

"Imagine a University Without Cheating..." Contest

Who We Need to Be

By Scott Ho

I was thinking of a way to call someone "a person of integrity", using an adjective. So, I did some research:

"Integrity" comes from the Latin word, *integritas*. This word is closely related to the Latin origins of the word "integer," which we know to be a whole, non-fractionated number.

A person with integrity would possess honesty, fairness and trustworthiness.

In order for the University to be without cheating, it must produce such people. Currently, cheating still happens, so changes must be made to the University's approach. Should it offer extracurricular activities that are focused on team-building? Does it need to train the teachers to encourage academic integrity above everything else? Would paying for more seminars and workshops encourage positive traits in the student body?

I think the answer to all these questions is "no".

While programs and training may benefit some, they are only cough drops for the laryngitis of our lack of integrity. Integrity is not something that can be drilled into someone. A person does not simply hear a lot of talks addressing integrity or practice his integrity for a short while to gain integrity.

University students do not value integrity because it is not important to do so.

Students are told "Don't cheat or you'll get reported" and are then challenged to get to the front of the pack in a rat race with peers who scored impossibly high on their SATs and attained amazingly high GPAs in high school. Students need help, and they are told to be bold and seek help out. They aren't guided down any path at all. They are left alone and expected to find their way out of the dark with pencil and scantron in hand. Students are too occupied with trying to survive college. To ask them to maintain integrity through it is a little too much.

At the moment, society says, "Strive for what you want and don't let anyone stand in your way." If you want *that* car: work your butt off and save up for it. If you want *that* job: work hard, get experience and apply yourself. If you want a good life: do good things. Life is dominated by the alpha males of the human race.

And that is why we fail. Everyone is so busy looking after himself that no one looks around to see if he knocked someone down in his morning rush. The University needs

people willing to step up and make a difference in people's lives. Invest without hoping for results or return or even change. And do all of this simply to lead lives of integrity and to challenge others to do the same. If we really want students to have integrity, we need to challenge them to live for something honest and worthy of trust and fair. The University must lead sacrificially by giving up time and career furthering to foster integrity and community.

Academic Integrity is a good thing. It is of utmost importance for students to know grades are to test and grow *them* and not the people *around* them twice. But if we allow our focus to be on the academics, we will discover that we have no true integrity. If students begin to show integrity in academics but not in the other realms of their lives, how is that integrity at all?