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**RECONSIDERING ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:  
A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF A COMPLEX ORGANIZATIONAL  
PROBLEM**

by

Tricia Bertram Gallant

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy  
University of San Diego

August 2006

Dissertation Committee

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Patrick Drinan, Ph.D.  
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## ABSTRACT

Academic dishonesty, traditionally framed as a problem of student agency, plagues higher education institutions. In order to facilitate leadership toward the resolution of the problem, this study reconsiders academic dishonesty as a symptom of the complex interplay among agency, structure, and culture. The theoretical framework utilized, which I call Systemic Interactionism, builds on existing sociological, leadership, and organizational theories to provide a more robust explanation of academic dishonesty and other complex organizational problems.

This reconsideration of academic dishonesty occurs in the context of three American higher education institutions. I employed a variety of field methods (interviews, observations, and document analysis) in each of the four-year non-profit institutions to critically interpret the dominant way in which the problem is framed and the solutions constructed. This study identifies Integrous Individualism as the dominant framing and suggests the ways in which this framing inhibits leadership toward organizational change. Specifically I argue that in its over-simplification, the framing silences dissonant voices, trivializes the issue, leaves incongruencies unaddressed, and constrains change agency.

The application of Systemic Interactionism to better understand the problem of academic dishonesty uncovers conflicting notions and competing interests co-existing within the academy to create tensions, complexity, and ambiguity. I argue that it is within this complex core that the problem is constructed and agency is mediated, and so it is this complex core that requires attention for the eventual resolution of academic dishonesty. In the end, I suggest that institutions of higher education must approach the problem of



academic dishonesty not only as an issue of individual integrity but as an issue of institutional integrity.

The main contributions of this research are two-fold. First, this research suggests that academic dishonesty is fundamentally a problem of unauthorized academic conduct, a tension in teaching and learning expectations caused by structural, cultural, and agentive forces. Second, the more robust framing offered in this research facilitates a complex understanding of the problem as reflexively connected to other challenges facing the institution of higher education. Ultimately, this research argues that colleges and universities must substantially alter the way in which they frame and respond to the problem.

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my integrous husband, James Gallant,  
who has supported me for the last seventeen years  
with unconditional love, friendship, and good times.

## Acknowledgements

I first need to acknowledge the three institutions who participated in this study. Thank you so much. Your open doors and open hearts were a blessing to me. Your enthusiasm and dedication to making your institution truly a place of higher learning is inspiring. I hope that you find both practical and reflective use for my analysis. Keep up the good fight of improving our institutions of higher education. Continue to call out loudly and strongly for integrity.

I would like to acknowledge Lea Hubbard, my Chair, who took me in and became a champion for my work. Thank you. Your knowledge of sociology and organizations, as well as your skills in research and inquiry were critical to the quality of this final product. But most of all, your positive energy and critical questions helped to push me past my breaking point. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you to Cheryl Getz., Associate Dean, who has supported me from the very beginning of my program. I always knew that you were there for me when I needed you.

Dean Patrick Drinan. I am not sure that I can express to you my appreciation for your mentorship and intellectual stimulation. Without you, I would not have known about this topic. Without you, I would not have written a manuscript for a leading higher education journal. Thank you so much for taking me into your life and teaching me about writing and re-writing ad nauseam!

Also thank you to Adrianna Kezar from the University of Southern California for agreeing to serve on my committee. Your critical thinking and knowledge of higher education, organizational theory, and leadership theory is appreciated, as is your genuine interest in my work and my successes.

I must also acknowledge Dean Paula Cordeiro. You are the reason I met Dean Drinan and Dr. Hubbard so your presence in this dissertation is powerful. Also, your continued support and mentorship for me has been critical to my accomplishments. Thank you for every opportunity you have offered me and for always doing that which is best for me and my career.

And finally, I need to acknowledge all of my family, friends, teachers and colleagues who have supported me. There are those of you who support me from a distance, including our parents, our family, and our friends in Canada. Without your support, Jamie and I would never have been able to make the move across the continent to pursue this dream. We have missed you so much over the last six years but knowing you are there cheering us on provides us with the motivation needed at the points we have been most lonely. Thank you also to our San Diego Chorus family who adopted us most whole-heartedly and continue to provide us with love and support.

To those of you within the Center for Academic Integrity who provide me with fodder and inspiration. We debate, we argue, we disagree, and we struggle to determine the most effective way for addressing the problem of academic dishonesty and providing a service to the institution of education in the United States and beyond. I thank you for including me in that process and I treasure the friendships that I have developed there.

And, at USD, I would like to thank my teachers and colleagues who made my doctoral experience more than I could have hoped for. There are many of you throughout USD who provided me with boundless opportunities for growth and development and I thank you for that. Specifically I would like to thank Dr. Terri Monroe, Dr. Shelly Valdez, Dr. Alana Nicastro, and Dayanne Izmirian who have pushed and supported me.

## PREFACE

The genesis for this study began over three years ago in the Fall of 2002 when I met Patrick Drinan, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of San Diego. Dr. Drinan had contacted Paula Cordeiro, the Dean of the School of Leadership and Education Sciences, to ask for a referral to an education graduate student who could help coordinate a Fall 2003 conference for the Center for Academic Integrity. Dr. Cordeiro asked me to consider working with her respected colleague on this important conference. The request was intriguing because I had never before heard of the term “academic integrity” let alone a national center and conference dedicated to the topic. Given my natural tendency to seek out challenges and my desire to secure a fellowship for that coming spring semester, I agreed to meet with Dr. Drinan.

After meeting about the conference, Dr. Drinan, having been a professor for many years, naturally inquired about my dissertation. Although I was at the beginning of my third year in the doctoral program, I still had not narrowed my interest nor selected a topic. As I admitted this to Dr. Drinan, I distinctly remember his face morphing into a very pleased and excited smile as he asked, “why not do it on academic integrity?” I paused. Why not indeed?

An avid believer in synchronicity, I analyze events and situations for their possible meanings to my life. I could look at this particular situation simply as financially fortuitous; I needed a fellowship and one was being offered. Alternatively, I could choose to see the fellowship as the impetus necessary to connect me to the topic I was meant to explore. I was, after all, personally interested in integrity as well as in issues of leadership and higher education. As a topic of study, academic integrity appeared to have the

potential to mesh with all three of these interests. And here I was, facing a person who was deeply interested and passionate about the issue. In the face of all the serendipitous events that brought me to that moment, I decided academic integrity was a topic to explore. This is when my love-hate relationship with the topic began.

I immediately loved the topic of academic integrity because I saw such complexity in it. I began the literature review process questioning the need for much research on such a simple issue as stopping students from cheating. However, I quickly realized that although the topic was actually quite complex, the existing research had framed it quite simply as primarily an issue of student agency. Informed by my graduate training, I was drawn into investigating the topic of academic integrity from the lenses of the formerly absent organizational and leadership theories.

I also, though, dislike the topic of academic integrity. I dislike it because of its complexity yet practical significance. We cannot ignore the complexity because an oversimplification of the issue might be more damaging and exacerbate the issue. Let me illustrate with a related, non academic, issue. Several years ago, my dad was experiencing difficulties breathing. He could not figure out why and, like many of us, let it continue for a while before seeing the doctor. The overworked and understaffed doctor could have seen a simple problem (i.e., difficulty breathing) and prescribed a simple solution (e.g., an inhaler). Conceding to the power and authority of the doctor, my father would have used his inhaler but continued to experience difficulties breathing. You see, my father's problem was not so simple at all---my father had lymphoma. A tumor was causing the breathing difficulties. His lack of oxygen was only a symptom of a much more systemic problem; cancer was overtaking his lymphatic system. If the doctor had ignored the

complexity of my dad's problem the issue (i.e., cancer) would have grown to be fatal. Although not easily diagnosed or remedied, this complex problem required immediate resolution because of its extreme significance to practical task of, to be obvious, breathing.

