

INTRODUCTION

This survey provides data on University Park undergraduate students' perceptions of cheating and the prevalence of cheating. In addition, included in the survey are questions concerning the likelihood of students notifying an instructor if they were aware of another student cheating and where they would go for assistance if they were accused of violating the University's policy on academic integrity.¹

In total, 1,232 students responded to the survey for a 28.7% response rate. By phone, 646 participated; 586 participated by Web. The confidence interval for the total sample is +/-2.74%.

Of the respondents, 55.2% are between 18 and 20 years of age, 52.3 % are male, 85.9% are White/Caucasian, 36.1% live on campus, 41.5% are first-year or sophomore students, 77.1% began their Penn State career at University Park, and 80.1% reported having a GPA of a 3.0 or higher. For additional information on the Pulse methodology, please visit: <http://www.sa.psu.edu/sara/qa.shtml>.

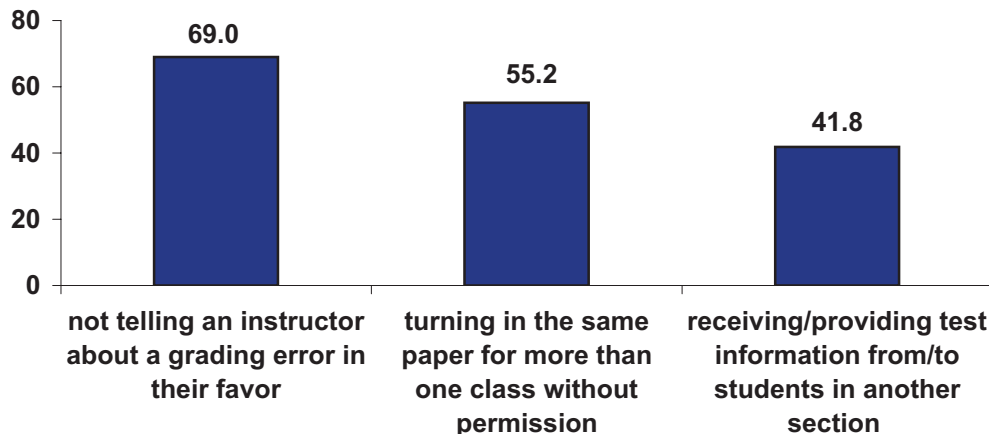
FINDINGS

Perceptions and Prevalence of Academic Dishonesty

According to the University's Code of Conduct, academic integrity is "the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner." In the survey, students were asked whether they considered a series of behaviors to be cheating. They were then asked if they had ever engaged in each of the behaviors while enrolled as a student at Penn State.

- Students were least likely to perceive the following behaviors to be cheating: not telling an instructor about a grading error in their favor (69.0%), turning in the same paper for more than one class without permission (55.2%), and receiving or providing information about a test from/to students in another section (41.8%) (see Chart 1).

Chart 1: Behaviors Least Likely to be Perceived as Cheating
(by percent who do not perceive it to be cheating)

