CREATING A CULTURE OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY REQUIRES THREE INTERCONNECTED COMPONENTS:

EDUCATION
ADVOCACY
MONITORING
INTRODUCTION

Building the culture of academic integrity requires a three pronged approach: education, advocacy, and monitoring. During 2014-15, the Ethics and Integrity Council made significant progress in enhancing USF’s culture of academic integrity by completing activities in each of these three key areas. A brief summary is listed below and additional information is provided in subsequent sections of this report.

Education
- Adopting the RAISE tutorial for undergraduate students with academic integrity violations, as proposed by the Office of Undergraduate Studies.
- Requiring RAISE completion by all undergraduate students suspended from the University or receiving FF grades for reasons of academic integrity (full process to begin in the next academic year).

Advocacy
- Working with General Counsel to revise the USF System Academic Integrity Regulation, USF3.027.
- Exploring the need for an Office of Academic Integrity at USF.
- Gaining approval from UCM to print the new USF academic integrity posters.

Monitoring
- Establishing the first Student Academic Integrity Committee at USF.
- Supporting the enhancement of a centralized reporting process for academic integrity violations of undergraduate students, currently maintained in the Office of Undergraduate Studies.
- Working with Innovative Education on the selection of an on-line proctoring system.

Despite these efforts, more needs to be done to enhance the culture of academic integrity at USF. Opportunities for academic dishonesty have increased dramatically in recent years. Cheating has moved beyond note-passing during exams, looking at other student’s answer sheets, and buying papers. Faculty are dealing with students who engage in complex cheating schemes that are difficult to detect. For example:

- Ghostwriters provide original, non-plagiarized papers for students. These services provide a non-plagiarism guarantee and charge by the amount of lead time and level of the program (undergraduate, masters, or doctoral).
- Students report that they can now “outsource” their assignments, even their entire class participation, to ghost services.
- Students have devised elaborate schemes to cheat during on-line exams and some have continued to cheat even when being video recorded during the exam.
- New phone apps, such as YikYak, provide an anonymous method of communicating with each other within a 10 mile radius. Unlike other social media outlets, the messages cannot be traced to the original user and open the door for cheating during class tests in a manner that is untraceable.
- New technological devices will make it more difficult for faculty to monitor exams.
The Ethics & Integrity Council is seriously concerned about these new opportunities for academic misconduct and has developed several strategies to enhance the culture of academic integrity at USF. This report describes the actions taken by the Ethics and Integrity Council during 2014-15, presents a preliminary list of goals for 2015-16, and proposes the establishment of an Office of Academic Integrity at USF with a three-prong mission: (1) provide leadership and advocacy at USF; (2) provide education and prevention activities for students and strategies for faculty to combat academic misconduct; and (3) coordinate and monitor processes associated with academic misconduct cases, e.g. RAISE tutorial, centralized reporting of misconduct, and assist with appeals through the Student Academic Integrity Committee.
Education

RAISE: Raising Academic Integrity Standards in Education
A university is a scholarly community dedicated to building and transmitting knowledge, critical skills and broad understandings through excellence in teaching and research. Fundamental to this purpose is a commitment to the inherent values of truth and wisdom, as inscribed on the seal of the University of South Florida. We must continue to dedicate ourselves to the preservation of these values to ensure that a USF degree continues to be held in highest regard as we strive to produce “well-educated and highly skilled global citizens through our continuing commitment to student success” (Goal 1, Strategic Plan 2013-2018).

Research on academic integrity indicates that many students enter the university without a solid understanding of academic integrity issues and their importance. A study at the University of Arkansas (2013) demonstrated the effectiveness of an on-line tutorial called RAISE in:

- Changing student attitudes about cheating
- Increasing student knowledge of the importance of academic integrity
- Helping students to understand acceptable and unacceptable behaviors.

The Ethics and Integrity Council worked with the Office of Undergraduate Studies to select a program to educate students on plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, copyright infringement, and technology violations. The program selected is called RAISE: Raising Academic Integrity Standards in Education. The RAISE system teaches students about academic integrity and cheating by completing a 55 minute on-line tutorial.