Resolving the issue of academic dishonesty is similarly critical to the practice of education. If students "cheat" their way through their degrees, we need not only worry about the implications for our educational institutions, but the impact of that on the morality of the American citizenship. Gradually, as more becomes published on the topic and institutions face lawsuits for their improper handling of dishonesty cases, colleges and universities around the nation (and the world) are coming to realize that they have to do something about the issue. A sense of urgency dictates the construction of a comprehensive university policy for detailing the rules, procedures and guidelines for academic integrity and for handling violations of the policy. But, in doing so, the complexity of the issue is downplayed and it becomes synonymous with prescribing an inhaler that effectively treats a symptom but does nothing to resolve the underlying problem.

When an issue is complex yet its resolution critically significant to informing practice, it becomes a difficult object of study. A complex topic requires observation and systemic analyses to see the complex interplay among all of the various elements involved. Such a complex, systemic analysis often raises more questions than it answers yet answers have to be provided. Thus, I write this dissertation to help colleges and universities tackle the complex challenge of academic dishonesty. I write to create a

dialogue about the tough, underlying issues that are feeding the problem and making the educative practice, at best, difficult.

The bulk of this dissertation, then, is focused on that which is normally unarticulated. Beneath the students cheating and the universities responding, there are beliefs, notions, interests, and ideologies competing for a privileged spot in the dominant culture and generating the agency which we see. Without an awareness of this underlying layer, we will continue to treat the complex problem in a simplified fashion, perhaps causing the problem to spread, become entrenched, and eventually corrupt the institution of higher education beyond repair. A dire prediction to be sure, but I think not unlikely as competition for the privilege of educating the American citizenry intensifies.

Ultimately I seek to inform the leadership necessary to respond to academic dishonesty as a complex organizational problem. In other words, I seek to not just critically interpret but to do so in a way that is useful for tackling the problem. To that end, I offer suggestions for leadership practice, for the organizations and its members who seek not to eliminate the symptom but to understand the problem for the eventual purpose of resolving it. To do this, I borrow both from the participants in this study and from the research fields of sociology, leadership and organizational theory. My suggestions may not appease those who are hoping for a step-by-step approach to the resolution of academic dishonesty; I refer those readers to the “best practices” literature. Rather, my suggestions are for those who have always suspected that the problem is more complex than, for example, social deviance or ignorant scholarship. My suggestions are for those who have often thought that the integrity policy solution may be only a band-aid for a deep wound or a fresh coat of paint covering cracked and leaking walls. My



suggestions are for those Council members who spoke to me in this study from the margins of the dominant conversation. I hope that my suggestions inspire you to speak overtly and persistently to that which you know to be true. And finally, my suggestions are for those students, faculty and administrators who silently resist the dominant approach by not adhering to its rules, guidelines and procedures. I hope that my thoughts provide you with ideas for accessing your agency to resist purposefully with integrity, moving away from actions that undermine to actions that lead your organization toward a culture of integrity.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

In this study I critically interpret the way in which three higher education institutions frame and respond to the problem of academic dishonesty. I do this to challenge the dominant framing of academic dishonesty as individual dysfunctionality and suggest the ways in which it is a complex organizational problem. It is important to call attention to the complexity of academic dishonesty because the way in which the problem is framed shapes organizational responses to the problem. When academic dishonesty is framed largely as a result of student dysfunction, organizational responses center on reforming the student from social deviant to moral citizen, or from ignorant scholar to scholarly citizen. While this framing, which I came to call *Integrous Individualism*, may not be incorrect, it is incomplete. By foregrounding student agency, *Integrous Individualism* downplays structural and cultural influences and ignores the complex interaction among agency, structure and culture. When this complex interaction is ignored, a false consensus regarding the problem is developed and conflicting notions and competing interests that co-exist within the academy and underlie the problem remain unaddressed. This false consensus is problematic because, I argue, it leads to the silencing of dissonant voices, the trivialization of the issue, the ignoring of organizational incongruencies, and the constraining of change agency. In this study I describe this oversimplified framing of academic dishonesty and suggest a more robust framing to inform the leadership strategies necessary to resolve the complex organizational problem and facilitate organizational change.

### The Problem Under Study

Toward the end of the twentieth century, faculty, administrators, and students in universities and colleges around the nation began to express a deep concern about the way in which undergraduates engage in their academic work. Behaviors such as obtaining help from others during exams, using another's words without attribution, and working with others without the permission of the instructor, seem to be proliferating and becoming normative among the undergraduate student population. Continued studies by McCabe and others (e.g., McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 2001) reveal that the number of students self-reporting such behaviors is at par if not slightly increasing from the rates reported in one of the first extensive studies (Bowers, 1964). This student academic conduct, problematized as cheating or academic dishonesty, has become a substantial area of study and research.

Although academic dishonesty has been a concern in higher education for centuries (Bush, 2000; Horowitz, 1987), the problem was not systematically studied until the 1990s. A ProQuest and ERIC search locates approximately 20 dissertations and less than 170 articles published on the topic before 1990. Since 1990, there have been at least 100 dissertations and 400 journal articles written on academic dishonesty, cheating, or plagiarism. The majority of this empirical research has been similar in nature, utilizing large-scale, quantitative, and survey-based data. This research is useful for describing student, faculty and administrator beliefs and attitudes about academic dishonesty (e.g., Kaplan & Mable, 1998; Lipson & McGavern, 1993; Simon, Carr, McCullough, Morgan, Olsen, & Ressel, 2003; Wajda-Johnston, 2001), the self-reported engagement in academic dishonesty (e.g., Hendershott, Drinan & Cross, 2000; McCabe et al., 2001; Moeck, 2002; Nonis & Swift, 2001; Smyth & Davis, 2003), determinants of academic



dishonesty (e.g., Davis, Grover, Becker, & McGregor, 1992; Finn & Frone, 2004; Genereux, & McLeod, 1995; Kibler, 1993a; McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 2002; Stearns, 2001; Whitley, 1998), and institutional responses to dishonesty (e.g., Aaron, 1992; Bush, 2000; Gehring, 1998; Kibler, 1993b; Rudolph & Timm, 1998). A handful of qualitative studies, using individual and focus group interviews, have added to the research by describing current or ideal practices for creating cultures of integrity on our campuses (e.g., Hendershott, et al., 2000; Marcoux, 2000; Whitley & Keith Spiegel, 2002). Few researchers have applied theory to the study of academic dishonesty but there have been a handful of attempts to apply the theory of social deviance (e.g., Michaels and Miethe, 1989), the theory of consumption capital (Saltmarsh, 2004), and student development theory (Kibler, 1993a, 1993b). Kibler's application of student development theory has been the most influential to practice. As a result of Kibler's work, institutions have added prevention to the traditional policing and punishing response to academic dishonesty.

Three general claims have been consistently made in the academic dishonesty research. First, there is the general claim that a majority of college and university students (perhaps as many as 75%) engage in academic dishonesty at least once. Second, educational institutions predominantly respond to academic dishonesty through the implementation of policies and procedures intended to manage and change student academic conduct. And, finally, it is claimed that students at "honor code" schools<sup>1</sup> self-report less academic dishonesty than students at non-code schools.

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<sup>1</sup>

Honor Code schools are most generally defined as those colleges or universities that "place a strong campus focus on the issue of academic integrity. Students are reminded, often quite frequently, that their campus places a high value on the question of academic integrity. Policies are clearly communicated

The validity of these claims, however, rests on student and faculty reports of behaviors that the researcher or institution defines as academically dishonest. That is, the actual occurrence and prevalence of academic dishonesty can not be accurately assessed, and a correlative or causal relationship between academic conduct and integrity policies such as honor codes cannot be predicted. Regardless of these major limitations, the academic dishonesty research has catalyzed a national movement focused on reducing academic dishonesty through the promotion of the value of academic integrity, and the policing and punishing of academic dishonesty. Institutions are encouraged to create cultures of integrity by implementing several structures such as: a representative council to create and manage an integrity policy; clear statements about the policy, prohibited behavior, and responsibilities of various constituencies; clear resolution procedures and penalties; methods for communicating and promoting the value of academic integrity; orientation and education of organizational members on the policy and procedures (see, for example, [www.academicintegrity.org](http://www.academicintegrity.org)). More to the point, the research reports and practice recommendations have rather uniformly supported and reinforced a causal negative relationship between the presence of student integrity and the occurrence of academic dishonesty.