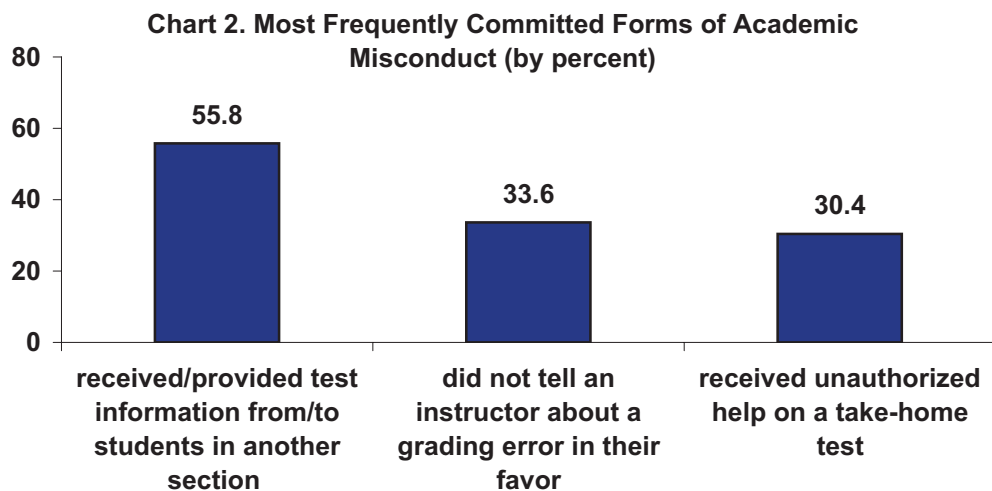


University Park students' perceptions and prevalence of Academic Dishonesty

For more information please visit Student Affairs Research and Assessment at <http://www.sa.psu.edu/sara>

¹ Survey was adapted from the University of Iowa's 1992 Survey of Campus Cheating.

- Most commonly students reported engaging in the following forms of academic misconduct: receiving or providing information about a test from/to students in another section (55.8%), not telling an instructor about a grading error in their favor (33.6%), and receiving help on a take-home test when they were not allowed to collaborate with others (30.4%) (see Chart 2).



Other violations of academic integrity are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

- Close to 30% (28.6%) of students did not perceive it to be cheating to lie to an instructor about having an illness or some other emergency when they missed a test or assignment, and 15.9% acknowledged having done so (see Table 2).

Table 1: Awareness and Prevalence of Academic Dishonesty: Exams

Behavior	Percent who do not consider it cheating	Percent who have done it
Take or attempt to take a test book or answer sheet that was supposed to be handed back to an instructor	7.7	1.6
Use an electronic device as an unapproved aid during an exam	4.2	2.9
Use notes on a closed-book test	3.2	4.3
Have someone take a test for you	3.1	0.7
Take a test for another student	2.8	0.8
Copy from another student's test or answer sheet during an exam	2.6	9.0
Exchange answer sheets or papers during a test	2.0	1.4

Table 2: Awareness and Prevalence of Academic Dishonesty: Assignments

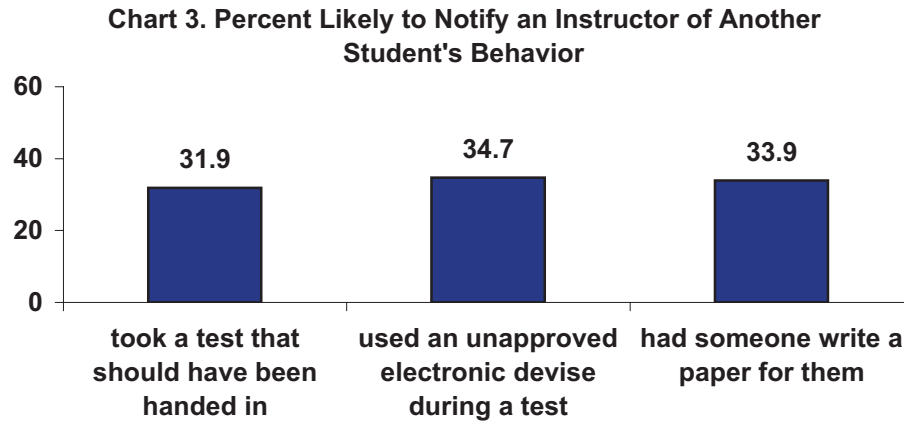
Behavior	Percent who do not consider it cheating	Percent who have done it
Lie to an instructor about having an illness or some other emergency when you've missed a test or assignment	28.6	15.9
Allow someone to copy your course assignment or paper	8.3	23.0
Use someone else's ideas or words without referencing or crediting the original source	7.4	11.8
Buy a paper or have someone write a paper for you	5.5	1.7
Turn in another student's paper or course assignment as your own work	2.4	2.0

- Furthermore, students who did not consider behaviors to be cheating were significantly more likely to engage in those behaviors when compared to students who perceived the behavior to be cheating (data not shown).
- In general, students with higher GPAs (above a 3.5) were less likely to engage in academic misconduct than were students with lower GPAs (data not shown).

