Plagiarism and Academic Integrity Systems

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ABSTRACT. The role of librarians has been neglected in the academic integrity literature. A probe of the plagiarism problem can illuminate potential roles for librarians beyond that of technical support of faculty. Librarians should assert the centrality of their roles in bridging tradition and adaptability as they provide robust platforms for guardianship of accumulated knowledge and the creation of new knowledge. Thinking strategically and organizationally will benefit both librarians and the academy more broadly.

KEYWORDS. Plagiarism, academic integrity systems, rule-compliance strategy, integrity strategy, pedagogical strategy, librarian roles

Attention to plagiarism in American higher education has increased in recent years for three main reasons: (1) technological change has made it easier to plagiarize, but also easier to detect¹; (2) growing interest in intellectual property issues has sensitized higher education to the matter of plagiarism²; and, (3) the formation of the Center for Academic Integrity in the mid-1990s produced momentum on the diffusion of best practices regarding the prevention and regulation of student academic misconduct, including plagiarism. There is a growing body of research on trends in student academic misconduct including descriptive and ex-

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planatory studies of motivations for cheating along with the analysis of institutional context for managing misconduct.³ By directing attention to the cultures supporting cheating and the institutional setting for managing academic misconduct, recent research has provided fresh insights into the problems of student cheating and plagiarism.⁴ The next step is to explore detailed prescriptions and suggestions for those with key roles in the management of cheating and plagiarism; librarians, however, have been neglected in recent scholarship on the topic despite an obvious role for librarians in the process of facilitating proper attribution of sources. The mainstream academic integrity literature has focused on articulating the roles for faculty and students, as well as those for student affairs staff who tend to be responsible for student discipline. Our intention here is to demonstrate that librarians have the potential to play a major role in academic integrity systems, especially as they pertain to plagiarism.⁵

Deconstructionists, constructivists, and others have sought to interrogate the plagiarism discourse in search of a different sense of power and ownership of sources. 6 The definition of plagiarism has not been dramatically altered over time, however. This can, in part, be attributed to the perennial valuing of individual authorship and intellectual property within the academy. Thus, rules of citation and attribution are not mere social conventions but rather function as symbols of fundamental ethical values. One of the most pertinent ethical values represented by the rules is respect-respect for the work of others by acknowledging one's "intellectual debts through proper identification of sources." Plagiarism, then, is considered dangerous because the use of others' work without acknowledgment threatens the accumulation of knowledge. We contend that librarians, as the guardians of accumulated knowledge, may bring a perspective to plagiarism (and academic integrity systems) not otherwise generated by students. faculty, and student affairs staff.

While the role of the librarian as guardian of accumulated knowledge may be contested because of the complications of the combined efforts of the information explosion and the Internet, the role itself has not fundamentally changed as evidenced by the continued prominence of the library in campus life and the participation of librarians in deciding the sources to which users will have direct or easy access. We argue librarians can actually be considered to have an enhanced role as guardians precisely because of the complexity and lack of coherence created by the information explosion. The search for coherence is a theme advanta-

geous to the librarian role because few others in campus life have the position to serve as both guarantor of accumulated knowledge and agent of coherence. Faculty in the academic units may aspire to such coherence, but specialization and the division of labor militate against. Interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary activity has been the typical remedy applied by faculty, but it is frequently an uphill battle that does not have the organizational and institutional vantage and leverage points of librarians.

By coherence we mean the ability to see and reflect on the relationships between and among the "modes of experience" during processes of change. Oakeshott referred to these modes as an "arrest in experience" so as to make judgments in the flow of the "world of ideas." Oakeshott described history, science, and the world of practice as three of these modes. Librarians are well-placed to be guardians of accumulated knowledge, not as static phenomena, but in the dynamics of the increase of knowledge and how it is interpreted by each generation. Librarians do not simply honor the canon; rather, they methodically collect and organize in highly practical ways making judgments about the shape of accumulated knowledge, and guaranteeing access to students and advanced researchers. This makes librarians key agents of coherence in the rapid flows of intellectual experience. They both "arrest... experience" but also act to accommodate change.