The existing research, however, downplays two key findings that suggest academic dishonesty is a much more complex problem than a lack of student integrity. There is, first of all, the finding that there is a lack of consensus regarding what constitutes “serious cheating” (see, for example, McCabe & Pavela, 2005). Students self-

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to students, and they are asked to personally exercise responsibility for academic integrity.” (McCabe, 2000).

report engagement in behaviors the researchers define as academic dishonesty, but they do not necessarily consider all of these behaviors to be cheating or dishonest. Faculty and students also seem to differ in their perceptions of “serious cheating.” These disparities have been routinely framed as student ignorance of academy rules and norms. Suggestions for practice, then, focus on educating students on the rules of scholarly citizenship and implementing structures to explicitly state the rules. Although student ignorance is likely a component of the problem, it is also possible that the lack of consensus is rooted in a conflict between fundamental notions and values that coexist in the academy.

This conflict may be connected to the second downplayed finding that a significant number of faculty and students do not report observed or suspected cases of academic dishonesty (see, for example, Jendrek, 1989). Because this lack of reporting is traditionally framed in the research as social deviance, suggestions for practice focus on educating students about their responsibilities as citizens to report observed academic violations. Structures that facilitate the punishment of students who do not report are also implemented. Again, although social deviance is most likely a component of the problem, it is also possible that the interests of reporting academic dishonesty conflict with other interests embedded in not reporting. In other words, the complexity of the problem has been downplayed to favor a dominant framing that focuses on the student as the problem. This study attempts to explore this complexity and explain consequent implications for the resolution of the problem.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> When I use the conventional phrase “resolution of the problem” in this case, I intend it to convey the reaching of an acceptable level of corruption. That is, I do not assume that all dishonesty can be eliminated but that the occurrence can possibly be reduced to a level that is more occasional and a result of individual agency (i.e., social deviance) rather than a result of underlying systemic tensions.

### Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this study is twofold. The first purpose is to expose the complexity of the problem of academic dishonesty. By critically examining the way in which three higher education institutions frame the problem of academic dishonesty, I enhance understanding of the nature of the problem and suggest a reconsideration that may facilitate different organizational responses. Although the existing research is replete with suggestions for colleges and universities, the perceptions of those who frame the problem and construct the solutions have been neglected. The students, faculty, and administrators who serve on the councils charged with reducing academic dishonesty are the primary framers and constructors and so their perceptions are critical in understanding the complexity of the problem.

The second purpose of this study is to inform practice by offering a theory that explains complex organizational problems and provides a framework for analyzing problems and planning organizational change, particularly in response to academic dishonesty. In this way, this study intends to offer broader implications for understanding complex organizational problems in higher education and the leadership that is needed to address persistent problems and facilitate organizational change. Overall, the research and practice recommendations offered through this study should assist higher education institutions in more effectively addressing persistent complex organizational problems such as academic dishonesty.

### Definitions

The study of academic dishonesty is centered on juxtaposing undesirable behaviors (i.e., academic dishonesty) with desirable behaviors (i.e., academic integrity). Academic dishonesty is used as the catch-all phrase to refer to any behaviors which

“result in students giving or receiving unauthorized assistance in an academic exercise or receiving credit for work which is not their own” (Nuss, 1984, p. 1). Subsumed in the academic dishonesty discourse are terms such as: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and unauthorized collaboration. Academic integrity, the antonym was commonly used, has not been clearly defined nor has the genesis of it been discussed. The infrequent use of the term academic honesty (which is the clear antonym to academic dishonesty) suggests that academic integrity means more than being honest. The Center for Academic Integrity (CAI)<sup>3</sup> actually suggests that in addition to honesty, there are four fundamental values subsumed in academic integrity: trust, respect, fairness, and responsibility. The use of terms such as dishonesty, integrity, honesty, and trust conveys a moral framing of the problem.

I study academic dishonesty in the context of agency, structure, and culture to expand the analysis of the problem beyond the morality of the individual student agent. When an organizational or social problem is viewed only through agency, structure, or culture, the problem and the solution are framed in simplified but limited ways. By looking at the three constructs as an interactive system, it can enhance understanding of the problem and suggest appropriate responses. Although a full description of the three constructs is provided in Chapter 2, an overview here is critical in setting the stage for this study. Briefly, agency is the will or power of the individual to act in the way he/she desires regardless of mediating circumstances. The research on academic dishonesty has focused on the agency of the student to resist engaging in academic dishonesty, and, in a more minor way, the agency of the faculty to reduce or stop academic dishonesty in their

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<sup>3</sup> The Center for Academic Integrity is a national organization dedicated to promotion of academic integrity in highschools, colleges, and universities. See for more information [www.academicintegrity.org](http://www.academicintegrity.org)

classrooms. This implicitly frames the student as the problem and the faculty as part of the solution. Structure refers to the rules, resources, organization, hierarchies, and practices that guide individual agency. The research on academic dishonesty has focused on the implementation of integrity policies as the key structural component to influencing both faculty and student agency. Finally, culture refers to the norms and artifacts that symbolize the way in which things are done in an organization. Culture is much more intangible than structure although intimately related. Culture more subtly mediates individual agency such that people are often unaware how norms and expectations affect their behavior. Other than suggesting that peer culture is a powerful influence on student agency (both enabling and hindering academic dishonesty), there has been little research conducted which considers the influence of institutional and national cultures on the problem of academic dishonesty.<sup>4</sup>

#### Complex Organizational Problems and Leadership

The reframing of academic dishonesty as a complex organizational problem is shaped by literature in the areas of leadership (Heifetz, 1994; Selznick, 1957), organizational studies (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Selznick, 1992; Senge, 1990; Wheatley, 1999), and social problems (Jamrozik & Nocella, 1998). At a very fundamental level, these theorists emphasize the importance of distinguishing between simple and complex organizational problems<sup>5</sup>. Simple problems are easily definable and resolvable. They are

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<sup>4</sup> Callahan's (2004) The Cheating Culture explores national data which suggests that "cheating" is normative in the American culture. While his book does not deal directly with academic dishonesty, Callahan does argue quite convincingly that cheating is rampant and persistent, and much more systemic than the isolated cases of business and political executives. In other words, Callahan argues that the problem is rooted not in the individual agent, but in the surrounding culture which mediates their actions.

<sup>5</sup> Heifetz (1994), Selznick (1957), and Senge (1990) all write about this distinction although their terminology is different from mine. Heifetz speaks of the difference between technical and adaptive challenges. Selznick refers to the distinction between routine and critical problems. And Senge (1990) uses the terms routine and generative. All, however, are generally speaking to the same distinction as I do here;

not trivial or unimportant but can be easily managed by someone with the necessary authority or expertise to respond. For example, a heating problem in a residence hall in January may not be quickly resolved and it is certainly important, but there is someone with the technical expertise to handle it. A university committee, for example, does not need to be formed to resolve the problem. Another way to make the distinction between simple and complex problems is to say that simple problems can be defined as either/or whereas complex problems are both/and (Wheatley, 1999). In other words, the simple problem has a known character ("it is either this or that") and the complex problem has an unknown character ("it could be this and that but we really don't know"). Complex problems, then, are usually ambiguous and amorphous; they appear quite differently at different times and tend to transcend traditional organizational boundaries and norms. Wheatley (1999) writes that we know we are dealing with complex problems when, as we try to manage (i.e., direct, control, or govern) them, they become more "slippery and evasive and perplexing beyond comprehension" (p. 28).

The framing of a problem as simple or complex shapes organizational responses to the problem. When simple problems are framed as complex problems, organizational responses are unnecessarily cumbersome. When complex problems are framed too simply, overly technical organizational responses exacerbate the problem by leaving underlying issues unaddressed. The character of simple problems requires a different response than complex problems. Complex problems require organizational learning and change, not management (Heifetz, 1994; Senge, 1990). The leadership needed in response to complex problems is to help mobilize organizational actors to work with the

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simple (technical, routine) problems are easily definable and manageable, while complex (adaptive, critical, and generative) are not easily understandable and require learning and change for their resolution.

uncertainty and chaos inherent in the underlying tensions and eventually to reconcile the tensions for problem resolution. Leadership, then, facilitates movement and organizational change.

