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BUILDING  
HONOR  
IN  
ACADEMICS

CASE STUDIES IN  
ACADEMIC INTEGRITY



# Building Honor in Academics



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*Case Studies in  
Academic Integrity*

Valerie P. Denney  
Camilla J. Roberts

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# Introduction

**F**rom the early beginnings of the Center for Academic Integrity, now the International Center for Academic Integrity (ICAI), the leadership and membership of the group strived to not only talk about or support academic integrity, but promote integrity and give institutions tools to create a culture of integrity on their own campuses. The Fundamental Values Project was designed to do just that.

According to Sally Cole, the center's first executive director from 1995 to 1999, the purpose of the original Fundamental Values was:

*. . . to identify and affirm the conditions under which student honesty would flourish. And we had the wisdom to recognize that it was an issue with campus climate that we were talking about. It was not just the student behavior but the environment/the settings in which a student decides to cheat or not to cheat. (Gallant, 2022)*

After the work of Elizabeth Kiss, Jim Larimore, Gary Pavela, Don McCabe, Bill Kibler, Pat Drinan, Mary Olson, and Sally Cole, the first edition of the Fundamental Values was published in 1999 with the following five values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. In recognition of the Center's 20th anniversary in 2014, the document was

reviewed in a second edition and the sixth value of courage was added. In 2021, a third edition was released, maintaining the same six values; however, attempting to connect the values to experiences global colleagues see daily at their institutions and with their students.

It is from this attempt to connect the values to the daily work that the idea of this case study book flourished. Leaders of ICAI saw a request and a need to be able to see examples of the fundamental values at work to help spur and continue conversations about academic integrity while also using these discussions as a training mechanism across the institution. We hope that the case studies found in *Building Honor in Academics*, organized by the six fundamental values of academic integrity, do just that. May they be talking points for a faculty meeting, training exercises for an honor council, or an ethical discussion in a classroom environment.

The mission of ICAI is to “cultivate integrity and academic communities throughout the world to promote ethical institutions and societies” and so throughout that mission the goal is to build the culture of academic integrity. We want to educate individuals; we want to educate our students; we want to educate our faculty. To have a commitment to academic integrity is to have a commitment to those values. We ask our students at our institutions to have these values, our faculty members to have these values, but also our institutions must maintain these values so our scholarly communities can flourish. *Building Honor in Academics* strives to help explore what it really means to live the fundamental values. The following is a description of the six fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage.

## Honesty

Honesty forms the indispensable foundation of integrity and is a prerequisite for full realization of trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Honesty can be seen as a prerequisite to realize all the other values. The ways we think about being honest is being truthful, giving credit to others, and promoting a culture in which we give credit to others. We keep our promises, and we provide factual evidence for our statements. Honesty is absolutely critical for both faculty and administrators model, not only in our words and what happens in our class in the classroom,

but with our policies and procedures. In examining your policies and procedures, explore whether the policy encourages honesty, is learning centered, or encourages a student to be dishonest because it is more legalistic in its approach. We must examine our own situations to be able to answer how we encourage honesty; how we promote a culture of honesty; how we praise acts of honesty when we see them and make it something that's very much part of the value of the institution.

## Trust

Trust is the ability to rely on the truth of someone or something. It is a fundamental pillar of academic pursuit. Within academics, we can promote trust by clearly stating our expectations and follow through on those expectations. That is whether we are faculty in the classroom and we are clearly stating the expectations for an assignment or if we are at the institution level where we are stating our expectations for academic integrity and what and how we will respond when breaches occur. Trust helps us promote transparency. Examples of trust in academia are to clearly state expectations, promote transparency, give credence, act with genuineness, and encourage mutual understanding. We want to trust others as we want to be trusted ourselves. We hold each other accountable to trust one another and encourage each other with a mutual understanding and act with genuineness when we have trust.

## Fairness

Fairness is focusing on impartial treatment or looking at bias making sure you understand where your biases are associated with this fair or impartial treatment. Fairness emphasizes and reinforces those values of truth within logic and rationality. Fairness can be seen by making sure that the ideas of the rules, policies, and procedures are applied consistently as it applies both to the institution, faculty member, and student. Engaging with others equitably ensures you keep an open mind, taking responsibility for your own actions. A faculty leads by example making sure to uphold those principles associated with the fairness principle and to communicate those expectations as we go through the academic year

making sure that the institution has clear, useful, and consistent policies and that there is a degree of transparency.