Coherence also should be understood in its institutional dimensions. Political scientist Samuel Huntington's ¹¹ classic study of successful institutionalization has coherence as one of four criteria. Coherence is contrasted with disunity caused by the complexity of modern organizations. Librarians may even better positioned institutionally than higher-level education administrators to nurture coherence; libraries are both a symbol of the continuity of universities and a key source of their adaptability-perhaps a more potent symbol and source then even the rise of the modern managerial class on our campuses!

We contend that there are two background conditions for success in the management and prevention of plagiarism and other student academic misconduct:

- 1. a "convincing vision of human flourishing" in the teaching-research nexus; and,
- 2. an understanding of the academic integrity system on a given campus.

VISION OF FLOURISHING

The first background condition is essential because the teaching-research nexus is critical to the success of American higher education and its status internationally. American higher education thrives and is a magnet and model throughout the world because of commitments, rhetorical and real, to the teaching of undergraduates and the promotion of research and scholarship.¹³ While the teaching mission of the contemporary college or university needs constant attention, revitalization, and even external stimulation from assessment forces, there is a sense that we succeed because faculty, even at research universities, spend a significant amount of time and "maintain interest in and concern for the teaching of undergraduates."14 The very persistence of the "teaching versus research" debate testifies to the creative tension between the two, however, and suggests while plagiarism-almost uniquely-is a challenge that directly engages both the teaching and research sides of the discourse given its embedded and linked qualities on both sides. There is arguably no other student misconduct issue that cuts through the center of the teaching-research mission as dramatically as plagiarism. Put positively, the opportunity to promote proper attribution of sources is vital to the authentic display of the best promise of the nexus of teaching and research and advances the coherence of the academy.

Librarians are especially well positioned to advance the issue of plagiarism to the forefront of the policy debates on teaching and research on a given campus. The collaboration of librarians, whether holding faculty status or not, with academic unit faculty in the trenches provides a powerful stimulus for robust organizational responses that can go beyond the prevention and regulation of plagiarism. The opportunity is seeing plagiarism less through the lens of deviancy and more in terms of the nexus of teaching and research, the heart of the educational enterprise.

By seeing plagiarism as situated in the teaching-research nexus, librarians can broaden their understanding of plagiarism as a multi-dimensional form of unauthorized collaboration. On the vertical dimension, writers collaborate in unauthorized ways by failing to cite and attribute previously written works used as sources in their own knowledge construction, thus pretending not to be "standing in the shadow of giants" and, perhaps more damaging, not adding to the accumulation of knowledge. On the horizontal dimension, writers collaborate in unauthorized ways by working with peers in producing a written work that is claimed to be independently authored. The advantage of con-

textualizing plagiarism in this fashion is that it permits visualizing the learning process with the teacher at the crossroads of establishing what is authorized and what is not, whether horizontally or vertically. Instructors frequently are uncomfortable executing the vertical role and tend to assume that proper attribution and citation have been taught elsewhere. High schools and English composition programs are often faulted when professors sense plagiarism among students, although even librarians can occasionally be a target. The "blame game" is not very useful, but it does signal that there is a community responsibility associated with the learning of proper attribution and the honoring of the collaborative nature of writing; thus, the professor is not solely responsible even though the crossroads position is crucial. The key is to see the opportunity for being proactive, rather than reactive as a "teaching moment," when plagiarism occurs. And this needs to be structured within all the support functions for the instructional process including librarians and their staff.

