and students. The faculty and administrators are the ones who enforce and uphold the institution and its academic integrity. The students will maintain the honor through their work and achievements at the school. Although the previous committee was comprised of members from all three of these bodies, the student representation was not enough.

The last two undergraduate survey questions reveal that the student body is split over the idea of a student run integrity committee, although two-thirds are in favor of

enhanced academic integrity on the campus. These two questions together suggest that students want representation in the process, but do not want to develop a code on their own. Consequently, we suggest that students voluntarily submit themselves to the committee so that they have proper representation. In addition a means to voice their opinions should be provided to all students. This can include discussions, opinion boxes both in the campus center and on the web, and by opening certain meetings of the academic honor committee to the student body.

Education that fosters awareness and communication will solve both the environmental and miscommunication issues. Before a successful honor code can be implemented on a campus the environment must be right for the change. It has been shown that students will not accept new standards just based upon institutional desire. In order for a change to occur the students must be involved in the process. The importance of communication must be stressed because very few schools “provide sufficient opportunities for discussion about the academic integrity standards and the policies among faculty and students.”²¹

In an effort to increase education and awareness, we advocate that the committee organize forums for discussion about academic integrity and an honor code. This dialogue will give students the opportunity to be involved in the process and to help foster communication. At the beginning of each school year we recommend new students attend orientation programs about academic integrity to raise awareness of policies and violations. Learning skill classes and academic integrity information classes can also provide additional opportunities to educate the population. To further enhance the

communication level, professors should begin new classes by discussing academic honesty policies with their students.²²

Most schools focus on the academic aspects of the undergraduate experience even though it is important to stress extra curricular experiences as well. There are several ways in which WPI can foster this. We recommend that Tech News, WPI's school newspaper, run a series of articles on academic honesty to further campus awareness. George Kuh mentions that the "articles could be strictly informative, could present student and faculty opinion, and report the outcomes of cases in which students are accused of academic dishonesty."²³ Public service announcements displayed across campus and on WPI's website could also help to educate the campus about academic integrity outside of the classroom.

Exhaustion was an obstacle faced by the committee. To eliminate this problem we recommend there be a limit or deadline placed upon the length of the process. Based upon the college survey results we recommend that the process be completed within a maximum of four years. A four-year period is appropriate because it would mean that the freshman class would not have graduated before the document was adopted. This is advantageous to the community because the initial freshman adoption class will influence the underclassmen below them. This will enable the committee to have a strong pool of students to support the honor code.

Although the process of implementing the honor code had more obstacles than the content of the code itself, there are still two issues with the code that prevented adoption. The two content obstacles were peer reporting and faculty buy-in. These two challenges contributed in the failure of the honor code.

Peer reporting was an obstacle as a result of miscommunication, misunderstanding, and the campus's unwillingness to change. The SGA members feel that WPI did not have an academic integrity problem and also feel that a peer reporting would disrupt their environment. Professors Bluemel and Addison both agree that there must be a period of transition before the campus is able to create an environment that is accepting of peer reporting. They believe that the WPI population must be educated on academic integrity and begin to feel a moral responsibility to keep a high level of honor on the campus before an honor code can be adopted. They feel that this period of transition may take several years and can only be accomplished through education and awareness. However, the undergraduate survey indicates that peer reporting would be effective at WPI and it appears that the period of transition may not take as long as people previously thought. With proper education the undergraduate body could be willing to accept peer reporting within a year.

. Based upon the response of Bruce Johnston, Dean of Student Life at Lyon College, we believe that peer reporting is a necessary part of an honor code. He feels that "without it you have only freedom without responsibility." Lyon College overcame this obstacle through discussion and communication. Peer reporting is an integral part of an honor code because "students have knowledge that cheating is occurring and have the responsibility to report it."²⁴

The academic honor committee also encountered a challenge in the content relating to faculty accountability. In an honor code environment, the faculty demonstrates and enforces the policies outlined in the document. Priorities in an honor code environment include training current and new professors to support the expectations

outlined. Also the committee educates the department chairs and request that the chairs pass along the new policies to their colleagues because, “department chairs play an important role in encouraging faculty to maintain academic integrity in the classroom and to support those who detect and confront it.”²⁵ The faculty can then communicate with each other and avoid creating a division between the committee and the faculty.