## Respect

Respect in academic communities is reciprocal and requires showing respect for oneself as well. Examples of respect include receiving feedback willingly, practicing active listening, showing empathy, seeking open communication, affirming others, and recognizing the consequences of our word and actions on others. It is not just that it is expecting trust from others but you also want to make sure that it is respectful, which shows that this trust goes both ways. To be clear, this is not only between individuals or between an individual and an institution, but one's self as well—respecting oneself. This can of course be completed in many different ways. As educators, we want students to have an active role in contributing to discussion and it means at times there are going to be some discussions where not everybody is going to agree. Faculty need to recognize students as individuals and to take seriously the ideas that those students have, respectfully. Respect is also having the faculty give full honest feedback and actionable feedback. Within respect in the institution, we must embrace that it is healthy to have some spirited discussions. The respect shown among the discussions gives the ability for individuals to have those disagreements but also to be able to proceed forward and to express their views.

## Responsibility

Responsibility identifies that upholding the values of integrity is simultaneously an individual duty and a shared concern. Examples of responsibility in academic life include engaging in difficult conversations, knowing and following institutional rules and policies, holding yourself accountable for your actions, following through with tasks and expectations, and modeling good behavior. It is the idea of making sure that one is holding oneself accountable for their own actions. We also often want our students to take responsibility for their actions. To demonstrate this responsibility, we encourage all at the institution to first

know the policies, but then to take responsibility to ask for clarification if needed. Responsibility is also creating understanding and respecting personal boundaries and following through. Just as students should take responsibility for the work they submit; faculty members are responsible for teaching our students and holding our students accountable. The faculty should also take responsibility for when things do not go quite as well as they planned with an assignment or maybe they were not quite as clear on their assignment guidelines. We also ask our institutions to take responsibility possibly through a long-term 5- or 10-year plan. These long-term plans allow for transparency of both successes and failures.

## Courage

Courage differs from the preceding fundamental values by being more a quality or capacity of character. However, as with each of the values, courage can be practiced and developed. Courage often is interpreted as a lack of fear. In reality, courage is the capacity to act in accordance with one's values despite fear. Examples of courage include being brave when others might not, taking a stand to address wrongdoing, being willing to take risk and risk failure, and being undaunted in defending integrity. One might need courage to be able to act in accordance with the other values. The previous five values sometimes can be intimidating, and one must have the courage to live out the value. For a student to speak up to their peers takes quite a bit of courage, or for our faculty members (especially prior to tenure) to stand up for what they think or what they believe in takes courage. We encourage all to have that voice to be able to take a stand, address wrongdoing, and understand there might be some discomfort but if you are standing up for the good, for something that you believe in, then it is worth it in the end. We ask our institutions to have courage just to make statements against wrongdoing. We have seen numerous current societal issues, and we encourage our institutions to take a stand to describe the culture and the community wanted at the institution. The courage in turn will continue to develop those previous five fundamental values. The six values will then lead to a high level of academic integrity culture at the institution.

## Structure of the Book

*Building Honor in Academics: Case Studies in Academic Integrity* is made up of 67 case studies written by authors from eleven different countries (United States, Canada, Australia, Germany, Indonesia, Latvia, Mexico, Nigeria, Puerto Rico, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom). The cases are organized into six chapters based upon the primary fundamental value the case entails. Many cases also have secondary values as well. Authors of the cases also directed their case toward a specific audience: faculty, staff, academic integrity office, researcher, or administration/other. Each case study follows a similar format beginning with a summary of the case, supporting information, a discussion of the values associated with the case, guiding questions and a conclusion.

To assist in the use of this case study book, the appendices have organized the cases in various topics.

- Appendix A is an alphabetical listing of the case studies mapped to the primary fundamental value.
- Appendix B is an alphabetical listing of the case studies mapped to the targeted audience of the case.
- Appendix C is a listing of case studies by author's name.
- Appendix D is a list of case studies by country of origin.