Professors do see their responsibilities more clearly on the horizontal aspects of proper collaboration because of the growing tendency to have students work in teams, both in the classroom and out. These pedagogical changes have been profound, and faculty may generally understand that they need to give students more guidance on these non-traditional teaching modalities. The fact that faculty research also has taken on a more team approach sensitizes them to the obligation of establishing proper norms even if only in the ordering of co-authors to indicate level of involvement in the writing project. We believe that recent faculty learning on the horizontal dimension should inform their approaches to the vertical, more traditional concerns of proper attribution and citation. Likewise, the larger the understanding by librarians of the horizontal-vertical dimensions and the logic of their interaction, the better they will be positioned to assist faculty in the prevention and management of plagiarism along with, more importantly, the improvement of instruction generally.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY SYSTEMS

Previous work by these authors¹⁶ identified the utility of organization theory to understanding the institutionalization of academic integrity in higher education. Comprehending the academic integrity system on a campus is the key to understanding its limitations and its potential for change and improvement. Librarians, as key agents for bridging tradi-

tion and progress on our campuses, have a role similar to academic unit faculty in this effort. Librarian roles have been usually understood as enforcement that is aiding classroom faculty in proving plagiarism and as facilitators for preventing plagiarism through student orientation classes, guest lectures, or individual advising. But the organizational roles of librarians ought to be understood in a broader context in relation to faculty in the academic units in the higher administration on campus.

In order to be effective in managing student academic misconduct, it is required that the range of academic integrity systems be comprehended in order to increase the responsiveness and effectiveness of librarians to the plagiarism challenge. Librarians should see themselves as active, indeed proactive, participants in the design and operation of academic integrity systems; plagiarism provides an issue area that legitimates the role of librarians in these campus discussions and provides a key opportunity for librarians to move to a fuller partnership with faculty. This can stimulate a higher standard for librarianship without diminishing the typically responsive operational style of librarians. Responsiveness can often be confused with a reactive posture, and there should be little room for a simple, reactive set of tactics in confronting the corrupting qualities of student and other academic misconduct on our campuses.

Academic integrity systems can be displayed on a spectrum from, on one end, the non-existence of the system because of lack of institutional policy on confronting student academic misconduct except at the discretion of individual faculty member. And, at the other end, there are highly developed systems—usually student-run honor codes—which can be highly efficacious and sharply reduce student academic misconduct.¹⁷ In the remainder of this article, we examine three strategies institutions can take in building or maintaining an academic integrity system and the implications of each for librarian roles. This analysis will reinforce suggestions above, while refining them in a manner that more sharply delineates the implications for librarianship on the matter of plagiarism.

Rule Compliance Strategy

For those colleges and universities which have academic integrity systems, the Rule Compliance Strategy¹⁸ (RCS) is perhaps the most popular strategy in the fight against plagiarism. In this strategy, the focus is on defining and enforcing the citation and attribution rules that have been established to guide the presentation of written material (e.g.,

APA, Chicago, MLA "styles"). In RCS, then, plagiarism is framed as an unethical or perhaps even bordering a "criminal" act with sanctions that are meant to discourage students from breaking citation and attribution rules or conventions. Because the available sanctions are often mandated by broader university policies (e.g., student conduct codes), plagiarism policies are often aligned with these pre-existing disciplinary systems and managed by existing staff (usually judicial officers). Generally, the intent within RCS is to tackle plagiarism as the institution would any other undesirable behavior among, in particular, the undergraduate student body. Education and prevention in RCS focuses on informing students of the citation/attribution rules, the university's policy, and the consequences of rule violation. Typically in this strategy, student affairs administrators are the primary players as the managers and enforcers of student codes of conduct.

An example of RCS can be seen within the structures and policies of the University of California, Los Angeles. At UCLA, the academic integrity system falls under the jurisdiction of student affairs, there is one code of conduct to guide student behavior (covering academic and non-academic misconduct), and the disciplinary processes are carried out by a judicial affairs officer who is also a lawyer. A review of web-based documents illustrates that there are few institutionalized roles for student involvement aside from membership on the Student Conduct Committee which hears contested cases of misconduct. The belief that plagiarism borders on a "criminal" act is symbolized by the structure of this Student Conduct Committee which is chaired by a faculty member who has "training in the law or experience in the arbitration or adjudication of disputes."19 All allegations of academic misconduct (including plagiarism) must be reported to the dean of students who may impose sanctions, refer to the Student Conduct Committee or dismiss the case (for lack of evidence). UCLA enforces the rules of citation and attribution in part by utilizing Turnitin.com, a popular but contentious plagiarism detection software program which compares submitted papers to every paper in its database or on the internet and rates the submitted paper on a "similarity index."

