Academic Integrity: Faculty Development Needs for Canadian Higher Education

Research Project Brief

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Acknowledgements

Declarations

The researchers declare no conflict of interest for this study.

Permissions

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Abstract

This collaborative project includes researchers from four Canadian universities (University of Calgary, University of Guelph, University of Manitoba , University of Waterloo), as well as partners from D2L. This is the inaugural project associated with the D2L Innovation Guild.

The purpose of this research is to understand faculty perceptions and needs related to academic integrity in Canadian higher education. This mixed-methods study will include a survey to be administered to faculty at four Canadian institutions. The survey designed for this research project will be informed by previous research (i.e. McCabe, 1993). The first stage of this project includes a detailed literature review on faculty perceptions of academic integrity in Canada and globally. This literature review is meant to inform the development of a survey tool and the research methods. The survey tool will be designed to capture qualitative and quantitative data based on the faculty responses about academic integrity in Canada. The goal of this research is to explore and better understand how faculty members in Canadian higher education institutions support academic integrity.

Key words: academic integrity, faculty, plagiarism, post-secondary, higher education, Canada

Background

This project is the first of its kind in Canada. There has never before been a multi-institutional project, with representation from across multiple provinces, that has also partnered with industry in pursuit of a common unified goal with regards to academic integrity. It is important for researchers, educators, policy makers and others to look for opportunities to create synergies with regards to academic integrity (McKenzie, 2018). In this project, we aim to do exactly that: create synergies across institutions, across provinces and across sectors.

The research in Canada about faculty perceptions on academic integrity is quite limited. Of the research that has been conducted to date, there has been a disproportionate focus on students' perceptions and experiences, with less inquiry into those of faculty (Eaton & Edino, 2018). This is true not only in Canada, but in other countries as well (Fielden & Joyce, 2008).

To further complicate matters, from the relatively small numbers of Canadian studies that have examined this topic, it is apparent that faculty at higher education institutes across Canada have contrasting perspectives on academic integrity and how to support it (Eaton, Crossman, & Edino, 2019) and faculty members themselves are not immune to academic dishonesty themselves (Hexham, 2000/2005). Faculty views and approaches differ by discipline (Evans Tokaryk, 2014). Faculty at Canadian higher education institutions also report difficulty and inconsistencies with understanding and implementing academic integrity policies (MacLeod, 2014; Taylor, Usick & Paterson, 2004; Zivcakova, Wood, Baetz, & Pasquale, 2012).

Two-large scale studies were conducted in Canada in the early 2000s (Christensen Hughes & McCabe, 2006a, 2006b), but there has been a gap in the evidence for more than a decade. In particular, there is a need for Canadian researchers to undertake multi-institutional, larger scale projects to elevate and amplify the academic integrity research agenda in this country (Eaton & Edino, 2018).

We contend that there is a need to better understand how faculty members in Canadian higher education think about and act upon matters relating to academic integrity. We anticipate that the findings of this research will inform future resource and program development to support academic integrity in higher education.

Project Overview

This is a multi-institutional project that involves four Canadian post-secondary institutions (University of Calgary, University of Guelph, University of Waterloo, and University of Manitoba) and D2L. It will investigate faculty perceptions and needs related to academic integrity.

This steps involved in the design and implementation of this project include:

1. A review of the literature to investigate previous research both in Canada and globally, specifically focusing on literature that will inform the development of a survey instrument;
2. The development of a survey instrument;
3. Research Ethics Board (REB) approval from each institution to conduct research with human participants and administer the survey to faculty;
4. Administration of the survey and data collection;
5. Analysis of qualitative and quantitative survey results; and
6. Dissemination of findings.

Objectives and Research Questions

The objectives of this study are threefold:

1. To better understand the perception and behaviours of faculty members in Canadian higher education institutions with regards to academic integrity.
2. To add to the small, but growing body of research on academic integrity in Canada through the execution of rigorous primary research involving the collection of data from human participants. Our goal is not simply to undertake a project, but to strive for excellence in our methods and results.
3. To test the feasibility of the collaboration itself. As this is the first university-industry partnership focused on academic integrity research, we acknowledge that the team members are pioneering new ground in this field. We have intentionally started with a small scale project, with a longer-term view to creating a project that could be scalable should the partnership prove to work effectively.

This study is guided by the overarching research question:

(RQ) What role do faculty members see themselves playing to support academic integrity?

There are four sub-questions, as follows:

Sub-Question 1 (perceived roles): (SQ1) What are the discrepancies between faculty members' perceptions of their roles in promoting academic integrity (or dealing with academic misconduct) and the roles others believe that faculty should play?

Sub-Question 2 (perceived competence): (SQ2) What is the level of awareness that faculty members have with the existing procedures, policies, and resources already in place to support academic integrity?

Sub-Question 3 (perceived agency): (SQ3) What supports do faculty members need to promote academic integrity?