## Reference

Gallant, Tricia Bertram. "It Takes a Village": The Origins of the International Center for Academic Integrity." International Center for Academic Integrity, 2022. [https://academicintegrity.org/images/conference/It\\_Takes\\_a\\_Village.pdf](https://academicintegrity.org/images/conference/It_Takes_a_Village.pdf)

# Chapter 1

# Honesty

## Chapter Contents:

### *Buyers' Remorse*

Loretta Frankovitch, University at Buffalo, United States

### *Investment Pains*

Sara Kellogg, Iowa State University, United States

### *Professor Purposely Publishes Student Paper Without Giving Credit*

Martin Daumiller, University of Augsburg, Germany

### *Photoshop: The Easiest (Worst!) Way Out*

Lucila María Puente Cruz, Dulce Abril Castro Escalón, and Daniela Gallego Salazar, Tecnológico de Monterrey, México

### *Should I Pay the Contract Cheating Sites to Get the Answer?*

Ann Liang, University of Saskatchewan, Canada

### *Readied Recalcitrance*

Christian Moriarty, St. Petersburg College, United States

### *Where's Waldo: IP Address Incongruence and Student Surrogacy*

Aaron Glassman, Cheryl Lentz, and Denise Bollenback, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, United States

### *Foiling Attempts to Facilitate File Sharing: Updating Assessment*

Ann M. Rogerson and Oriana Milani Price, University of Wollongong, Australia

### *Caught in the Act*

Tay McEdwards, Oregon State University, United States

### *To Burn Bridges or to Build Them?*

Blaire N. Wilson and Jason T. Ciejka, Emory University, United States

### *A Syllabus Sleight of Hand*

Jason T. Ciejka and Blaire N. Wilson, Emory University, United States

**H**onesty forms the indispensable foundation of integrity and is a prerequisite for full realization of trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. The ways we think about being honest is being truthful, giving credit to others, and promoting a culture in which we give credit to others. We keep our promises, and we provide factual evidence for our statements. Honesty is absolutely critical for both faculty and administrators model, not only in our words and what happens in our class in the classroom, but with our policies and procedures. In examining your policies and procedures, explore whether the policy encourages honesty, is learning centered, or encourages a student to be dishonest because it is more legalistic in its approach. We must examine our own situations to be able to answer how we encourage honesty; how we promote a culture of honesty; how we praise acts of honesty when we see them and make it something that's very much part of the value of the institution.

There are 11 case studies in this book which address the primary value of honesty.

***Case Studies Focused on the Student.*** There are four case studies which primarily address the student perspective.

Two of the cases address unauthorized collaboration and/or use of resources. In “Case 1: *Buyers’ Remorse*” two students purchase an online assignment, but don’t actually use it to solve their homework problems. Nevertheless, they receive a bill from the online tutor which they don’t pay, causing the tutor to turn them in to the faculty member.

In “Case 2: *Investment Pains*” a faculty member at a university finds similar homework submissions for two students including the same document. One student said she simply used a peer’s laptop since hers was broken but denies misconduct.

One of the cases addresses giving proper credit. In “Case 3: *Professor Purposely Publishes Student Paper Without Giving Credit*” a student in her final year as an undergraduate conducted a research project independently in a term paper. A few years later, the student discovered an article written by her former professor that was nearly identical to her former term paper, but without attributing the work to the student.

The final case also deals with deception. In “Case 4: *Photoshop: The Easiest (Worst!) Way Out*” a student studied abroad and took two courses but failed one. She used Photoshop to change the failing grade into a passing grade on the transcript and submitted it to her home university.

***Case Studies Focused on the Faculty and/or Administrator.*** There are seven case studies which primarily address actual or potential



unauthorized collaboration and/or use of resources. In “Case 5: *Should I Pay the Contract Cheating Sites to Get the Answer?*,” an accounting instructor notices that several students in her class have answered questions incorrectly using a method that she did not teach. The instructor found the exam questions on a contract cheating site where a tutor has provided the answer that is only viewable for a fee. The instructor contemplates paying for the proof of misconduct.