Completion of the RAISE tutorial is now required for all undergraduate students who receive an FF for academic integrity reasons or who have been suspended from the University for reasons of academic misconduct (to begin in academic year 2015-2016). Students complete the on-line tutorial at the USF Testing Center with a fee of $55.00, plus costs for USF proctoring services. Prior to being allowed to register for classes in a semester following their violation and/or re-enter the university after suspension, students must complete RAISE, write a 4 - 5 page paper relating what they learned about the value of academic integrity and their particular violation, and send a letter to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies reaffirming their intention to follow the USF Commitment to Honor.
Monitoring and Regulation

Student Academic Integrity Committee (SAIC)
The Student Government has long been interested in establishing an Honor Court at USF. The initial proposal came forward several years ago but was not implemented. Two years ago, the student government members of the Ethics & Integrity Council (EIC) once again proposed the establishment of an Honor Court that would be composed of students who would review appeals on academic integrity cases. After consulting with the General Counsel’s office and other administrators, the EIC decided to implement a modified version of the Honor Court: the Student Academic Integrity Committee (SAIC). The SAIC includes student and faculty/administrative members. SAIC is cited in the new USF Academic Integrity Regulation (3.027) as a source of student members for academic appeals cases involving integrity.

The purpose of SAIC is to engage students who are committed to academic integrity in activities that promote the Commitment to Honor among USF students. SAIC has three functions related to academic integrity: (1) education; (2) advocacy; and (3) case review. The following activities were accomplished in 2014-15:

- Twenty-two students were selected to serve on the inaugural SAIC.
- A basic training program was developed that included: (1) an overview of the USF academic integrity regulations and academic grievance processes and (2) case studies portraying a wide range of academic integrity dilemmas.
- Fifteen students completed training and several were asked to serve as members of the academic integrity review boards for spring, 2015 cases.
- The SAIC met as a student organization and selected Mark Noble as their first chair. The group began meeting in the spring semester to plan their educational and advocacy activities for the 2015-16 academic year.

During 2015-16, SAIC will be expanded to 45 student members. New members will complete the basic training to prepare them to serve as advocates, educators, and case reviewers for academic integrity cases appealed by students. In addition, an advanced training program will be developed to provide students with additional hands-on experience in participating in case reviews and decision-making processes.

Centralized Reporting of Academic Dishonesty
Many, if not most, cases of academic integrity at USF are managed by the instructor who meets with the student, presents the evidence, hears the student’s explanation of the situation, and assigns the appropriate sanction ranging from a zero for the assignment to an F or FF for the course. These consequences are considered appropriate for first offenses but repeat offenses may require a more severe penalty. In the past, there has been no centralized record of academic integrity violations at the college or university level unless a grade of FF is assigned or unless the student appeals the sanction. Thus, the faculty members and Associate Deans who
coordinate academic integrity appeals have no way of knowing if a case represents a first violation or if the student has multiple, unreported violations that may affect the nature of the sanction.

The new USF Academic Integrity regulation requires the instructor to submit a written statement to the College Dean reporting all Level 3 or 4 violations to the appropriate Academic Officer to consider additional academic sanctions above the grade assignment. In Level 2, 3, and 4 violations, the instructor must also report the violations to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies to enable appropriate handling of multiple violations. A description of the various levels follow:

- Level One violations typically occur because of inexperience or lack of knowledge.
- Level Two violations include dishonesty characterized by a more serious character that affects a significant aspect or portions of the course.
- Level Three violations are those that include multiple violations or serious violations affecting a major or essential portion of work done to meet course requirements.
- Level Four violations refers to an infraction following return from suspension for academic dishonesty, activities similar to criminal activity, substitution for an exam, fabrication of evidence, falsification of data, professional code violation.

At the present time, the centralized reporting is being maintained manually in the Office of Undergraduate Studies. However, efforts are underway to determine the feasibility of an automated reporting system, possibly through Canvas.
Advocacy and Awareness

Academic Integrity Posters
During 2013-14, the Ethics and Integrity Council designed a series of posters to be placed in strategic locations across campus. During 2014-15, the posters were reviewed and approved by the Office of University Communications and Marketing and are now ready for printing and distribution (see attachment to this report). More than 350 posters will be placed in all classrooms and residence halls for the beginning of the Fall, 2015 semester. The EIC expresses its appreciation to the President’s Office and UCM for their commitment to and financial support of this project.