Librarians, as experts in citation/attribution rules and the guardians of accumulated knowledge, can play a most influential role in RCS in terms of education. Education can be offered both as a socialization of students into the academy and its rules, and after students have been found to have plagiarized (e.g., through citation & attribution workshops that look similar to "traffic school"). Librarians may also be helpful in educating faculty and staff on how to use plagiarism detection

software (at UCLA, it is The Office of Instructional Development that takes on this role). UCLA is also an excellent model of library collaboration on academic integrity initiatives, most particularly plagiarism. Together, the library and the dean of students work to "educate students about academic integrity, related campus policies, and the ethical and legal issues surrounding information access and use." As a result of this collaboration, the UCLA library now has a very thorough website for educating students about citation and attribution rules, and the necessity for compliance, including the values underlying the university's rules (i.e., intellect as property). In the property of the pro

RCS is not limited to student affairs offices. Many colleges set up separate, parallel processes in academic departments or divisions with oversight by academic deans. In these cases, librarian interaction with academic deans is essential. Note, however, that student affairs professionals have significant experience with student discipline and should be sought out for advice and counsel even if student academic dishonesty does not fall under their jurisdiction.

Integrity Strategy

A small number of colleges and universities, although arguably an increasing number, are employing an Integrity Strategy²² (IS) which focuses first on education and student development and secondarily on discipline. Rather than emphasizing student compliance with the rules, the strategy is to develop and reinforce the concept and value of integrity in actions. In particular, IS attempts to instill in students the value or positive reasons for rules on academic conduct, rather than simply "scare" students into compliance with talk of punishments and sanctions. Thus, the strategy is "proactive rather than reactive, motivated by personal values rather than rules, and culturally relevant rather than coldly legalistic."²³

Institutions that use IS tend to have significant student involvement in education, policy development, and hearing bodies (usually a student majority with a faculty minority). The premise behind this strategy is that student involvement and leadership in the academic integrity system will "encourage students to accept greater responsibility for their behavior . . . [and result in] lowered levels of self-reported cheating."²⁴ The premise is based on the findings from student development research, writings on social responsibility and student engagement, and McCabe's own survey research which suggests that there are fewer

self-reported rates of student academic misconduct in institutions where there is significant student involvement and leadership.²⁵

An increasing number of colleges and universities are adopting IS because of strong advocacy by both Donald McCabe and Gary Pavela, who suggest that student academic misconduct can be best reduced by creating cultures of integrity through the implementation of honor codes or modified honor codes. This is because although many students are aware of the rules, "the positive reasons" for citing and attributing sources are not "universally apparent" to undergraduates who "are generally not involved in producing original work but rather engaging with well-established ideas." ²⁶ IS, then, seeks to bridge the gap between the institution which values citation and attribution for the production and accumulation of knowledge and the students who, en masse, lack those values.

Usually institutions that follow this strategy promulgate an honor or integrity pledge or code to which students are expected to publicly and repetitively commit. IS includes the creation of multiple methods for routinely and innovatively conveying the integrity message to students (e.g., annual honor or integrity weeks; integrity symposiums; guest speakers; presentations; incorporation of ethics or integrity education into regular classroom work). Students who are found responsible for violating the policy or code are less often sanctioned with removal from the university, and more often sanctioned with some type of developmental education experience.²⁷ Regardless of the organizational structures chosen, the focus in IS is on broader ethical or integrity education and the development of students' ethical reasoning, usually as part of an implicit or explicit institutional commitment to develop and graduate moral citizens and ethical leaders.

