



Academic Integrity

March 1999

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Purpose

The goals of this survey were to explore the factors that encourage and discourage cheating, to determine effectiveness of consequences of cheating, and to verify student awareness of academic integrity expectations.

Highlights

A majority of students (63%) had faculty discuss consequences of cheating in their classes.

Students estimated on average that 23% of students cheat on tests and 41% cheat on class assignments. Since coming to Penn State, 17% said they themselves had cheated on tests and 44% said they had cheated on class assignments.

Students had looked at the Academic Integrity statement (58%), the Code of Conduct (39%), and the honor code for their College (26%); 32% claimed they had read the 'Penn State Honor Code', which does not exist.

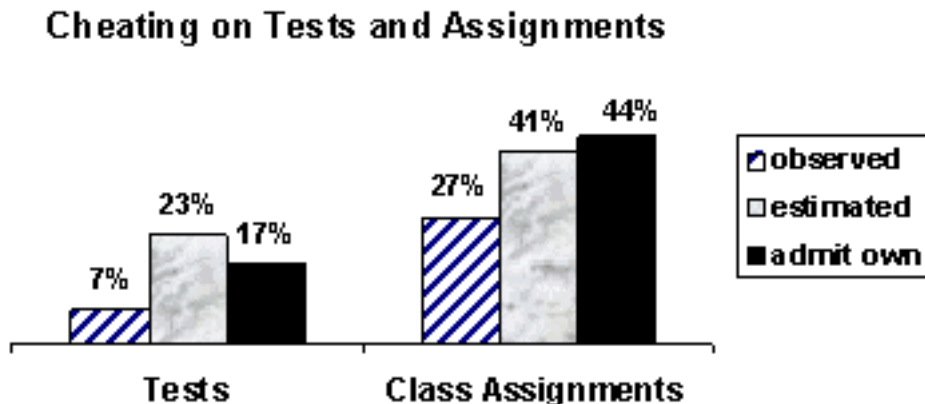
Participation Rate

- N = 734 (65%) agreed to participate
- N = 390 (35%) did not agree to participate



Findings

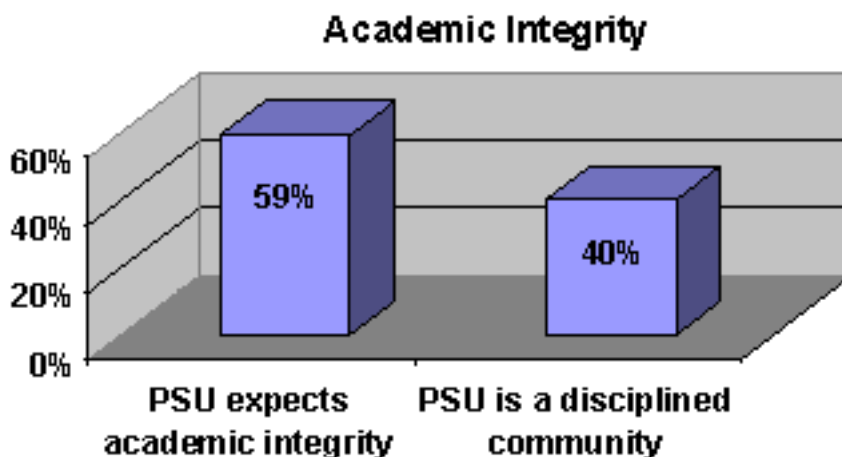
- Students estimated more cheating among other students than they actually observed. Reports of their own cheating almost matched estimated cheating among other students.



- Students were evenly split about whether students planned in advance to cheat or cheated because of an unexpected opportunity.

49% plan in advance to cheat
 44% cheat because of unexpected opportunity
 7% unsure

- Most students agreed that academic integrity was in fact the expectation at Penn State while fewer students felt campus climate fit the definition of a 'disciplined community... where individuals accepted their obligations and where well defined procedures guide behavior for the common good.'



- A majority of students said cheating was 'always wrong' while a third thought it depended upon circumstances.

58% cheating is always wrong
 33% depends on circumstances

9% cheating is normal part of college life

- There was a significant difference by GPA for students who said they 'had cheated' or 'had not cheated' on a test or class assignment. **

Grades and Having Cheated

	had not cheated	had cheated
equal to/below 2.75	42%	58%
between 2.76 and 3.29	45%	55%
equal to/above 3.30	57%	43%

(Statistically significant at the .01** level)