5.2 Conclusions

Our research has revealed the obstacles to implementing an honor code at WPI. Two types of obstacles prevented adoption, content and process. Process obstacles can be overcome by:

- Creating a committee that includes students, faculty, and administration to foster communication
- Dividing tasks among subcommittees to speed the process
- Educating the campus through orientation programs, forums, and public advertisements
- Limiting the duration of the process to a maximum of four years

Content obstacles can be overcome by:

- Educating department chairs to help educate their faculty and educating new faculty members
- Providing the WPI community with guided proof of the current academic dishonesty level and the benefits of a peer reporting clause in an honor code

The survey of undergraduate student opinion indicates that an honor code at WPI can be adopted. The obstacles identified through our research seem to be less of a challenge than when the SGA dismissed the last honor code in 2001. The undergraduate survey shows that students trust themselves, professors, and other students. The results also

show that undergraduates are in favor of increasing academic integrity on campus.

Experience at many other campuses demonstrates that an honor code is an effective means to raise levels of academic integrity. Our research indicates that the time is right for Worcester Polytechnic Institute to adopt an honor code.

Endnotes

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³ Flandez, Raymond Lee, "Academic Honesty Increases 30%: Honor Code May Discourage Cheating," The Diamondback, 2002.

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⁵ The Honor System at Duke University: A Brief History, Retrieved from www.duke.edu/web/Archives/history/honor_system.html, 2002.

⁶ Rubin, Richard. "Cracking the Honor Code: Part 1 of 4," The Chronicle, Independent Daily at Duke University, April 06, 1998.

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¹⁰ Nuss, Elizabeth M, "What Colleges Teach Students about Moral Responsibility? Putting the Honor Back in Student Honor Codes," Annual Meeting of the Institute on College Students Values, February 1996, p. 5.

¹¹ McCabe, Donald L., and Trevino, Linda Klebe. "Academic Dishonesty: Honor Codes and Other Contextual Influences," Journal of Higher Education, September/October 1993, p. 533.

¹² Phases of Nursing Science Development Walker and Avant. Retrieved from <http://www2.kumc.edu/instruction/nursing/nrsg750/Syllabus/CONCEPT%20Analysis%20Tutorial/sld004.htm>

¹³ Frey, James H. and Oishi, Sabine Mertens, How to Conduct Interviews by Telephone and in Person, SAGE Publications, Copyright 1995. pp. 25, 110-114.

¹⁴ Litwin, Mark S, How to Measure Reliability and Validity, SAGE Publications, Copyright 1995. pp. 5, 33.

¹⁵ Fink, Arlene, How to Design Surveys, SAGE Publications, Copyright 1995. pp. 1-20.

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¹⁸ Andrews, Nikki, "2002 Student Fact Book," WPI, October 1, 2002. p. 6.

¹⁹ WPI Plan, Retrieved from www.wpi.edu, 2002.

²⁰ Keith-Spiegel, Patricia, and Whitley, Bernard E. Jr., Academic Dishonesty, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, Copyright 2002, pp. 132.

²¹ Kibler, William L., Nuss, Elizabeth M., Paterson, Brent G., and Pavela, Gary. Academic Integrity and Student Development, College Administration Publications, Inc. Copyright 1988, pp. 15-16.

²² Ibid., 16-18.

²³ Kuh, George D., Schuh, John H., and Whitt, Elizabeth J, Involving Colleges, Jossey-Bass Publishers, Copyright 1991, pp. 258.

²⁴ Keith-Spiegel, Patricia, and Whitley, Bernard E. Jr., Academic Dishonesty, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, Copyright 2002, pp. 140.