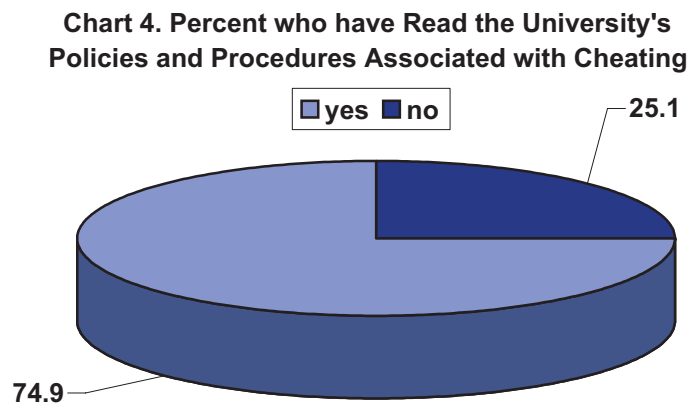
Supporting Academic Integrity

Students were also asked about the likelihood of them notifying an instructor about the academic misconduct of another student (see Chart 3).

- Approximately 33% indicated they would be at least “somewhat likely” to notify an instructor of someone taking a test book that should have been handed in, using an unapproved electronic device during a test, and having someone write a paper for them.

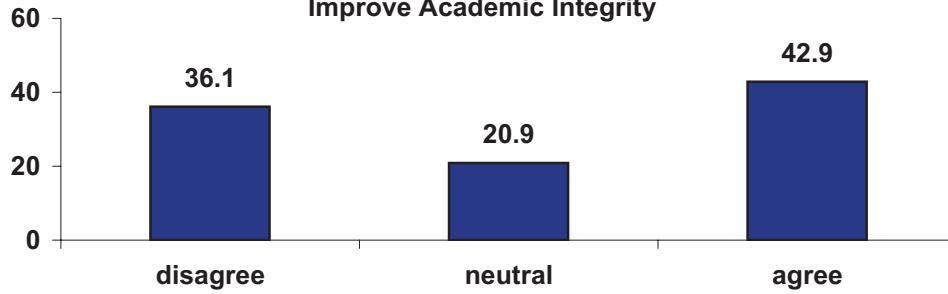


- As shown in Chart 4, 74.9% indicated they had read the University's policies and procedures associated with cheating.
- When asked how taking an exam in a secure facility with access controls, identity confirmation, video surveillance, and computers that scramble questions and answers would affect their anxiety, 59.7% indicated it would make them “slightly” or “significantly” more anxious, and 36.6% indicated it would have no effect (data not shown).
- In addition, students were asked the percent of their instructors during this academic year who discussed what they consider cheating and the consequences of getting caught; 61.6% indicated 75% or more of their instructors had these conversations with them (data not shown).



- Approximately 43% agreed that having an honor code would improve academic integrity (i.e., reduce cheating) at Penn State, while 36.1% disagreed (see Chart 5).
- Students of color and first- and second-year students were significantly more likely to agree that an honor code would improve academic integrity when compared to white students and juniors and seniors respectively (data not shown).

Chart 5. Percent who Agree that having an Honor Code would Improve Academic Integrity



Lastly, students were asked where they would go for assistance if accused of violating the policy on academic integrity (see Table 3).

- Most students responded they would seek assistance from an instructor or faculty member (93.1%) and an academic advisor (82.9%).
- Students were also likely to seek assistance from the Judicial Affairs Web page (68.8%) and the Penn State Web page (52.4%).

Table 3: Where Students Would Go for Assistance if Accused of Violating the University’s Policy on Academic Integrity

Resource	Percent
Instructor or faculty member	93.1
Academic advisor	82.9
Judicial Affairs Web page	68.8
Penn State Web page	52.4
Dean’s office	49.2
Resident assistant or hall coordinator	20.0