There are many academic integrity systems that can be examined for an illustration of IS, but Duke University offers an exemplar. The strategy at Duke includes: a student pledge to a community standard; an Academic Integrity Council (comprised of students, faculty and administrators) that collects information about academic integrity and misconduct and proposes educational policy initiatives; and, a student-run Honor Council that is primarily responsible for educating Duke students on the importance of ethics and integrity in one's personal and professional lives. Although discipline for standard violations is a part of Duke's strategy, it seems to take a back seat to the broader discussion of integrity and ethics. The student-run Honor Council hosts discussions, symposiums and town hall meetings on the topics in an attempt to get students to think about integrity, thus hopefully preventing aca-

demic misconduct.²⁸ Duke has completed three academic integrity assessments over the last seven years and continues to tackle the problem of plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct as an institution with all involved, including the president.²⁹ There also is some collaboration with the library which helps to educate students about citation and attribution rules as well as inform students of the community standard.³⁰

In an institution using IS, librarians can take on much of the same roles as they would in RCS but there may be greater interaction and collaboration with students on the development of educational materials. In addition, librarians could volunteer to post the honor/integrity pledge throughout the library, as well as post scrolls containing the pledge signatures of each matriculating class. To help highlight for undergraduate students the meaning of plagiarism in the academy, librarians could offer to host workshops and speakers on broader issues of ethics and integrity, routinely create displays on the topic, and ensure the library is stacked with relevant resources. Librarians may be particularly helpful to the students in speaking passionately about the importance and honor of "standing on the shoulders" of others since this seems to be a particularly difficult concept for undergraduates to grasp. The library at the University of British Columbia offers a good illustration of such an educational strategy.

Pedagogical Strategy

The Pedagogical Strategy (PS) is the least common strategy adopted by colleges and universities within their academic integrity systems. This is likely because it is the most difficult to implement and institutionalize as it most directly impedes upon the "private" territory of the classroom by asking for changes in teaching and assessment. However, it is also the strategy most directly situated within the teaching-research nexus in which learning how to write and build upon accumulated knowledge is forefront. PS is most directly applicable to the issue of plagiarism because plagiarism, more than other forms of academic misconduct, can often represent misunderstanding or lack of academic sophistication rather than an intent to deceive. The main premise behind the pedagogical strategy is that student plagiarism is distinct from the plagiarism that might be performed by faculty or other experienced writers given students' lack of experience in writing research or scholarly pieces and their lack of expertise in the discipline. An underlying belief of the PS is that undergraduates often plagiarize "inadvertently"

not because they do not know the rules, but because the have "anxieties. . . in terms of their own authority as writers" and find "it difficult to understand the implicit relationship between acknowledging the source of the text and acknowledging the authority of the text."33

There are a few writers who have attempted to flesh out this strategy, and there are even fewer institutions that have attempted to integrate this strategy into their academic integrity systems. Howard and Maruca are two of the most prolific writers promoting a pedagogical approach to plagiarism, particularly as committed by undergraduates. Howard, for example, argues that the label of plagiarism typically gets assigned to three very different types of behaviors, two of which are quite common among students who are novice scholars (i.e., undergraduates) and only one of which is reprehensible from an ethical standpoint.³⁴ Excessive repetition, for example, is a problem experienced by budding writers as they learn to comprehend the source material and properly paraphrase in their own words; composition instructors and theorists typically refer to this as "patch writing," a legitimate form of learning how to write. Howard insists that this behavior need not be punished, but rather leveraged as a teachable moment in developing students' writing and source comprehension abilities.

The second behavior, according to Howard, is insufficient citation, again a behavior quite typical among people new to the discipline and its particular (and often peculiar) rules of citation and attribution. Again, this behavior could be addressed pedagogically with instruction in citation and attribution rules, particularly at the draft stage of writing. Such a behavior may result in a grade reduction to acknowledge insufficient attribution but will likely not result in punishment for intentional deception. The final label, fraud, should be reserved for those behaviors that are fraudulent, unethical, and diminishing of the integrity of the academy, the fundamental purpose of which is "to teach and to certify intellectual accomplishment." Very few students engage in such fraudulent behaviors as handing in a term paper previously written for another class, handing in a term paper written by someone else, or writing a term paper for someone else, but when they do they should be disciplined firmly.

