

“Imagine a university without cheating...”

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Imagine a university without cheating. When I say “cheating”, I define it as “academic dishonesty”. A university without cheating would be phenomenal, would it not? In order for one to even comprehend such an idea, one must first understand and address the consequences of its polar opposite. Now, imagine a university WITH cheating.

Sometimes the best way to view this is to analyze the pros and cons of each situation. Take, for example, the following hypothetical scenario. There are two universities, where University A is a university without cheating and University B is a university with cheating. University A produces C to B-average graduates, while University B produces A-average graduates. A renowned company, knowing full well the reputation of each university, wants to hire a graduate. Which graduate is the company most likely to hire? The student who graduated in fairness or the student who graduated by taking shortcuts? The company is not going to want to hire a student who graduated from University B, even though the individual has the highest grade, because the company does not want a dishonest and untrustworthy employee. It will reflect poorly on the reputation of the company. Therefore, the company is most likely going to hire a graduate from University A because the company appreciates integrity. Even though the graduate is a C-average individual, his characteristics of honesty, responsibility, and respectfulness overshadows his average grade. Emphasize the significance of academic integrity and one can produce a university without cheating.

For the most part, students do not cheat because they want to. Rather, they cheat because the environment in which they exist gives them incentive to do so. Getting good grades is one of those extrinsic motivators that lead students toward the wrong path. Another is when one gets away with cheating. And still another is when they want to take the easy way out. Students feel

more inclined to give in to academic dishonesty because they do not understand the full weight of its ramifications. Take, for example, me. I was charged with academic dishonesty during my freshman year for plagiarizing in my academic paper. In fact, I remember that day quite vividly. The moment my academic advisor informed me of the accusation, my entire college career flashed before my eyes. It was very disheartening news. As I remember it correctly, the reason why I even plagiarized was because I was simply not thinking about academic integrity. It was one of those concepts that I was familiar with, but I had it locked away in my subconscious because academic dishonesty was not emphasized to me enough. A university without cheating can be made possible if the university addresses the importance of academic integrity.

Oftentimes, simply informing students of academic integrity is not enough to convince them to be honorable scholars. The university must address the issues of academic dishonesty and create opportunities to allow students to experience the consequences of it so that they will diverge from cheating. Now, imagine a university WITHOUT cheating.