The distinction being drawn between simple and complex problems, as well as the difference between leadership and management,<sup>6</sup> is critical in informing this study and must be underscored. It situates this study in a different milieu than that of the existing academic dishonesty research. I view academic dishonesty as an example of a complex organizational problem that has been mis-framed as a technical problem by the foregrounding of student agent dysfunctionality and the receding of structural and cultural influences into the background. I argue that this mis-framing constrains organizational responses predominantly to the management of student conduct rather than the leadership of organizational change. That is, the way in which the problem of academic dishonesty has been framed limits the ability of organizational members to identify and address the complexity of the problem

#### Assumptions

I entered this research with several assumptions that influenced the design and implementation of the study as well as the analysis of the data. I share these assumptions here to be as transparent as possible about my personal biases that are inextricably woven into this study. There are four fundamental assumptions that guide my work: (1) organizations are social constructions that are (2) imbued with multiple perspectives,

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<sup>6</sup> This distinction between management and leadership has been made by several leadership theorists (e.g., Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Heifetz, 1994; Rost, 1993; Schon, 1984; Selznick, 1957). Based on this literature, I propose that a key distinction between the two can be drawn by authority; that is, management is the use of authority to direct, control, or govern people and tasks, while leadership is an activity that may be influenced by formal or informal authority but ultimately does not depend on authority to mobilize people to tackle problems.



norms, and values that (3) create complex organizational problems to which (4) members throughout the organization can give voice.

I assume first and foremost that organizations are social constructions not objective realities. Together, agents, structures and cultures co-construct organizations to fulfill some purpose or a multitude of purposes that are both known and unknown. As social constructions, organizations are constantly mediated by internal and external systemic forces that exert pressure on the organization to perform some function over others. The organization, then, is in a constant state of producing or reproducing different organizational realities. By assuming that organizations are social constructions, I also assume that the problems and notions within the organization (e.g., academic dishonesty and academic integrity) are socially constructed and therefore can be reconstructed to enhance understanding.

Because organizations (and their problems and notions) are socially constructed by multiple agents, structures, and cultures, I assume that there are multiple perspectives co-existing within single organizations. I also assume that there are differing levels of power and authority co-existing within an organization, raising some perspectives to a dominant position from which they can shape organizational norms and structures. The organizational culture, then, is not uniform or conflict-free, but appears that way because of the privileging of some interests and notions over others. This is a critical piece in informing my research as it allows me to consider that academic dishonesty and academic integrity are socially constructed for the purposes of privileging some interests and notions over others.

This leads to the third major assumption of this study. Many unresolved organizational problems are complex. Complex organizational problems are formed out of the conflicts and competitions between multiple perspectives, some of which are unvoiced because of they are marginalized within the organization. Academic dishonesty, although heavily researched, remains an unresolved problem and therefore, can be assumed to be a complex organizational problem rather than, as traditionally considered, a problem of individual agency. By assuming that academic dishonesty is a complex organizational problem, it becomes amenable to further research from sociological, organizational, and leadership perspectives

As a complex organizational problem socially constructed by multiple actors within the organization, I assume that academic dishonesty can also be deconstructed by the actors involved. Specifically, the organizational members working to reduce academic dishonesty are assumed to have intense and specific knowledge into the issue. In other words, because of their roles in the organization, these actors are considered as knowledgeable informants about the problem and the approach taken to resolve it. Other organizational members are included in this study because they are also considered knowledgeable informants who might speak to the issue differently than those directly involved in problem resolution. In this sense, I assume that the research participants represent the various perspectives, notions, and interests co-existing within the larger organization.

Making research assumptions transparent is imperative in the constructivist tradition of inquiry. My assumptions are co-constructed by the mediating structures and cultures in my world and inform how I produce and reproduce certain realities through

my research. Thus, they inevitably shape the conceptualization, design, implementation, and write-up of this study. In other words, I do not pretend to be biased-free in my research conduct, in data analysis, or the writing of this dissertation. In this sense, I am admitting my own framing of the problem, explicating the assumptions that interact to compose the picture created for the reader. The time, context, and certainly the operating assumptions under which I completed this study influence the analysis. In the end, I hope that my assumptions have led to a critical investigation that is useful for both informing research and practice so that we may continue to explore this critical issue in new and robust ways.

### Significance of the Study

Addressing the significance of this study seems almost redundant; what could be more significant to higher education than a study of its integrity? However, I am quite aware that questioning the dominant construction of academic dishonesty and extending the analysis beyond student dysfunctionality might actually be perceived as threatening to the integrity of higher education. This study is significant, then, because it questions that which has formerly been assumed---the reduction of academic dishonesty to an issue of agency. This study breaks the pattern that has been established in the research, a pattern that largely blames the student (and perhaps the faculty member) for the disintegration of institutional integrity. This study forces us to consider that which we might normally hope to ignore; the institution of higher education has not been a passive victim at the hands of immoral students. Rather, the institution has been an active participant in the creation of the problem, a co-constructor of the issue, and an obstacle to the resolution of the problem. Considering the institution as an active participant positions my study differently than the studies of the past by reframing the problem and the possible

solutions. I suggest that reframing the problem may free Council members to become effective agents of change within their institutions. In this sense, this study is significant because it considers academic dishonesty as a complex organizational problem requiring leadership, rather than a student conduct issue requiring management and control.

The contribution of this study, then, is not to repeat previous research by prescribing best policy practices for reducing academic dishonesty behaviors. Rather, this study diverts from the existing research trend to offer a reconsideration of the problem from the lenses of sociological, leadership and organizational theories. This study begins from a fundamentally different place in that it assumes academic dishonesty is a social construction that has emerged out of a complex and dynamic relationship among agency, structure and culture. This assumption creates space in which the construct of academic dishonesty can be critically examined and understood within the context of higher education institutions. Second, this study allows for an examination of “the role... practices play in sustaining the seemingly objective social fact” (Wendt, 1999, p. 375) of academic dishonesty. By illuminating these practices, a new way of viewing academic dishonesty can develop, one that will hopefully facilitate organizational change.

#### Overview of Dissertation

In the next chapter, Chapter Two, I describe the background literature that has informed this study. Specifically, I define the constructs of structure, culture, agency and power, and then review the existing research on academic dishonesty within that framing, depicting the way in which the problem has been predominantly framed within the research literature. I then suggest an alternate framing for considering academic dishonesty as a complex organizational problem. Chapter Two ends with the guiding research questions which transition the reader into the methodology chapter. In Chapter

Three, I discuss the research perspective taken in this study, the research design, as well as the methods of data collection and data analysis. In this chapter I also discuss the limitations of the research, trustworthiness, and my role as the researcher. The subsequent three chapters are the heart of this dissertation, the results of the study.

In Chapter Four, I describe the three case institutions: Lasallian College (LC), a small, liberal arts, private religious college; Elite University (EU), a medium sized, research-focused, private highly ranked university; and Heartland University (HU), a large, research-focused, public land grant university. I offer a brief overview of each institution including organizational culture, institutional priorities, and a description of the organizational response to the identified problem of academic dishonesty. In the end, I compare the similarities and differences among the three institutions. I offer these descriptions to situate the findings in context and to facilitate an awareness of the influence of structure and culture on the problem.

The next chapter, Chapter Five, presents the dominant way in which the problem is framed at each of the three case institutions. I do this to explain the way in which ideologies, cultures and structures co-construct the problem. The dominant framing is first described by examining the “policy talk” at each institution, that is, the way in which the Councils talk about the problem and the solution. Through this examination, I demonstrate that the “talks” are embedded in an underlying ideology that functions to protect and support institutional values and beliefs, i.e., the dominant culture of the higher education institution.

In Chapter Six I describe some of the limitations of the dominant framing. Specifically, I suggest that the dominant framing is limited because it ignores the

complexity of the academic dishonesty problem, including conflicting notions about the nature of knowledge and information, and competing interests in the purpose of higher education. In the end, I argue that by downplaying this complexity, the oversimplification of the problem inhibits organizational change by: silencing dissonant voices, trivializing the issue, ignoring organizational incongruencies, and constraining council agency.