²⁵ Kibler, William L., Nuss, Elizabeth M., Paterson, Brent G., and Pavela, Gary. Academic Integrity and Student Development, College Administration Publications, Inc. Copyright 1988, pp. 20.

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Appendix A: College Survey

School Name _____

1. Which of these attributes are found in your Academic Honesty Policy?
(Please check all that apply)

- Written pledge
- Requirement of peer reporting
- Student participation in judicial or hearing bodies
- Unproctored exams
- Campus communication of academic integrity to students
- Other

2. How long did it take your school to implement its Academic Honesty Policy? (The period of time from the first mention of the possibility of a policy to its adoption)

_____ years _____ months

3. Which groups participated in the adoption process of the Academic Honesty Policy? (Please check all that apply)

- Students
- Faculty
- Administration

4. Was there another school that your institution used as a model for establishing the Academic Honesty Policy?

Yes/No

If yes, what school? _____

5. Did you encounter any of the following challenges during the implementation but prior to the adoption of your Academic Honesty Policy?

Lack of Support of a “Rat” clause/Peer Reporting

Yes/No

(Requires students to report instances of academic dishonesty that they observe. Many students find this difficult because it requires them to “rat out” other students.)

Did you include this clause in your Academic Honesty Policy? Yes/No
Student/Faculty/Administration Mistrust

Yes/No

(Was there a lack of trust among campus contingencies that hindered implementation of an Academic Honesty Policy?)

Did you overcome this mistrust? Yes/No

Cultural/Environmental Issues

Yes/No

(New students who enroll at a college that already has an honesty policy know what they are getting into. However, students already enrolled may find it difficult to adjust to a new policy.)

Did you overcome cultural or environmental issues? Questions surrounding WPI's proposed Honor Code

Appendix B: SGA Questionnaire

SGA Interviews

1. What was your involvement in the proposed honor code process?
2. When and how did you get involved in the adoption process?
3. Who were the major players in the process?
4. Do you feel that the student body had enough say in the process?
5. What did you see as the obstacles to the honor code's installation?
6. Were you personally against or for the adoption of an honor code at WPI? (Why or why not?)
7. Do you feel an honor code will work at WPI in the future? And if not, why?

Appendix C: Selected Committee Email Correspondence

Date: Wed, 22 Sep 1999 09:58:43 -0400 (EDT)
From: W A Addison <addison@WPI.EDU>
To: honesty-committee@WPI.EDU
Subject: Honesty Meeting, Thursday, 9/23, SL 011

PLEASE NOTE NEW MEETING LOCATION IN SALISBURY LABS, ROOM 11, JUST NEXT TO THE HUMANITIES AND ARTS COMMON AREA.

AGENDA -- Continue revisions starting with section IV.
Discussion of Honor Advisors

Dear Honesty Folks: May I take the liberty to respond to Karen's minutes and attempt to sum up our discussions about section IV. Responsibilities. Please correct me where I'm wrong.

I believe we are all in agreement that we do not recommend an Honor Code that has NO OTHER OPTION but a Rat Clause . . . although we do believe the Code should allow students to report violations to either the professor or to the Honor Council, and can do so anonymously (this last aspect of reporting is stipulated in sections of the code we have not yet revised and may require discussion).

Thus the OTHER OPTION has been in past discussions for the witness in some form or other to tell the violator that the former has seen the latter break the honor code. This kind of option is used on other honor codes. I believe the idea is that peer pressure, telling a fellow student that they have been seen cheating, will either compel that student to turn themselves in in hopes of clemency or prevent them from attempting to cheat in the future. It seems to me to be a way of creating an effective although not failsafe deterrent, a non-toleration student culture. Other "non-toleration" codes seem to use the language of "reporting the dishonesty to the perpetrator, a professor, or honor board."

