

# To Cheat or Not to Cheat: That is the Marketing Research Question

Sarah Brodie, Sarah Hunter, Victoria McNeilly, Sarah Takla, Amanda Zirk, MacEwan University

## Abstract

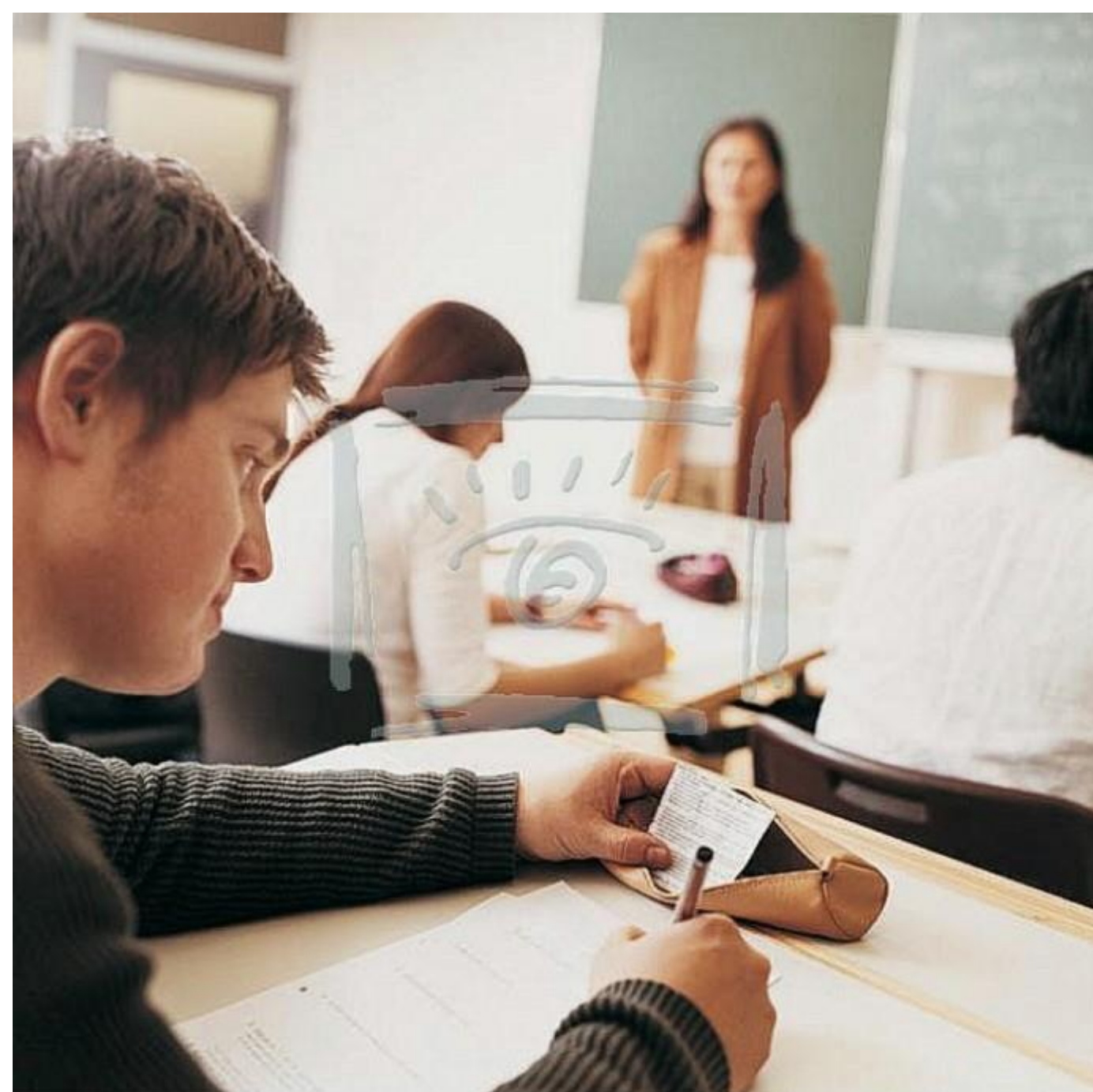
Focusing on Academic Integrity at MacEwan University, our research provides an overview of the perceptions faculty and students have on this topic. With our research completed, our recommendations and conclusions may help reduce problems the Academic Integrity office at MacEwan University faces.

Our research showed that business students were more inclined to be academically dishonest than most faculties. Most students feel that instructors have given a suffice amount of information on the policies. We strongly believe that this evidence can create a new adaptive culture within MacEwan, where small differences will lead to greater successes.