In “Case 6: *Readied Recalcitrance?*,” a student turns in a paper that shows 65 percent similarity to a paper with another student’s name on it and on a paper-sharing website. The student denies the allegations.

In “Case 7: *Where’s Waldo: IP Address Incongruence and Student Surrogacy?*,” a faculty member noticed that some students had different IP addresses when submitting their weekly discussion posts than when submitting their heavily weighted activities like research papers. The faculty decided to investigate the complexities of this dilemma by examining the log data.

In “Case 8: *Foiling Attempts to Facilitate File Sharing: Updating Assessment?*,” a faculty member notices that the assessment tasks had not been routinely updated and lacked model answer examples. The faculty member has heard that students were uploading answers from past courses to file sharing sites, and she wants to proactively address this situation.

In the final case about unauthorized resources “Case 9: *Caught in the Act?*” a testing assistant routinely assists faculty with concerns about online exams that require proctoring. While reviewing a video of an exam session proctored by a third-party online proctoring vendor, the testing assistant noticed that before the exam started the screen share captured an open Excel spreadsheet with thousands of entries about student information and appeared to be used for organized contract cheating.

One case addresses providing proper credit. In “Case 10: *To Burn Bridges or to Build Them?*” a staff member proposes a solution to a staffing problem in the office during a team meeting. The solution is implemented successfully and praised by the senior leadership for providing an innovative solution. However, the staff member learned this idea from a colleague, and she has not been given credit.

The final case study “Case 11: *A Syllabus Sleight of Hand?*” deals with yet another form of deception. In this case, a faculty member is designing a syllabus for a new course that will be reviewed by the university’s curriculum committee. The faculty adds several assignments to the proposed syllabus that will meet the new standards, but he has no intention of following through on these once the course is approved.

In addition to the 11 case studies in this chapter on honesty, 23 other case studies in this book address honesty as a secondary value. Refer to that value chapter as shown for an introduction to each case study.

Trust:

- *Where in the Metaverse Is Boris' Voice?*
- *Suspicious Success*
- *My Students, My Research Subjects—Trust in Faculty, Researcher, and Student Relationships*
- *But They'll Never Know*
- *Machine Learning: Trusting the Training Data, or the Trainer?*
- *Capturing the Impostor Syndrome Through Turnitin*

Fairness:

- *Collusion Confusion*
- *Higher Learning, Higher Stakes*
- *All for One and One for All*

Respect:

- *Time Is a Non-Renewable Resource*
- *Email Déjà Vu*
- *Respect and Honor Through Intentional Proactive Student Actions*

Responsibility:

- *Posting Faulty Information to Bait Students*
- *Does Co-Authorship Imply a Responsibility for the Whole Document?*
- *Alma Mater Should Always Matter*
- *Student's Legal Defense and Institutional Responsibility*
- *Contract Cheating Coercion*

Courage:

- *Mock Police Board Exam Puts Students in the Hot Seat*
- *Taking a Stand for Integrity: A Whistleblower's Tale*
- *The Blackmail Blues*
- *To Tell or Not to Tell: That Is the Question*
- *Self-Plagiarism in PhD Student's Thesis*
- *The Handy Dandy Dictionary*

## Case 1: Buyers' Remorse

Loretta Frankovitch, University at Buffalo, United States

### *Synopsis/Summary*

Two students purchase an online assignment, but don't actually use it to solve their homework problems. Nevertheless, they receive a bill from the online tutor which they don't pay, causing the tutor to turn them in to the faculty member. The instructor must then determine if and how to sanction them.

### *Supporting Information*

James and Joe, two undergraduate computer science students, don't understand their computer science homework. It is after hours, so they cannot contact their professor or TA. Desperate, and running out of time, they purchase a solution from Tariq, an online tutor on a "help" website.

While waiting for the solution, James and Joe have second thoughts. They also realize that they can complete the majority of the project on their own. They do so, and submit it prior to the assignment deadline and prior to receiving anything from Tariq.

A little later, the completed assignment and a bill arrive from the online tutor. Since the students have already turned in their assignment, they don't pay the bill.