Our problem seems to arise from the indefiniteness of "confronting the student" by which a student may be held accountable for an honor code violation. Perhaps the indefiniteness can be corrected by stating simply:

3. Respond to any violation of the Academic Honor Code by appropriate action such as reporting the violation, discussing it with the professor, contacting the Honor Council, or [and I would list this last] TELLING THE STUDENT THAT YOU SAW THEM COMMIT AN HONOR CODE VIOLATION.

Such wording would eliminate the indefiniteness of "confront" (although in all honesty I believe this might be legitimately interpreted by an Honor Council). Neither "confront" nor "telling the student" will, of course, insure that the wrong-doing is corrected, but it will help cultivate a student culture of non-toleration, and is that not all we can realistically strive for?

Maybe Janet knows of other ways this has been worded in other codes with non-toleration goals but no exclusive rat clauses. I too will research alternative language.

The other proposed fix to the problem was to remove this option from the list of Responsibilities, thereby not making the student actionable for the way they "confront" or "report to" the perpetrator. My reading of this would be that such an emendation would make the code into a Rat Clause code because we would have removed the only other option. Removing . . . necessity to take any action, i.e., make the whole subsection into a recommendation or somesuch, and not a responsibility, would undercut student enforcement of the code, which I see to be absolutely necessary for it to work.

Sorry to be so longwinded. Please let us hear any thoughts or

counter-thoughts either electronically or in the meeting tomorrow.

Bland

Date: Thu, 7 Oct 1999 07:39:32 -0400 (EDT)
From: W A Addison <addison@WPI.EDU>
To: honesty-committee@WPI.EDU
Subject: MEETING TODAY, THURSDAY, 10/7, SL 011

MEET TODAY, THURSDAY, 10/7, AT NOON, IN SALISBURY LABS, ROOM 11.
This will be the last meeting of A Term.

AGENDA

I. Resolve issue of Faculty rights and responsibilities in cases of apparent student cheating. (Section IV. ii. 4.)

As I see it, we are all in agreement that students should be guaranteed due process.

The problem arises when there is not sufficient evidence to convict any specific student of an academic honesty violation, but there is evidence of academic dishonesty.

What can and must the faculty member do in such a case? He or she must report the incident to the Honor Council.

Question remains can the faculty member in a just manner do something to rectify the fact that his or her grading process has been corrupted.

I would say yes. This is not a matter of finding any particular student guilty of an honor violation. It is a matter of rectifying a pedagogical problem. Perhaps this needs to be made very clear. E.G., if after giving an exam it is discovered that the exam had been stolen, surely the professor could re-give the test and throw out previous examinations. Such steps will not be entirely fair to every member of the class--some students will have more homework or be ill or whatever when the the unexpected second exam is given, but the violation of academic dishonesty would in itself overturn the fairness of the classroom.

If you are in agreement with this argument, we need to find words to articulate the premises clearly.

On the other hand, if you believe the faculty must do nothing, but abide by the Honor Council decision, I presume you would want to make the case that the faith students have in the system (innocence until proven guilty, due process, etc.) is more important to the Faculty (because presumably it would create a very effective Honor Code) than rectifying a grading difficulty in one faculty's classroom. While this seems a plausible argument to me, it does not in fact seem like an argument the WPI Faculty will accept. We would undermine our Code in recommending it.

I welcome your thoughts and clarifications!

II. Continue revisions.

See you at noon, Salisbury 11. Bland

Date: Thu, 7 Oct 1999 10:57:45 -0400 (EDT)
From: Christopher J. Larsen <cjlarsen@WPI.EDU>
To: W A Addison <addison@WPI.EDU>
 : honesty-committee@WPI.EDU
Subject: Re: MEETING TODAY, THURSDAY, 10/7, SL 011

My main point, briefly, was:

The higher the standard of proof needed to "convict" students, the less an acquittal is a conclusion of innocence. So, in order to get faculty to agree to abide by honor board acquittals, the standard needs to be low. However, where severe punishments are possible, I believe the standard should be very high.