Chapter Seven offers some conclusions from the study. Specifically I offer four conclusions: (1) how a problem is framed significantly affects organizational responses; (2) the application of power and authority inhibits problem resolution; (3) conflicting notions and competing interests must be addressed to enable organizational change; and, (4) systemic interactionism is a more robust framing through which to understand and analyze complex organizational problems.

The dominant framing used by the three institutional Councils emphasizes the integrity of the student agent to simplify a complex problem. I conclude that this is detrimental because structural and cultural influences will continue to influence the problem despite organizational attempts to change student agency. Moreover, I conclude that the simplified framing hides the dimension of authority and power that is at play in the construction of academic dishonesty. I argue that this is problematic because it creates a fallacious argument between dishonesty and integrity rather than addressing the real argument, which is “who has the power and authority to determine the best way to do academic work?” By characterizing unauthorized academic behaviors as academic dishonesty and authorized behaviors as academic integrity it creates an illusion that does not help to ensure learning but serves to protect academic capital, the privileging of

meritocracy and the authority of the instructor and the institution of higher education. This reproduction of hegemonic structures ignores the changing nature of knowledge, information, and the purpose of higher education, ideas from which student agents may be acting.

In the last chapter of the dissertation, Chapter Eight, I discuss the research and practice implications of this study. The research implications include those for future research on academic dishonesty, as well as ideas for extending the research on the alternate framing developed in this study. I suggest that much more in-depth research is needed to significantly enhance our understanding of resolving the complex organizational problem of academic dishonesty. The practice implications suggest the ways in which Council members can begin to address the complexity of the problem in their organizations. Although the insights provided through this study are novel and further research is needed, they provide useful ideas for helping change agents strategize a more robust organizational response to the complex organizational problem of academic dishonesty.

## CHAPTER 2

### BACKGROUND LITERATURE: FRAMING THE PROBLEM

In this study, I critically examine academic dishonesty in the context of agency, structure, and culture to consider the problem beyond that of student agency. This sociological approach is based in constructivism, which assumes that our social world is produced and reproduced over time through a complex and dynamic interaction among agency, structure, and culture. A constructivist approach is helpful in understanding the issue of academic dishonesty because it enables a de-construction of the issue in terms of its agentive, structural, and cultural influences. My choice of a sociological approach to educational reform emerged from my data, rather than being applied a priori; I wanted to understand, from the change agents themselves, how the problem is being framed, the solution constructed, and the influence of conflicting notions and competing interests in the reform process. Agency, structure, and culture were determined to have tremendous explanatory power for communicating these findings.

It is imperative to critically examine the problem from the lens of agency, structure, and culture because higher education institutions across the country are engaging in attempts to reduce the amount of academic dishonesty occurring on their campuses. However, the current focus on the individual student agent as the creator of the problem narrowly frames possibilities for organizational response. Considering agency, structure, and culture in the construction of the problem allows for a more robust approach to analysis, solution generation, and organizational reform. This presumption is supported by organizational change theorists who have acknowledged the benefits of



viewing an issue through multiple frames or lenses (e.g., Bolman & Deal, 1997; Morgan 1997; Kezar, 2001).

### Chapter Overview

In this chapter, I first explore through a critical constructivist lens the fundamental constructs of agency, structure, and culture as well as the interrelationship among them. In that section, entitled Agency, Structure, Culture, and Power, I also discuss the related notions of ideology and power and their contributions to creating complex organizational problems, including that of academic dishonesty. In the following section, I review the existing research on academic dishonesty in the context of agency, structure and culture, and present a picture of the way in which the problem is predominantly framed in the literature. After summarizing the research, I offer an alternate framing of the relationship among agency, structure, and culture drawn from sociological, organizational, and leadership theories. In the end, I suggest Systemic Interactionism as a theory of complex organizational problems and a way in which to consider the problem of academic dishonesty. The research questions are presented at the end of this chapter.

### Agency, Structure, Culture, and Power

This research is informed by critical constructivist literature that argues against the notion that a single organizational reality objectively exists outside of the perceptions of agents (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Deetz, 1992; Jamrozik & Nocella, 1998). Rather, the theoretical assumption of the critical constructivist perspective conveys that multiple organizational realities are socially constructed out of agent interactions and those subscribed by the most socially powerful generally rise to a dominant or privileged position to be perceived as the normal or natural way. The current study also builds on this literature to suggest that organizational realities (and thus problems) are not simply

the social construction of agent interaction, but the construction of a complex interplay among agents, structures, and cultures within and between systems. This complex relationship, along with the role of power and ideology are described next.

A simplified view of agency assumes that an individual has the will or ability to act in any way that he/she desires. In this sense, agency refers to the “efficacy of human action” (Sewell, 1992, p. 2) to exert “some degree of control over the social relations in which one is enmeshed” (Sewell, 1992, p. 20). A more complex view of agency considers that individual will and ability to act is mediated by structure and culture (Datnow, Hubbard & Mehan, 2002). Structure refers to the rules, resources, organization, hierarchies, and practices that provide a framework within which individuals act, that is, the mechanisms of operation (e.g., Giddens, 1984; Sewell, 1992). Structure includes the policies that govern or organize behavior, often constructing a culture or milieu. So, in the case of higher education, structure includes integrity policies, the curriculum, reward policies, classrooms, integrity Councils, and so on. Culture refers to the underlying assumptions and values that relay ‘this is how we do things around here,’ which is manifested in cultural artifacts such as norms and symbols (e.g., Bolman and Deal, 1997; Geertz, 1973; Schein, 1992). Because there are multiple assumptions and values that can co-exist within a single system, “culture involves power and is the site of social differences and struggles” (Datnow et al., 2002, p. 16). Power is utilized within the struggle of conflicting values and competing interests.

In the agency-culture-structure theory of social action, agents are considered to “simultaneously constitute social structures and cultural artifacts and [be] constrained or enabled by them” (Datnow et al., 2002, p. 15). In other words, individual agents affect,

and are affected by, the system in which they live. McLaren (1991) describes it in this way:

The human agent can never indeterminately float outside of historical and cultural determinations, antiseptically removed or extracted from the larger social formation; at the same time it is true that the human agent is never irrevocably determined by the social structures out of which it has been formed. (p. 242)

Agents are not, then, passive players determined by the structural forces and the culture in which they live. Agents have the ability to resist being shaped by structure and culture. That is, agents have the power to “intervene in the world, or to refrain from such intervention, with the effect of influencing a specific process or state of affairs” (Giddens, 1984, p. 14). The acknowledgement of agentive power is the basis of “co-construction,” the belief that people act to reproduce structure and culture, as well as act to create new structure and culture (Datnow et al., 2002).

This idea of “co-construction” in which agents are both affected by, and affect, structure and culture is complex. It implies the influence of power and the role of self-authorization in mediating an agent to resist dominant structures and cultures in a way that creates new structures and cultures. That is, in order for agents to resist, they need to believe that they hold both the power and authority to resist. It is also complex because it is often the unknown that affects agency. Structures “reproduce expectations in people about how others will behave” (Balkin, 1998, p. 70). These expectations and the resulting behaviors become so embedded in culture that they become common sensical; actors within the culture are often unaware of alternate possibilities. The unknown or the invisible within this mediational system (formed by agency, structure, and culture) are the ideologies underlying an agent’s choice to reproduce or resist. Giroux (1984) describes ideology in this way:

Ideology functions not only to limit human action but also to enable it. That is, ideology both promotes human agency and at the same time exercises force over individuals and groups through the 'weight' it assumes in dominant discourses, selected forms of socio-historical knowledge, specific social relations, and concrete material practices. (Giroux, 1984, p. 314).

In critical constructivist literature, ideology is considered in Marxist, Althusserian, and Habermasian terms as "a set of representations produced and inscribed in human consciousness and behavior, in discourse and in lived experiences" that is "concretized in various 'texts,' material practices and material forms" (Giroux, 1984, p. 312). In other words, ideology is the expression of beliefs or values made manifest in structures and cultures. Ideology, then, is intimately tied to the social construction of organizational realities (and problems). Thus, ideology forms and transforms the way in which people interpret the world. Ideologies are discursively represented in culture "through affirmative symbolism or ritual" (Therborn, 1980, p. 82) and in the institutionalization of some structures over others. Because they are institutionalized through structures, ideologies are not recognized as optional but rather considered common sense or normal. Alternative ideologies are considered counter-cultural or deviant. The reinforcement of ideologies considered culturally normal "engenders attitudes and conduct that enable objective social structures to succeed in reproducing themselves" (MacLeod, 1987, p. 13). In other words, dominant agents define that which is culturally normal, subsequently mediating social action in a way that reproduces the social structures that work reflexively to support those culturally "normal" behaviors.