## Introduction

Academic integrity is the acknowledgment and respect of university policies regarding how students complete academic work. The academic integrity policies at MacEwan University are important because they create a standard of expectations of students to complete work honestly.

After interviewing Paul Sopcak, the Academic Integrity Officer at MacEwan University, we have discovered that the main management problem is how the office could promote academic integrity culture in the university. The discussion with the decision maker has led us to determine that our marketing research problem will focus on discovering why students cheat and the role that instructors have in the culture.



Source: JEFFREY M. COOK, EMMETT-2001, Digital Vision. Student Cheating in an Exam Watched by a Lecturer

## Methods

- In depth interview with Paul Sopcak, the Academic Integrity Officer at MacEwan University
- In depth interviews with both students and faculty members
- Surveys targeting 320 students and 80 professors; 281 useable student surveys and 69 useable professor surveys
- The sampling frame consisted of a variety of students and faculty from the Faculty of Arts & Science, Faculty of Fine Arts & Communications, School of Business, and Faculty of Health and Community Studies at MacEwan University

## Results

### Student Focus

*Is students' cheating behaviour related to whether they have ever witnessed their peers cheating?*

- The likelihood that a student violates the academic integrity policy at least once during their (undergraduate) studies is 40%
- This increases to 54% when students have witnessed friends or other students violating the policy
- This decreases to 15% if a student has not witnessed friends or other students violating the policy
- The probability that a student has not had an instance of cheating is 60%, which increases to 85% when a student has not witnessed a friend or other student being academically dishonest
- There is a positive relationship between student instances of academic integrity violations and students witnessing their peers cheating

		Have you ever witnessed your friends or other students being academically dishonest?		Total
		yes	no	
		No instances of cheating	Count	
	Expected Count	107.4	59.6	167.0
	% within rows	49.1%	50.9%	100.0%
	% within columns	45.6%	85.0%	59.6%
	% of Total	29.3%	30.4%	59.6%
At least one instance of cheating	Count	98	15	113
	Expected Count	72.6	40.4	113.0
	% within rows	86.7%	13.3%	100.0%
	% within columns	54.4%	15.0%	40.4%
	% of Total	35.0%	5.4%	40.4%
	Count	180	100	280
	Expected Count	180.0	100.0	280.0
	% within rows	64.3%	35.7%	100.0%
	% within columns	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	64.3%	35.7%	100.0%

### Faculty Focus

*Does the amount of violations a professor deals with during an academic year vary between faculties?*

*Rate of students violating the academic integrity policy more than once for the different MacEwan faculties:*

- 38% School of Business
- 16.9% Faculty of Fine Arts and Communication
- 14.9% Faculty of Arts and Sciences
- 14.7% Faculty of Health and Community Studies

		What faculty are you currently part of? * Incidents Crosstabulation				Total	
		No incidents	One incidents	Two incidents	Three incidents		
What faculty are you currently part of?	Faculty of Health & Community studies	Count	49	9	8	2	68
	% within What faculty are you currently part of?		72.1%	13.2%	11.8%	2.9%	100.0%
	Faculty of Fine Arts & Communications	Count	36	18	5	6	65
	% within What faculty are you currently part of?		55.4%	27.7%	7.7%	9.2%	100.0%
Faculty of Arts and Science	Count	50	13	6	5	74	
	% within What faculty are you currently part of?		67.6%	17.6%	8.1%	6.8%	100.0%
	School of Business	Count	30	14	17	10	71
	% within What faculty are you currently part of?		42.3%	19.7%	23.9%	14.1%	100.0%
Total	Count	165	54	36	23	278	
% within What faculty are you currently part of?		59.4%	19.4%	12.9%	8.3%	100.0%	

## Conclusions

The School of Business had the highest amount of student academic dishonesty while the Health and Community and Communication faculties had the most academic violations reported by professors

### Student Focus

- Presentations from professors or the Academic Integrity Office and emails were the most popular choice among students and faculty for ways to promote academic integrity
- Students who believe their professors have given them enough information regarding academic integrity are less inclined to cheat
- Students are more inclined to cheat if they see a peer cheat

### Faculty Focus

- The faculty of Health and Community Studies and The faculty of Fine Arts and Communications have the most reported instances of academic violations
- It is important for professors to evaluate the nature of their exams and eliminate repeat assignments to lower the risk of students acting academically dishonest

## Acknowledgements

Fernando Angulo-Ruiz, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor  
Chair, Department of International Business, Marketing, and Strategy  
School of Business  
Grant MacEwan University