Chris

Date: Wed, 1 Dec 1999 16:16:35 -0500 (EST)
From: W A Addison <addison@WPI.EDU>
To: honesty-committee@WPI.EDU
Subject: Faculty Responsibility

While our discussion of "Faculty Responsibility" is fresh in everyone's mind, let me attempt to sum up the key points and decisions. As always I welcome corrections and additions, and apologize for lack of brevity.

The underlying principle here upon which we are agreed is that ALL JUDGMENTS ABOUT ACADEMIC DISHONESTY ARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ACADEMIC HONOR COUNCIL. This means that any faculty decision about a student's grade that involves matters of academic dishonesty must be overseen by the Academic Honor Council. What this implies is that a faculty member who witnesses an act of academic dishonesty must--in the spirit of the Honor Pledge--report it to the Honor Council, and can take no action against the student's grade without the Council's oversight (to be explained below, involving cases resolved between faculty member and student) or judgment (cases where student and faculty do not arrive at an agreement or where other circumstances necessitate adjudication by the Council).

What is different about this formulation and the procedure that it entails in contrast to current WPI policy is that it eliminates the Department Chair as an intermediary.

It appears to us that there are many benefits to this formulation of the principle and the procedure that is implied:

First, the faith of students in the Honor Code is strengthened inasmuch as they will recognize that faculty members are bound, in a similar fashion to themselves, to report violations of academic trust and that, on the other hand, faculty members can only evaluate students on the basis of their apparent academic accomplishments unless they challenge the honesty of those accomplishments by making a report of an academic dishonesty violation to the Honor Council. Furthermore, in cases where a subsequent resolution of the matter is worked out between faculty member and student, the initial report to the Honor Council will help ensure that the resolution is fair to all parties involved--the faculty member, the accused student, other members of the class or WPI community.

Second, the procedure entailed here reinforces the culture sustaining and supporting the Honor Code and the seriousness and gravity of any violation. In my mind, to be effective, the Honor Code must be viewed in a sacrosanct manner, tolerating no deviation from a clear and established procedure of some weight and consequence, and tolerating no clandestine "fixing" of violations. Having this single response to Honor Code violations--a report to the Honor Council--I believe reinforces the culture needed to sustain the Code. Furthermore, in a quite pragmatic manner, having faculty members report any suspected violation of academic dishonesty to the Honor Council would solve the current problem facing the Dean of Student Life, i.e., the difficulty of maintaining accurate records concerning prior offenses since currently many incidents are not, in fact, reported.

HOWEVER, by necessitating that the faculty member report violations to the Honor Council, the Committee does not want to preclude an independent resolution of the accusation of academic dishonesty between the faculty member and the student involved, thus unburdening the Council of the impossible task of investigating and judging every dishonesty incident. Most importantly, the procedure should be such to encourage students to recognize their wrongdoing and admit to the violation. Moreover, when the incident is not of great gravity or is a first offense, or when the incident does not involve other students, and so forth, it makes sense to allow for the possibility that a faculty member and student can reach some mutual agreement about how to resolve the issue.

Now with all this said, can we find the words to capture these concepts in the section dealing with Faculty Responsibility? Here's a first try:

1. Faculty Responsibilities
Know and uphold the Honor Pledge.
2. Foster an educational environment that is consistent with the definition of academic trust.
3. Communicate to students individual policies concerning evaluation procedures and expectations pertaining to academic integrity and trust.
4. REPORT ANY ACT OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY TO THE ACADEMIC HONOR COUNCIL.
5. JUDGMENTS ABOUT ACADEMIC DISHONESTY ARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ACADEMIC HONOR COUNCIL. GRADING DECISIONS INVOLVING ACCUSATIONS OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY MUST REST UPON THE JUDGMENT OF THE ACADEMIC HONOR COUNCIL EXCEPT IN CASES WHERE, UNDER THE OVERSIGHT OF THE HONOR COUNCIL, A FACULTY MEMBER AND STUDENT BOTH AGREE TO A RESOLUTION OF THE MATTER.