In order to illustrate this relationship, I will use an example with which all readers may be familiar; this will help set the stage for our later discussion of academic dishonesty. Heterosexuality is predominantly considered in our society as the normal

pairing between two human beings. Human agents then act according to this norm, and proceed to set up the marriage structure as “between a man and a woman,” reinforcing heterosexuality as the normal way to be in relationship. As gays, lesbians, and bisexuals continue to resist both the cultural norm of heterosexuality and the dominant social structure of marriage, they act in ways that work to create new forms of structure (e.g., “gay marriage”) and redefine cultural norms. Framing this resistance as dysfunctional or deviant, as would be done from an objectivist standpoint, formulates attempts to manage this resistance in the form of social control or structural changes (e.g., such as re-writing the constitution to define marriage as between a man and a woman). On the other hand, a critical constructivist standpoint enables a framing of this resistance as a struggle for the power or right to construct cultures and structures that support certain beliefs or ideologies. A critical analysis of the resistance ultimately enables the construction of new understandings and forms of practice that may be more cognizant of multiple realities (Giroux, 1983).

Of course, it is difficult, especially given the example used above (heterosexuality versus homosexuality), to persuade those who align with dominantly accepted ideologies to adopt new forms of practice. However, when there clearly exists a situation of competing interests and ideologies (as in the case of gay marriage, and perhaps in the case of academic dishonesty), a democratic institution should be interested in the exploration. Ignoring conflict and competition between and among those with opposing ideologies is not congruent with the fundamental principle of the academy which is to pursue truth. However, when faced with issues that seem so counter-cultural or deviant to

a dominant way of life, as academic dishonesty is to the academy, we tend to “lose our minds”<sup>7</sup> and we often go into protection rather than exploration mode.

The idea of co-construction in which agency, structure and culture work reflexively opens up the space for reconsidering taken for granted assumptions. Co-construction suggests that concepts such as academic dishonesty can be “de-constructed,” examined for meaning, and exposed as a process that is reproduced via the interplay among agency, structure and culture. Co-construction also allows for an investigation of dishonesty not as a deviant behavior, but as the product of agents who are mediated or influenced by their culture and structural indicators. Behaviors categorized as academically dishonest, for example, could be re-conceptualized as resistance against a dominant ideology that shapes student agency in a culturally “normal” way. That is, students who engage in behaviors categorized as academic dishonesty could be seen as resisting not the value of integrity per se, but the way in which integrity is conceptualized by the dominant culture and ideology. The academic dishonesty-academic integrity dichotomy can then be seen as representing a cultural struggle over whose ideas and interests will be privileged to ultimately shape the structure and culture of the academy. Understanding ideologies, then, helps us to understand the “established meanings and received practices that characterize the day to day workings of schools” (Giroux, 1984, p. 309) and the alternate ideologies that may alter future school workings. A critique of ideology, then, is crucial when looking at the problem of academic dishonesty over which there is such confusion and conflict.

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<sup>7</sup> I owe this phrase to Dr. Terri Monroe who teaches and writes about the difficult work of facing and tackling complex challenges.

Reconceptualizing dishonesty as agency resistance against the dominant notion of academic integrity requires adherence to the premise that student agents have access to enough power and authority to resist. In essence, then, this argument of resistance is parallel to the more common argument that the integrous student can resist engaging in unauthorized behaviors. Both of these resistance arguments downplay the influence of culture and structure on individual agency. Of course, the complexity of the interplay among agency, structure, and culture suggests that dependence on the argument of individual resistance has limited explanatory power. Student agents are affected by structure and culture in ways that limit their power to act (with integrity) and diminish their authority to speak to alternative ways of engaging in academic work or challenging the policies of the university. In addition, the resistance argument downplays the affect of power and authority held by other agents (i.e., faculty and administrators) on student agency. So, within this complex interplay among agency, structure, and culture are embedded issues of power and authority that determine whose voices are heard and what ideologies become dominant, ultimately affecting the construction of the problem as well as influencing outcomes or responses to the problem.

It is critical at this point to examine the existing literature on academic dishonesty in the context of agency, structure, and culture. The literature has been particularly influential in informing the practice of reducing academic dishonesty in higher education institutions. In the next section I examine how the research to date has typically relied on one of agency, structure, or culture to frame the problem and construct the solution consequently ignoring the influence of the complex interplay among them.

### Academic Dishonesty Research

There has been an abundance of research conducted on academic dishonesty since the early 1990s (e.g., Aaron, 1992; Alschuler & Blimling, 1995; Burnett, Rudolph, & Clifford, 1998; Bush, 2000; Davis et al., 1992; Davis & Ludvigson, 1995; Genereux & McLeod, 1995; Hendershott, Drinan & Cross, 1999; Hendershott et al., 2000; Jendrek, 1992; Kibler, 1993a; Lipson & McGavern, 1993; Marcoux, 2002; McCabe & Trevino, 1996; McCabe et al., 2001; Moffatt, 1990; Niels, 1996; Rudolph & Timm, 1998; Simon et al., 2003; Wajda-Johnston, 2001; Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2001; Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2002; Wilcox & Ebbs, 1992). The term academic dishonesty has been used in the literature to refer to any academic behaviors that produce work that is not of the student's independent effort. The definition offered by Nuss (1984) is a concise representation of academic dishonesty as expressed in the literature: "students giving or receiving unauthorized assistance in an academic exercise or receiving credit for work which is not their own" (p.1). Important in this definition, from a critical interpretive perspective, are the words "students," "unauthorized," and "not their own," for they convey the valuing of external authorization and independent work. Concomitantly, the language communicates the meaning of academic honesty: the independent completion of academic assignments in ways authorized by the academy.

Several academic behaviors have been aggregated into this definition of academic dishonesty, for example: obtaining help from others during exams; using another's words without attribution; and, working with others without the permission of the instructor. This dishonesty aggregate creates a seemingly objective phenomenon for researchers to explain, predict, and describe. Engagement in these behaviors can be measured and



correlated with other variables to offer conclusions about the level of dishonesty within a particular context, or in relation to other personal variables (e.g., age, gender, major).

The phenomenon of academic dishonesty (an undesirable behavior) has been juxtaposed in the research with a construct of academic integrity (a desirable behavior). Academic integrity is defined as the production of academic work that is in a student's own words as a result of his/her independent effort. Academic integrity, as the antonym of academic dishonesty, has also then become an object of study. Together, they comprise the problem (academic dishonesty) and the solution (academic integrity). The study of academic dishonesty and academic integrity as counter phenomena have emphasized agency, suggesting that it can be mediated by structure and culture in order to reinforce academic integrity. This research is reviewed below.

#### *Agency*

The prevalence of academic dishonesty has primarily been studied through the use of self-report data collected via surveys of students and faculty. Although there may be various renditions of surveys, the majority of studies have used McCabe's (1992) survey as a model. In these surveys, students are asked to indicate the frequency with which they engage in certain behaviors, the frequency with which they observe others engage in these behaviors, and their perception of the seriousness of these behaviors (as cheating or not cheating). From such surveys, we understand that anywhere between 40-90% of post-secondary students admit engaging in behaviors that the surveys define as academically dishonest (Jendrek, 1992). More recent research suggests that, on average, 75% of undergraduates report engaging in at least one of the behaviors the researcher defines as dishonest (McCabe et al., 2001). It is important to reinforce that the surveys do not ask students to say whether or not they cheat, but whether or not they engage in

certain behaviors; whether they consider those behaviors to be mild, moderate or serious forms of cheating is a separate question.