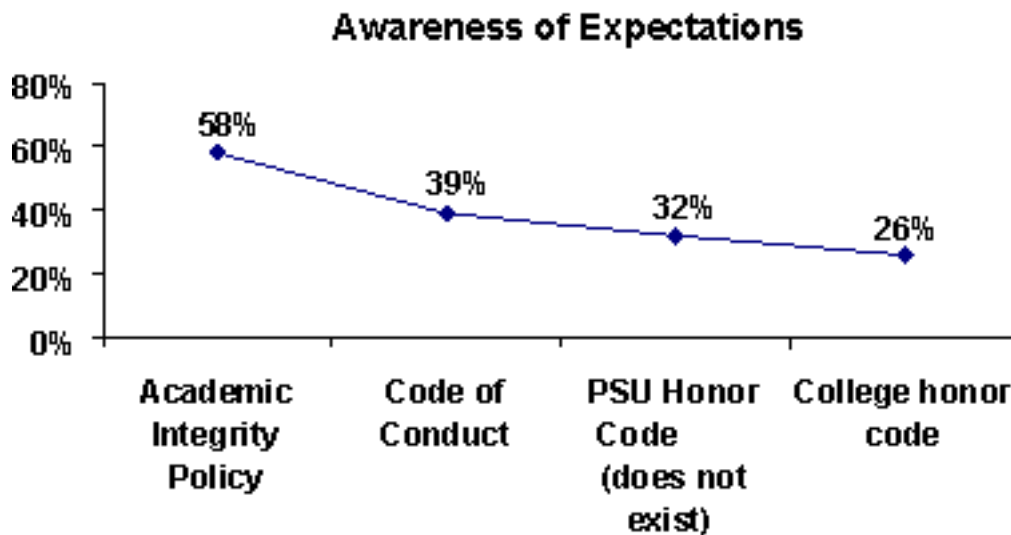
- Students were asked what consequences should be assigned to those proven to have cheated.

Effectiveness of Consequences

- 83% get an F on test or assignment
- 42% be put on academic probation
- 33% get an F for the course
- 33% have a notation of cheating on transcript
- 27% have parents notified of cheating
- 26% be referred to Judicial Affairs
- 15% have to pay fine
- 10% be suspended or expelled from the University

- When asked how they would find out about the Penn State Academic Integrity Policy, most students said they would ask their instructors (47%) or check the PSU web page (36%) while only a few would ask their advisor (8%), contact Judicial Affairs (4%), ask someone in their College Dean's office (3%) or speak to their RA (2%).

- A majority of students reported they were familiar with the Academic Integrity statement.



● Three fourths of respondents thought having more proctors in a room when there is a test would help reinforce the expectation of academic integrity at Penn State. Fewer students felt having an honor code or an agreement to report observed cheating would be effective.

Reinforce Expectation of Academic Integrity

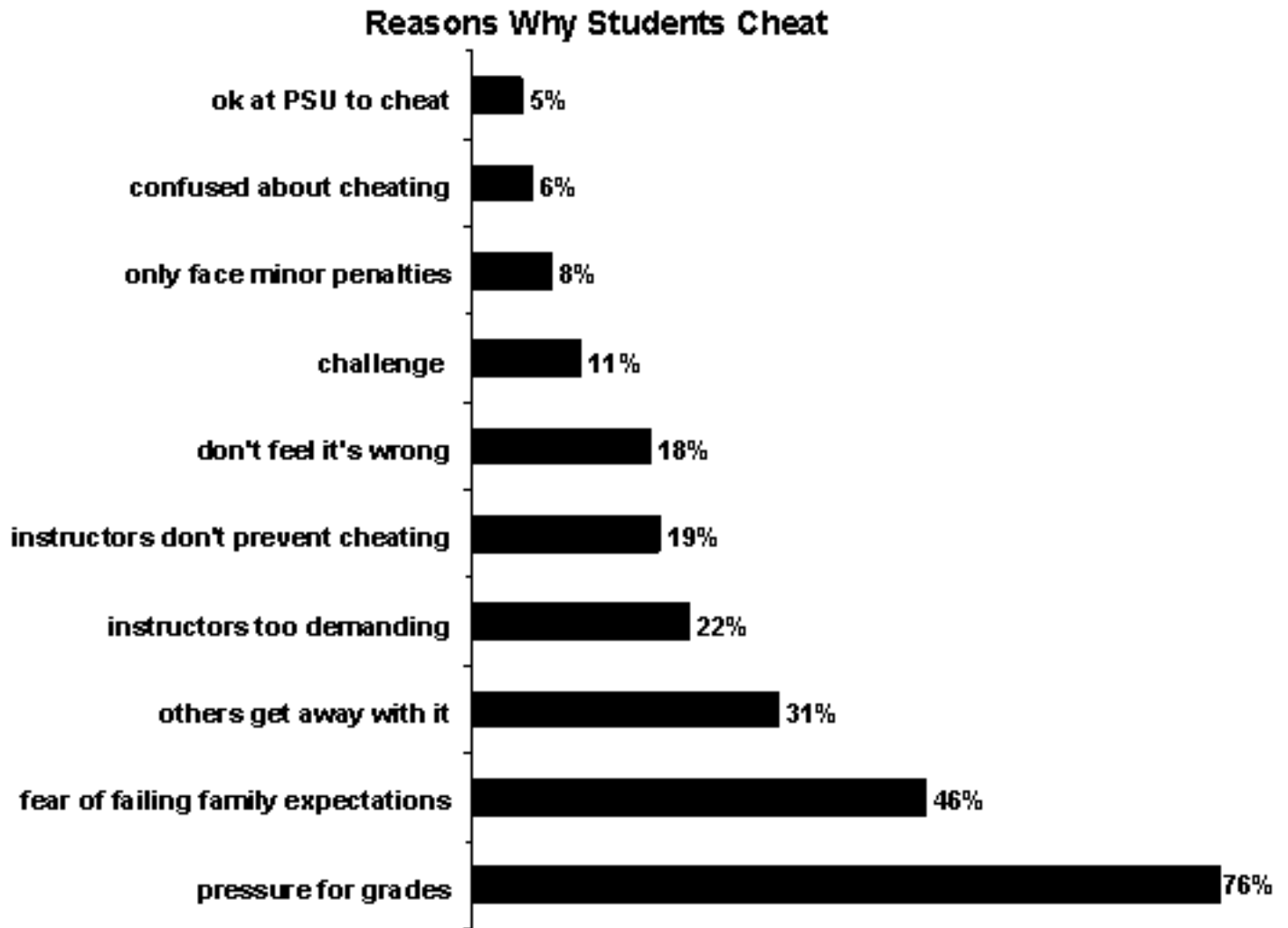
- 72% having more proctors in room when there is a test
- 59% having clearer information about consequences of cheating
- 40% having instructors define academic integrity expectations on each syllabus
- 39% having clearer information about what constitutes cheating
- 28% having all new students sign an honor code
- 17% having all students sign an agreement to report cheating observed