[Further explication about the Honor Council "oversight" and how faculty and student reach an agreement to resolve the accusation of academic dishonesty would be spelled out under VI. Academic Honor Council, ii. Investigation Sub-Committee. I would prepose something like the following.]

ii. Investigation Sub-Committee 3. In cases where a faculty member reports a violation by a student, the investigation sub-committee will ask the faculty member and student if they can mutually decide upon and agree to a resolution of the matter. The sub-committee will make a record of this agreement.

4 The investigation sub-committee decides whether the allegations merit

I welcome your comment or alternative suggestions.

Bland

Richardson, Janet Begin

From: W A Addison [addison@WPI.EDU]
Sent: Friday, October 20, 2000 10:48 AM
To: honesty-committee@WPI.EDU
Subject: CAO Comments about the Honor Code (fwd)



Untitled

----- Forwarded message -----
Date: Thu, 19 Oct 2000 15:26:13 -0400
From: Angel Rivera <arivera@WPI.EDU>
To: W A Bland Addison <addison@WPI.EDU>
Subject: CAO Comments about the Honor Code

Memo

To: Ad Hoc Committee on Academic Honesty
From: Ángel A. Rivera, Chair - CAO
CC: CAO
Date: 10/19/00
Re: Honor Code

Comments About Honor Code

On October 12, 2000, CAO discussed some issues related to the proposed Honor Code. Your committee will find a bulleted list of general comments from the discussion.

? The discussion of the proposal was related, mainly, to implementation issues.

? Some members of the committee and student representatives voiced their concerns about requesting students to sign (or to pledge to) any kind of binding document that forces students to "police" any honor code.

? Other members have concerns about any honor code that does not imply that all students and faculty will pledge to enforce the code. Some CAO members insist that no meaningful honor code can exist without such a "pledge to enforce."

? Student Representatives understand that the honor code mostly refer to the student. However, WPI is a learning institution that involves both students and faculty, especially with IQP's and MQP's. Accordingly, any honor code should include accountability for professors as well.

? CAO members inquired about the existence of studies related to the implementation of such a code at other academic institutions. There was a general idea/concern that implementation of an honor code can be one of the biggest problems.

? CAO agrees with other campus-wide committees that an Honor Code should be an educational policy, and that it should not have legalistic overtones.

? A CAO member indicated that CAO should be more concerned with operational issues. He also said that any ethics code should be related to specific educational opportunities, as well as to how a definition of

academic honesty is clearly articulated.

? It is clear, from the discussion, that any Honor Code should foster the creation of a learning environment that resembles responsible, honest, and professional practices at the workplace.

? Some CAO members expressed a concern about having a clear articulation of how to deal with violations to an academic honor code.

? One of the positive aspects of the document presented is that it specifies areas related to proper/improper academic behavior. CAO found that this is particularly good since in the past there was some confusion about what constitute dishonest action.

? An Honor Code should define how to act ethically and honestly in an academic and professional environment.

? Some CAO members indicated that the most important issue is to change attitudes about how we operate. However, CAO agreed that such any honor code should present a general (inclusive) statement that refers to improper academic conduct.

As you can see, most of the comments are general or schematic. However, please feel free to contact the committee in case of questions.

Respectfully submitted

Angel A. Rivera, Chair
CAO

--

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Richardson, Janet Begin

From: Addison, W A Bland
Sent: Friday, March 23, 2001 9:46 AM
To: honesty-committee@WPI.EDU
Cc: Ernest Domenic Dimicco; Janelle A Smith; Bluemel, Van; Demetry, Chrysanthe; Nicoletti, Denise W
Subject: Report on Academic Honesty Meeting, 3/22

I wanted to give a brief report on the academic honesty meeting on March 22 for the benefit of those who could not make the meeting. Janelle, Ernie, Janet, Chris, Van, Kelly please emend or correct anything below.