Sub-Question 4 (perceived facilitators/barriers): (SQ4) What do faculty members see as the facilitators and barriers to using the existing academic integrity procedures, policies, and resources?

Methodology

This study will use a mixed methods approach to the collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative survey data. The data collected will include demographic information and closed and open-ended questions related to the overarching research question and the four sub-questions. Close-ended responses will be statistically analyzed, while open-ended questions will be analyzed qualitatively and coded thematically. Results will be triangulated between institutions and methodological approaches to provide a rich understanding of faculty perceptions of academic integrity in Canada.

The survey will be distributed to faculty members across disciplines at University of Calgary, University of Guelph, University of Waterloo, and University of Manitoba. We may explore the possibility of broader distribution of the survey at a later time.

Significance

Academic misconduct is a topical issue and common concern in higher education across Canada (Christensen Hughes & McCabe, 2006a). Canadian institutional policies on academic misconduct are characterized by inconsistency (Eaton, 2017). Our work is built upon previous research conducted in the US (McCabe, 1993) that looked at faculty responses to academic dishonesty. McCabe's study, while large in scale (with 789 faculty survey responses), is now over 25 years old and had an American focus.

Canadian studies of faculty perceptions on academic integrity are more limited in scope. Our research agenda seeks to develop a tool to better understand how faculty support academic integrity across Canada. We expect this research will contribute to the body of knowledge on this topic to better support students, faculty, administrators, and policy makers to adopt guidelines and develop a culture of academic integrity across Canada.

Knowledge Mobilization Plan

We plan to register the project on the Open Science Framework (https://osf.io/) in order to align with institutional and philosophical commitments to the outputs of research being open access.

We will also share our research and findings in other ways, such as:

1. Presentations. This research will be presented, if accepted, at a minimum of one scholarly, research-focused conference.
2. Publications. We anticipate a minimum of one peer-reviewed article to result from this work. We intend to publish our results in an open-access format, to ensure wide access to the findings.

This project will provide a better understanding of faculty perceptions of academic integrity in Canada. The results will be valuable to many stakeholders in post-secondary institutions such as faculty members, staff, students, administrators, and policy-makers. From an educational perspective, faculty can learn how to better support students to act with integrity throughout their academic careers and policies can be informed by our findings in order to best foster a culture of integrity across academic institutions Canada-wide.

Research Team

The research team is comprised of university researchers and industry partners.

University Researchers

Name	Role	Institution
Sarah Elaine Eaton	Principal Investigator (PI)	University of Calgary
Katherine Crossman	Study Coordinator and Co-investigator (CI)	University of Calgary
Brenda Stoesz	CI	University of Manitoba
Kim Garwood	CI	University of Guelph
Amanda McKenzie	CI	University of Waterloo
Amy De Jaeger	Survey development support	University of Manitoba

Industry Partners

Name	Role	Company
Brian Cepuran	Collaborator	D2L
Rose Kocher	Collaborator	D2L

Overview of Major Tasks

1. **Literature Review:** Katherine Crossman, Kim Garwood, Brenda Stoesz
2. **Survey Development:** Amanda McKenzie, Brenda Stoesz, Amy De Jaeger
3. **Ethics Protocol:** Sarah Eaton, Brenda Stoesz, Kim Garwood
4. **Survey Administration and Data Collection:** Sarah Eaton, Katherine Crossman, Amy De Jaeger, Brenda Stoesz, Amanda McKenzie, Kim Garwood
5. **Data Analysis:** All team members
6. **Knowledge Dissemination:** All team members

Each institution will be responsible for submitting an application to their respective research ethics board (REB).

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Research Team Member Biographies

Sarah Elaine Eaton, *BA Hons (Saint Mary's University), MA (University of Calgary), PhD (University of Calgary),* is an Assistant Professor in the Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary.

Katherine Crossman, BA (University of Calgary), MEd (University of Calgary), PhD (University of Calgary), is a research associate and sessional instructor in the Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary.

Brenda Stoesz, BEd, BSc, MA, PhD (University of Manitoba), is a Faculty Specialist (Academic Integrity & Copyright) at The Centre for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning at the University of Manitoba.

Amanda McKenzie, MA, is the Director of Quality Assurance (Academic Programs) and oversees quality assurance and academic integrity at the University of Waterloo.

Kim Garwood, BA (*University of* Guelph)*,* MA, PhD (*University of* Waterloo), is Acting Head, Learning and Curriculum Support at the University of Guelph Library.

Brian Cepuran, BASc (University of Waterloo), is Vice President of D2L Labs. He is responsible for identifying and conducting applied research in technology-enabled teaching and learning in partnership with D2L clients and partners.

Rose Kocher, Computer Programmer/Analyst--Advanced Diploma (Conestoga College, Kitchener), PMP (Project Management Institute), is Director, Grant & Research Programs at D2L. She is responsible for establishing and leading grant and research programs in partnership with government, academic and corporate organizations.