EIC Website Revision
In an effort to promote awareness of academic integrity at USF, the EIC website was redesigned. The major addition was the development of a new site for the Student Academic Integrity Council (SAIC). Other revisions were also made to increase the ease of access to resources for faculty and students, including links to the USF academic integrity tutorials, plagiarism tutorials in the library, research ethics and research misconduct sites, academic integrity regulation, and other resources such as the Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy and articles on the rise of cheating.
Proposed Office of Academic Integrity

Building the culture of academic integrity at a university is a multi-faceted process. This past year, USF developed new processes for its system-wide academic integrity regulation (USF3.027); established a Student Academic Integrity Committee; strengthened a centralized reporting system for undergraduate students; and adopted the RAISE tutorial for undergraduate students suspended for academic integrity. These new initiatives, as well as the increasingly complex nature of academic dishonesty cases, require the full-time attention of a university administrator. Therefore, the Ethics and Integrity Council recommends the establishment of an Office of Academic Integrity.

The most important reason for establishing an Office of Academic Integrity is to provide leadership for enhancing the culture of academic integrity throughout the campus. Academic integrity cannot solely be legislated. It must be reinforced in multiple settings and on multiple occasions. This requires the provision of a systematic set of services that “focus on creating healthy, ethical environments that support ethical choices at all levels of the organization rather than simply focusing on stopping students from cheating” (Davis, Drinan, & Gallant, 2009). The culture of academic integrity involves continuous articulation of the ethical values and expectations of the university, enhanced ethical education for students, expanded faculty training in prevention practices; outreach to faculty to acquaint them with procedures for handling suspected cheating; and support for faculty who report suspected violations of academic integrity.

Recognizing that academic dishonesty detracts from the value of a USF degree, the establishment of an Office of Academic Integrity is proposed. By building a university-wide office responsible for academic integrity at all levels of scholarship and research, the university can better educate its students to take pride in their academic, professional and personal development. This office would become an important part of the university’s infrastructure to administer the system regulations on academic integrity. It could address the erosion that academic dishonesty brings to student success, whether reported collectively through student retention, persistence and graduation rates, or realized through individual failures to produce an honest, trustworthy and respected citizen. Its establishment will enable the university to more directly empower our students to exhibit high standards of ethics and integrity in both their personal and professional lives.

USF presently does not have a designated Academic Integrity Officer. However, designated Academic Integrity positions exist at numerous institutions, including Stony Brook University, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, University of California-Davis, University of California-San Diego, Johns Hopkins University, University of South Carolina, Washington State University, Clemson, and Texas Tech, among others. These individuals hold various titles, such as Director of Academic Integrity, Director of Student Standards and Accountability, and Coordinator of Academic Integrity.
Suggested responsibilities for the Academic Integrity Officer follow:

1. Develop a comprehensive outreach and educational program regarding the USF Commitment to Honor and issues of academic integrity for the campus community.

2. Administer the USF System Academic Integrity Regulation, USF3.027.

3. Oversee the management of Academic Integrity cases.

4. Oversee the activities of the Student Academic Integrity Committee (SAIC) including annual solicitation of members, training, and case assignments.

5. Develop and monitor a centralized reporting system for graduates and undergraduates.

6. Provide USF faculty with new tools and knowledge to prevent and address academic misconduct within our changing academic environment.

7. Consult with faculty who are faced with academic integrity violations.

8. Coordinate educational activities for students to improve their knowledge and understanding of academic honesty and behaviors that violate integrity by presenting to student groups, orientation programs, academic departments, and professional staff.

9. Create documents and guides for faculty, staff, and students regarding the academic integrity process.

10. Monitor the implementation of sanctions and completion of RAISE tutorials for students found to violate academic integrity regulations.

11. Prepare an annual report on the number of academic integrity violations and prepare educational and outreach activities to address observable trends and prevent academic misconduct.

12. Coordinate with the Office of Research on cases involving research misconduct.
PRELIMINARY GOALS FOR 2015-16

1. Expand the membership of the SAIC, provide training for new members, and develop advanced training for continuing members.

2. Identify a mechanism to automate the centralized reporting process.

3. Conduct a survey of students and faculty to assess their perceptions of academic integrity on the USF Tampa Campus.

4. Develop outreach activities with faculty and students to create an awareness of the updated USF System Academic Integrity Regulation and the new processes.

5. Continue to work with Innovative Education on the selection and implementation of the on-line proctoring program.

6. Provide featured stories for the communications section of the EIC website to highlight USF’s pro-active approach to academic integrity.

Additional goals may be added when the new committee re-convenes in Fall, 2015.
ETHICS & INTEGRITY COUNCIL MEMBERS 2014-15

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Dr. Catherine Batsche College of Behavioral & Community Sciences

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References