A significant portion of the existing research has also investigated the determinants of academic dishonesty with the intent to explain the reasons for student academic dishonesty and plan for organizational responses. Explaining academic dishonesty as a matter of individual agency emphasizes the internal determinants that might facilitate the choosing of “dishonest” behaviors over “honest” behaviors. In other words, this research has taken a psychological perspective to ask why some students have the agency to refrain from academic dishonesty and others do not. Some of the individual determinants found through this research include: attitudes toward academics; indifference toward cheating; low moral development; prioritization of values (e.g., loyalty versus integrity); lower intelligence; need for social approval; externalized social control; and, low personal work ethic (Davis and Ludwigson, 1995; Davis et. al., 1992; Drinan, 1999; Forsyth, Pope, & McMillian, 1985; Kibler, 1993a; Payne & Nantz, 1994).

### *Structure*

Explaining academic dishonesty as a result of structure emphasizes the external or institutional determinants that might constrain the student’s ability to engage in behaviors defined as academically honest (i.e., independent work). This research has investigated the correlation between the self-reporting of dishonest behaviors and the existence of certain institutional factors such as integrity policies, clear communication, and student involvement in integrity policy management (e.g., McCabe et al., 2002). This research has found that students at institutions with integrity policies do self-report less engagement in academically dishonest behaviors than students at institutions without a policy (McCabe & Trevino, 1993). This repeated finding in McCabe’s research

stimulated a move to recommend that all institutions implement some sort of integrity policy to make explicit institutional expectations regarding student behavior (McCabe & Pavela, 2005).

Other researchers have found that classroom structures (as mediated by faculty agency) play a significant role in influencing students to work in authorized or unauthorized ways. For example, Genereux and McLeod (1995) found that “instructors who invest time and effort into being highly vigilant and constructing fair exams will reap benefits in terms of overall prevention and reduction of cheating in their classes” (p. 698). Thus, the research has suggested that faculty time and effort is best spent implementing structures such as rotating forms of examinations, spreading students out during exams, and increasing the use of proctors during examination time (e.g., Barnett & Dalton, 1981; Kibler, 1993a; Kibler, Nuss, Paterson & Pavela, 1988). In other words, this research has investigated the influence of structure on individual agency by explaining the ways in which structure can constrain student engagement in unauthorized academic behaviors or facilitate student engagement in authorized academic behaviors. While recognizing the role of structure, this research maintains that the problem is located in the individual student and thus structures are simply a way to manipulate student agency. The power of this argument is diminished by the research that has found that students do engage in behaviors defined as academic dishonesty despite institutional policies (Barnett & Dalton, 1981; McCabe & Trevino, 1993; McCabe & Trevino, 1996; Moffatt, 1990).

### *Culture*

Culture is also used in a rather limited way in the academic dishonesty research, referring more to a dishonest climate variable (i.e., student and faculty perceptions of academic dishonesty) than to the underlying assumptions and values that guide behavior.

The research recommendation to implement structures has often been coupled with advice to create “cultures of integrity” so that integrity, rather than dishonesty, is the shared norm and value amongst the student collective (Alschuler & Blimling, 1995; Dalton, 1998; Hendershott, Drinan, & Cross, 2000; McCabe & Drinan, 1999; Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2002). The research in this area has added that to create this “culture of integrity” or an integrity ethos, institutions should implement: an academic integrity program in which the value of integrity is promoted and reinforced; training for faculty, graduate assistants, and students; a plan to consider institutional integrity; strategies to create a learning-oriented environment; and, a values-oriented curriculum (Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2002). This text of “creating cultures of integrity,” (Alschuler & Blimling, 1995; Dalton, 1998; Hendershott et al., 2000; Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2001) assumes the possibility of monolithic cultures in which alternative values are eliminated and students buy into the institution’s definition of integrity and its valuing of some academic behaviors over others. The research, in other words, assumes that organizational culture can be homogenous and free of conflict.

Although it seems reasonable to desire that integrity, rather than dishonesty, be the dominant norm in any organization, the call for a culture of integrity assumes a shared understanding of the meaning of “integrity,” shared understanding of the symbols of integrity, and relatively homogenous academic practices. On the contrary, the research has shown that there are multiple perspectives of the issue (Jendrek, 1989; McCabe, 1993; Payne & Nantz, 1994). Generally, these studies reveal that perceptions of academic dishonesty vary; they are inconsistent within and between institutions as well as within and between stakeholder groups (e.g., faculty versus students). These studies also suggest

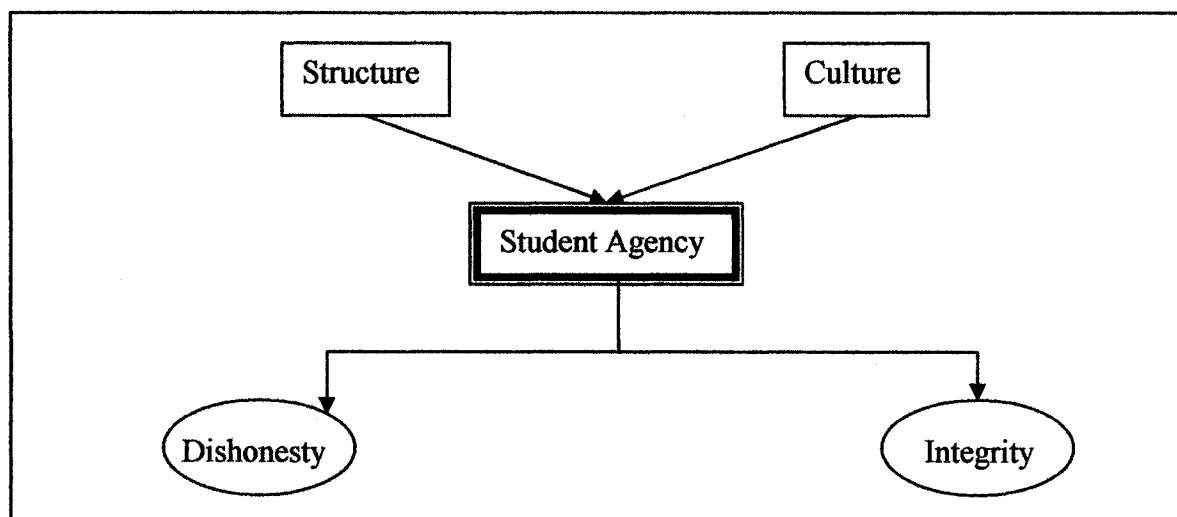
that institutions and stakeholders vary in their perceptions of proper organizational responses to academic dishonesty, depending on the type of behavior. For example, students and faculty tend to agree that buying a paper to turn in as one's own is serious cheating and should be punished harshly, but they disagree as to whether unauthorized collaboration is serious cheating and should even be responded to at all.

The research call for creating cultures of integrity, then, seems to be a call for students to “buy in” to, that is share, the institutionally constructed definitions of authorized and unauthorized academic behaviors. This perspective of culture creation assumes the institution has the right to authorize legitimate academic conduct and to assert compliance to that definition. Although the research on academic integrity adamantly calls for the inclusion of student and faculty voices in integrity culture creation, this approach “fails to take into account how... beliefs, values, and customs are historically and ideologically constituted” (McLaren, 1991, p. 237) and therefore, embedded into the way in which the organization “does things.” In other words, including student and faculty voices without an examination into the beliefs, values and customs of the organizational culture may make unreasonable an expectation for organizational culture change.

#### *Agency, Structure and Culture*

As can be seen from the above review of the academic dishonesty research, researchers have focused largely on describing academic dishonesty as shaped by individual agency and structure, typically with an emphasis on agency. Research has also suggested that culture may play some role in enabling or constraining individual agency toward academic dishonesty. But what has been ignored is the complex interaction

among agency, structure, and culture that co-constructs the problem. The simplification of the problem of academic dishonesty in the research is represented in Figure 1.



*Figure 1.* The Relationship among Agency, Structure, and Culture in the Academic Dishonesty Literature.