The online tutor has given them several days to pay, but because they don't, he contacts their professor, Dr. Baker, showing the students' request and the completed assignment.

Upon comparison of the submitted assignment and the "purchased" assignment, Dr. Baker determines that the students did not use the "purchased" assignment in their homework submission. However, at their next class meeting, Dr. Baker asks James and Joe to stay afterward to discuss a possible breach in academic integrity.

DR. BAKER: Gentleman—did you purchase your last project from an online tutor?

JAMES: Actually, yes . . . , but we didn't use it.

- JOE: We didn't have to. We thought we didn't have enough time to finish it, but as we waited for the tutor to complete the assignment, we ended up figuring it out ourselves.
- DR. BAKER: After looking at your submission, it doesn't bear resemblance to the "purchased" assignment, so I'm inclined to believe you, but why didn't you pay the online tutor?
- JAMES: We really didn't use his work, so we didn't feel we needed to pay him.

### *Value Discussion*

The primary value in this case study is honesty. According to the ICAI Fundamental Values document (<https://academicintegrity.org/resources/fundamental-values>), honesty requires truthfulness. In this sense, the students appear to have complied by answering their faculty member truthfully. But honesty also means that you will keep promises, a rule that the students break at least twice. First, they break a promise with the faculty member to abide by the rules and policies of the course and complete their work honestly, and second, they break a promise with the online tutor to exchange an assignment for money.

A secondary value seen is responsibility. Dr. Baker bears responsibility for teaching his students certain concepts and assessing what they know. He cannot uphold this responsibility if the students do not complete their work with honesty. His responsibility to the institution and to his profession is broken if he allows the students to violate the policies. The students bear responsibility to the faculty member, the institution, themselves, and anyone with whom they've entered an agreement, even if that promise is predicated on dishonesty. Two wrongs do not make a right. They need to adhere to course and university policies, and "model good behavior" (ICAI, 2021), neither of which they have done.

Another secondary value evident in this scenario is courage. The students had the courage to complete their assignment and turn it in without waiting to compare it to or check it against the tutor's answers. And, more importantly, they had the courage to respond to their professor with the truth. They could have lied to Dr. Baker in an attempt to cover their dishonest actions, but they chose to admit their mistake and possibly face negative consequences. According to ICAI's fundamental values, courage in academic settings may "include opportunities to make choices, learn from them, and grow" (ICAI, 2021). James and Joe made a

poor choice, but learned from it, both academically and personally, resulting in a more honest and courageous choice to tell Dr. Baker the truth about the whole situation.

### *Question Discussion*

1. Is poor behavior a reason to charge students with an academic integrity violation, even if the purchased assignment was ultimately not used?
2. Is it unethical that these students didn't pay their online tutor? Or doesn't the tutor deserve to be paid since he was operating unethically?
3. What is the faculty's responsibility in all this? Should they give the students a lesser charge than someone else who actually carried through with contract cheating?

### *Conclusion*

Students often make errors in judgment, but eventually come to an honest and responsible decision on their own.

## Reference

International Center for Academic Integrity [ICAI]. The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity, 3rd ed., 2021. <http://www.academicintegrity.org/the-fundamental-values-of-academic-integrity>.

## Case 2: Investment Pains

Sara Kellogg, Iowa State University, United States

### *Synopsis/Summary*

Faculty at an American accredited university find similar homework submissions for Tan and Lu. Faculty find the same author for both spreadsheets in document properties and refer the case to the student conduct office for cheating. Lu informs the student conduct office that

because her laptop is broken, she had used Tan's to complete coursework, but denies misconduct. Faculty disagree with the conduct office's finding of non-responsibility for academic misconduct and proceed to review all prior homework submissions.

### *Supporting Information*

Tan and Lu are roommates enrolled in a Business Management course, and both received an email from their faculty, Dr. Rose, regarding their most recent homework assignment. Dr. Rose found a few similarities in Tan and Lu's spreadsheets, and upon closer inspection, discovered the same author in the properties of both documents. Dr. Rose already had some concerns about these students as they've missed a number of the same class periods and are currently earning very similar grades in the course. Dr. Rose informs the students they have been referred to the student conduct office for academic misconduct, and they will both receive a zero if responsible. During their meetings with student conduct, the students are asked to explain the same author on their spreadsheets.