● Two thirds of students had faculty members who discussed what constitutes cheating in their classes.

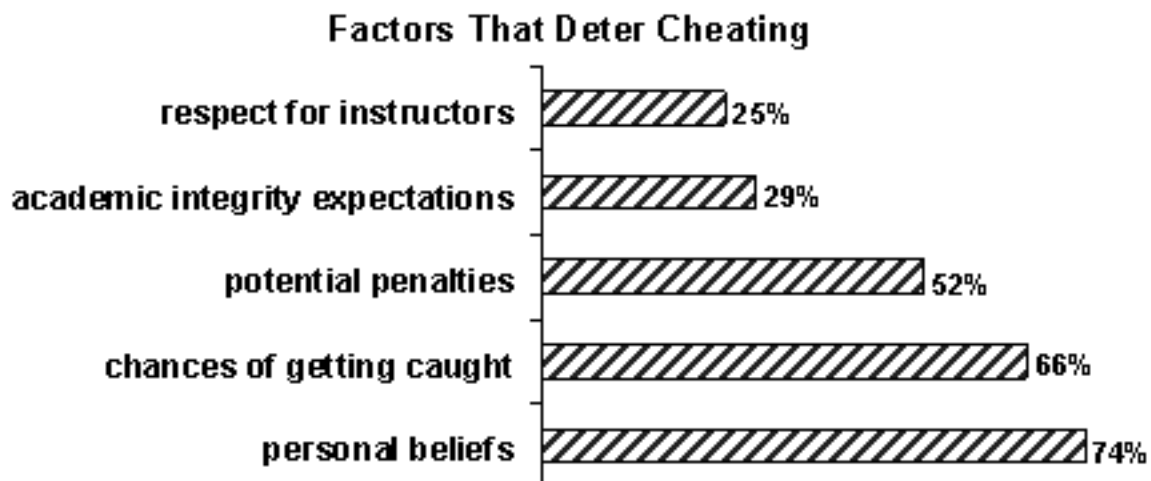
- 63% faculty discusses cheating in their classes
- 11% discussed cheating with other students
- 8% felt pressured by other students to help them cheat
- 5% knew someone caught cheating
- 5% were confused as to what constitutes cheating

● There were *no* significant differences by '**College of Enrollment**' in the percentages of students who reported having cheated on tests or class assignments.

- Pressure to get good grades and fear of not meeting family expectations were the two most quoted explanations for why students cheat.



- Personal beliefs, chances of getting caught, and penalties if proven to have cheated acted to deter cheating.



- Those who reported they 'had cheated' differed significantly from those who said they

'had not cheated.' Those who 'had cheated' were more likely to have:

- reported that the University Academic Integrity policy** and respect for instructors** did not deter cheating
- not read academic integrity policy statements**
- known students who were caught cheating** and to have observed others cheat on tests*** or on class assignments***
- felt cheating was encouraged by pressure to get good grades*** and seeing others get away with it*
- felt pressured by others to help them cheat***

(Statistically significant at the .05, * .01** or .001*** level)

Revised on 07/17/00
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