There are few academic integrity systems that thoroughly use PS. The strategy may be employed in individual composition or writing programs, or within individual classes, but in those cases the faculty employing the strategy may be operating "undercover" because they may be in violation of university policy which requires faculty to report all forms of plagiarism (including excessive repetition and insufficient

citation). The Department of Interdisciplinary Studies at Wayne State University is one example of an academic unit that attempts to take a PS toward plagiarism. In its department-specific guidelines, the distinction is made between types or seriousness of plagiarism, including: fraud, direct copying or patch writing, indirect plagiarism (i.e., insufficient citation), and resubmission of already submitted work. The guidelines encourage faculty to use their discretion in noting when a pedagogical response is more appropriate than a disciplinary response.³⁶ On the Wayne State University Library website, further support is offered to students, not only education about the various citation rules, but online tutoring help and links to the online writing center (further acknowledging the needs of budding writers).

Librarians can assist faculty and institutions in adopting PS in order to respond to student plagiarism. First, librarians as information experts may be able to help faculty and students understand the impact that the information explosion has on academic conduct. Traditional-age students may conceive of information and knowledge differently and thus have difficulty understanding a lack of citation or attribution as "cheating" or "dishonest." Wood argues for a distinct role of librarians to act as bridges between faculty and students given the different ways in which they conceptualize and use information—"within an understanding of the world of information as viewed and manipulated by students, the college librarian is able to actively promote a more complex understanding of the Internet, electronic databases, and a critical approach to research and writing."38 So, in PS, for example, librarians could be folded into the academic integrity system as "information experts," teaching students both before and after incidents of "plagiarism" arise about the skill of accessing, understanding and using information. Librarians may be particularly helpful in teaching students how to discern reliable internet sources from those that they should not be using for academic work, as well as inculcating students into the value that intellectual property has within the academy or any knowledge industry.

Second, librarians can partner with centers for learning and teaching, instructional development and/or writing centers to help create information literacy curriculum, workshops for faculty on understanding "plagiarism" from a student/budding writer's perspective, and a revised approach to emphasizing the teaching, rather than just the assessing, of writing. Part of this could include developing workshops for faculty on how to use plagiarism detection software as a pedagogical tool rather than only as a policing tool; that is, students can submit their drafts to

the software to see when they have forgotten to cite or properly attribute a source, or perhaps even incorrectly paraphrased. An initiative from the academic side of the institution can more naturally take a PS than perhaps one can from student affairs.

CONCLUSION

Our analysis suggests a higher and more strategic profile for librarians in the matter of plagiarism than has been previously postulated in the scholarship on academic misconduct. While discussions of intellectual property have engaged librarians, the more traditional challenge of plagiarism in undergraduate academic work and the librarian role have seen less attention.

The founder of the modern academic integrity movement, Donald McCabe, has argued that it "takes a village" to respond to the student academic.³⁹ The focus of the academic integrity movement the last decade has been on students, faculty, academic leaders, and student affairs professionals. Librarians have not been regularly included. The issue of plagiarism is one that cries out for the active participation of librarians not only in the academic integrity systems on their respective campuses, but also in the national and international academic integrity movement. Librarians are essential citizens in the village, and it is time that this citizenship becomes engaged on the matter of strengthening academic integrity.

This engagement can come in many forms. Planning processes on campuses now frequently take on academic integrity more overtly. Partnering with academic deans, other faculty leadership, and student personnel administrators is one opportune place to begin as planning processes are designed and executed. The UCLA college library and its collaboration with student affairs is one successful example of such partnerships.⁴⁰

Such collaboration may require insinuation into institution-wide planning and reaccreditation processes. Librarians need not pose as passive service providers; issues like academic integrity are central to the teaching and scholarly missions of our colleges and universities, and librarians should assert the centrality of their roles in bridging tradition and adaptability, supplying needed coherence, and providing key platforms for guardianship of accumulated knowledge and the creation of new knowledge. Library administrators will find many allies in this more active profile, and the results can be provocative and long term.

NOTES

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- 36. For more information about this policy, visit the department's website at www.clas.wayne.edu/unit-inner.asp?UnitID = 24&WebPageID = 924&site = candle.
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 - 39. Donald L. McCabe, "It Takes a Village: Academic Dishonesty & Educational
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