We began with a discussion of the general fact that honor codes are instruments by which a campus culture can be changed, so that the crucial element is how they might be used to heighten campus awareness about matters of academic integrity and trust. They are not secret weapons to end cheating; they are part of a structure that raises the consciousness of members of the community about ethical issues.

There was general consensus that to have a WPI Honor Code, WPI students would have to agree to such a code, and that to arrive at such an endorsement from students, SGA would have to be willing to champion it. This, in turn, would ONLY be possible (and by no means certain) if SGA leadership undertook to advocate such a code. The SGA had in the past been largely an "operational" body, and undertaking proselytizing the values of an honor code would be a new kind of, challenging endeavor.

There was an understanding that a minimum honor code ingredient (from at least the Ad Hoc Committee's point of view) was the recognition from students of some sort of shared or collective responsibility for academic honesty in the classroom. That everyone--student and professor alike--had the ethical responsibility TO DO SOMETHING when they witnessed an act of academic dishonesty. Neither student nor professor could sit idly by, self-assured by their own moral righteousness; that they themselves had not cheated. (This is not a matter of students and professors snooping around and trying to catch cheaters; it is simply making it a matter of conscience that one MUST DO SOMETHING when one knows that an act of academic dishonesty has been committed.)

What that SOMETHING ONE/STUDENTS MUST DO was not defined. Clearly students found anything approaching a "rat rule" as unacceptable.

There was an understanding that an honor code meant that professors conducted classes in a manner that indicated they trusted students. Here, some expressed the view that some students felt insulted by being policed by teachers while other students viewed it as a reassuring security measure. In either case, such practices and attitudes suggest clearly that WPI does not, in fact, have an honor culture in the classroom. This point may not be generally recognized because so much is made on our campus of the trust and collaboration that goes on in projects, which may not, in fact, be a good test of honor and trust among students and faculty.

It was recognized that to the degree students committed themselves to the ideal of shared responsibility for honesty in the classroom, there were concomitant expectations of trust from the faculty.

Janelle Smith, SGA VEEP, and acting interim president, agreed to take these issues to the SGA Committee on Academic Issues (CAI) to see if it were possible in the Committee's opinion to move in small increments

toward the idea of a WPI Honor Code.

Please respond to these comments wherever they need emendation or correction. Thanks to everyone, especially to Ernie and Janelle!

Bland

Appendix D: Janet Richardson Interview Questions

Janet Richardson Interview

1. When was SGA first asked to give their opinion on the proposed honor code?
2. A concern was expressed that faculty wasn't held to the same accountability as the students. What was expected from the faculty as far as accountability is concerned?
3. What was committees stand on the "rat clause?" Was the committee divided on this issue?
4. What kind of information and how frequently was it provided to the campus on the honor code issue?
5. How were students selected for the honor committee?
6. You talked about two problems that came up along the way, exhaustion and the notion of content versus process. Can you explain these problems a little deeper?

Appendix E: Undergraduate Student Survey

WPI Undergraduate Survey

We are studying academic integrity at WPI as part of our IQP. Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. Academic integrity means that all members of the community should act with personal integrity, respect other students' dignity, rights and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts. Please answer the following questions:

1. Do you feel that WPI is an institution that promotes academic integrity? Yes No
2. Do you find that you are less likely to cheat or do something academically dishonest if other students hold you accountable for your actions? Yes No
3. Do you find that you trust or distrust your professors at WPI? Trust Distrust
4. Do you find that they trust or distrust you to be academically honest? Trust Distrust
5. Do you find that they trust or distrust other students to be academically honest? Trust Distrust
6. Would you like to see WPI develop a student academic integrity committee? Yes No
7. Would you be in favor of developing higher academic integrity on the WPI campus? Yes No

Username

Password

The authentication of a CCC UNIX user name is to assure that only one vote is submitted per person. Answers will not be associated with your login