Lu shares, "My laptop broke around midterms, so I've been using Tan's laptop for all my coursework, which is why we had the same document author, but I didn't cheat." Tan shares a similar account, adding, "We had some similarities because we study together, but a lot of our formulas and work were different. I don't understand why Dr. Rose isn't paying attention to that." After review, the student conduct office determines there is not a preponderance of evidence to support that academic misconduct occurred and notifies the faculty. The students were found not responsible. Dr. Rose strongly disagrees with this finding and believes the students have gotten away with cheating, so decides to pull up all their previous homework and exams to compare more closely, looking for evidence to support his suspicion.

### *Value Discussion*

Honesty is the primary value in this case. Students are expected to be honest in their coursework and engagement with faculty and may be asked to support their account when there are reasons for suspicion. Faculty may have questions about a student's honesty and still facilitate an equitable classroom experience. An integrity office may have to make decisions in support of a student's account as supported by the relevant and available evidence, regardless of suspicions of dishonesty.

A secondary value in this case is responsibility. Students have the responsibility to communicate issues that may arise or create suspicion about their work and do this proactively when possible. Faculty have a responsibility to ensure equitable treatment of students, and additional responsibility not to harbor resentment or seek reprisal for unfounded suspicions of academic dishonesty. Integrity offices have a responsibility to review and weigh all relevant information in making thoughtful and well-informed decisions.

### *Question Discussion*

1. Should the students in this situation have taken some type of steps to proactively prevent this referral?
2. Is it possible for a faculty's perception of a student's investment in their course to influence their suspicion of academic misconduct?
3. When a faculty disagrees or is frustrated with a decision by a student conduct office related to a referral for academic misconduct, what options do they have for response?
4. What are some strategies an integrity office might use to reduce frustration from faculty in a case where students are found not responsible?
5. What is the appropriate action or outcome if the faculty does find issues with prior coursework submissions from these students?

### *Conclusion*

Honesty is the foundation for trust in the classroom, and even when challenging, faculty may have to accept a student's account to provide a fair and objective learning environment.

## **Case 3: Professor Purposely Publishes Student Paper Without Giving Credit**

Martin Daumiller, University of Augsburg, Germany

### *Synopsis/Summary*

In her final year as an undergraduate student at a large university in the US, Janine conducted a research project independently and described her findings in a term paper. Her professor praised her paper and graded it with an A. Having started her graduate studies at another university,

Janine continued with further research on this topic. She discovered an article written by her former professor that was recently published and was nearly identical to her former term paper; the professor even kept the exact text that Janine wrote in many instances.

### *Supporting Information*

As soon as Janine read the article, she called her friend, Maggy.

JANINE: Hi Maggy! Do you remember the term paper I wrote in my final year? I just came across the exact same paper, but allegedly written by my former professor, Prof. Umbridge. It just got published!

MAGGY: Wow, so Prof. Umbridge built on aspects of your work?

JANINE: No! It's the exact same paper. Only a few words are different. Other than that, it's identical!

MAGGY: Wow—I'm shocked. You put so much work and effort into that paper. Did she at least give you credit?

JANINE: No! Nothing. Not even a mention in the acknowledgements. I don't know what to do! This is so unfair, and I feel so exploited. What do you think I should do?

MAGGY: Do you still have all the data on your laptop? Everything that refers to that project?

JANINE: Yes! I even have the comments Prof. Umbridge made to the article in the first stages of writing the paper.

MAGGY: Perfect, that's all we need! Does your former university have an academic integrity office? I recommend that you go there first thing tomorrow. Maybe they can even help to take the article down! Good luck!

JANINE: Thank you for your advice. I'll keep you updated!

### *Value Discussion*

Honesty, the primary value in this case study, is the fundamental premise of academia and forms a scaffold around scientific actions and beliefs. The scientific process entails gathering new and authentic findings for a deeper and better understanding of nature. Researchers should act with honesty and integrity, in best knowledge and with full conscience throughout all stages of their profession, including the publication process. This makes them and their research findings trustworthy