As can be seen in Figure 1, student agency is clearly centralized or foregrounded in the framing of the problem. In this framing, students are perceived to be able to choose dishonesty or integrity but their choices are mediated by structure (including faculty practices) and/or culture. In this way, academic dishonesty is framed as dysfunctionality within the individual student. Largely, the academic dishonesty research explains this dysfunctionality as social deviance or ignorant scholarship. That is, students choose academic dishonesty to gain advantage over other students (social deviance) or they choose it because they do not understand the purpose for doing academic work in established ways (ignorant scholar). Kibler (1993a) offered a third alternative suggesting that students engage in academic dishonesty because of their current stage of moral development. Although a successful re-framing of academic dishonesty from a crime and

punishment model, Kibler's (1993b) use of student development theory retains the centralization of the student agent.

Centering the discussion on the student agent and his/her integrity is always useful when attempting to resolve something as detrimental as misrepresentation and fraudulence is to the institution of higher education. Our institutions depend on individual adherence to a collective agreement for behavior or a code of conduct, otherwise institutional corruption and organizational anarchy may ensue. This seems particularly important in the educational institution that has as part of its agreement with society a commitment to develop citizens who can independently contribute to the public and private, economic and social good of society (Chambers, 2005).

However, when viewing the academic dishonesty problem as one of student agency, the complex relationship among agency, structure, and culture is simplified, as are the constructs themselves. It may be conceivable that structures can affect student agency and also create a culture that reinforces integrous rather than disintegrous, behavior.<sup>8</sup> It may also be conceivable that student agency is producing new cultural norms and values that redefine academic dishonesty and produce new structures that reinforce alternative forms of student engagement and learning. It is difficult to see this possibility in the current academic dishonesty research that has restricted the meaning of agency, structure and culture by focusing on the student actor. Structure and culture become means through which we can manipulate student agency, rather than aspects of a system that can produce and reproduce organizational realities and problems.

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<sup>8</sup> Integrous will be used throughout this dissertation as the adjective version of integrity, that is to mean, "having integrity." It can be used to describe a person, group, institution, or act that has integrity, e.g., *the integrous individual displays traits such as honesty and trustworthiness*. Integrous was commonly used in previous generations but has slipped from common vernacular in the last couple of centuries. Disintegrous will be used as the antonym to integrous.

### *Summary*

The existing research on academic dishonesty offers a survey of student and faculty behaviors, as well as predications of the causal relationship between individual and institutional characteristics and these behaviors. As a consequence of juxtaposing academic integrity with academic dishonesty, academic dishonesty has been constructed in the research as a problem technically rooted in student agency; students who engage in academic dishonesty have a deficit in individual integrity. This “deficit model” of academic dishonesty rests on “psychologizing” academic dishonesty, blaming the behaviors on “individual traits or a series of traits” (McLaren, 1989, p. 221). In other words, the cause of academic dishonesty has largely been laid in the arms of the individual student agent. The reader will see in Chapter Five that I eventually came to call this problem framing *Integrous Individualism*. Academic dishonesty research based on *Integrous Individualism* assumes that students have the agency to choose to abide by the rules but many lack the internal integrity to do so. This problem framing has resulted in the wide acceptance of a generic organizational response to academic dishonesty, an integrity policy approach to affect student agency. To sum up, the framing of academic dishonesty as primarily a problem of student agency, referred to in this study as *Integrous Individualism*, has limited organizational responses largely to the implementation of integrity policies, the promotion of integrity, and the policing and punishing of academic dishonesty.

By centralizing the student agent, *Integrous Individualism* serves to reduce the complexity of the problem and diminish the influence of the dynamic interrelationship among agency, structure, and culture. Academic dishonesty is reified as an objective fact to be examined and altered rather than a social construction resulting from the interplay



among agency, structure, and culture. What is lacking in research and practice, then, is a framework for addressing the complexity of the problem through the reformation of the organization beyond the preventing, policing, and punishing of student behavior.

Research that has gone beyond the student agent has tended to overemphasize faculty agency, that is, the will of faculty to promote academic integrity and punish academic dishonesty (e.g., Jendrek, 1989; Pavela, 1981). Again, resting cause inside an individual and failing to look reflectively at the organization's structures, cultures, and actions has constrained organizational responses by assuming a shared understanding of academic dishonesty, ignoring structural and cultural constraints on agency, and downplaying the socially constructed nature of the problem.

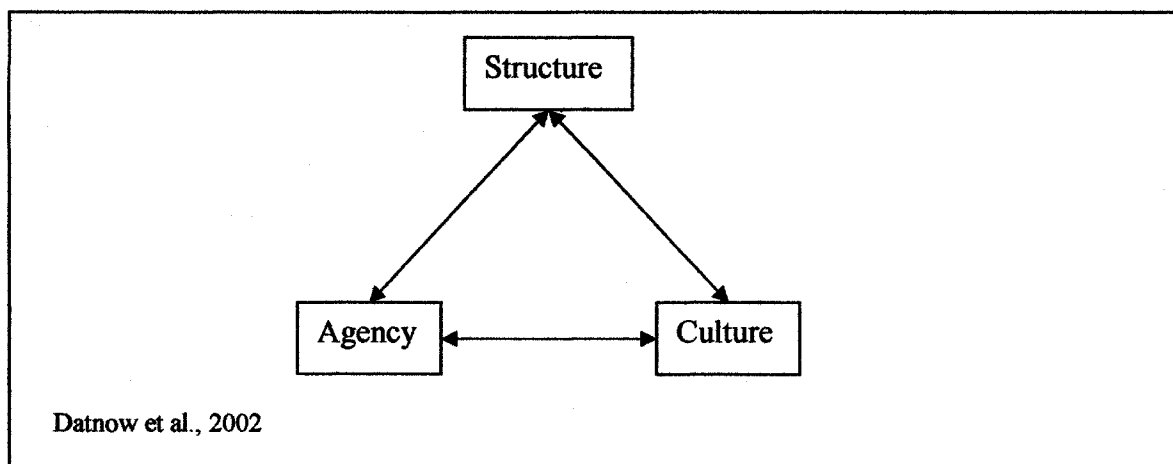
#### Developing an Alternate Framing

This study borrows from sociological and organizational theories to propose an alternate framing of the academic dishonesty problem. In this framing, as shown in

Figure 2:

Structure, culture, and agency construct each other. Structure and agency work reflexively. So do agency and culture, structure and culture. In the agency of individuals we see structure and culture operating; in culture, we see structure and agency; and in structure, we see agency and culture. (Datnow et al., 2002, p. 16)

Datnow et al. (2002) refer to this construct relationship as a mediational system; each construct mediates the others. While this notion of mediation is an important one, it is only one aspect of the relationship among the three constructs and should not be over-emphasized. Datnow et al. (2002) also refer to the process within this mediational



*Figure 2. Agency-Structure-Culture as a Mediation System*

system as co-construction; that is, together, these constructs create a reality. The phrase “co-construction” however, is used in other ways within the broad theory of constructivism and so may not hold sufficient specificity to accurately describe the relation of these three constructs to organizational realities. I build upon Datnow et al. (2002) to situate their mediational system within the context of organizations and the complex problems that arise. I do this to offer a theory of organizational problems that draws together and integrates several different theories (critical theory, constructivism, interactionism, systems theory, structural, and cultural theory) as well as ideas from organizational, group dynamics, and leadership theorists (e.g., Bolman and Deal, 1997; Datnow et al., 2002; Heifetz, 1994; Senge, 1990; Wheatley, 1999). In the next few paragraphs, I will describe the influence of each of these theories in the construction of a theory of complex organizational problems.

#### *Influence of Sociological Theories*

The theory of complex organizational problems developed here is informed by social constructivism, critical theory, systems theory, structuration theory, and cultural theory. In the theory of social constructivism, social processes (e.g., conflict, competition,

cooperation) are derived from, or constructed through, the interactions of persons (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Because organizational reality is socially constructed by the individuals involved, multiple realities co-exist within an organization (Deetz & Kersten, 1983; Humphreys & Brown, 2002; Putnam, 1983; Tierney, 1991). Critical theory suggests that power and authority serve to privilege some of these realities over others, allowing privileged realities to rise to predominant positions within the organization and operate as the status quo (Alvesson & Willmott, 1992; Deetz & Kersten, 1983; Forester, 1993; Putnam, 1983). Systems theory points out the importance of understanding that people are mediated by the systems in which they work and live (Wells, 1985). The importance of understanding systems seems best articulated by Wheatley (1999):

Individual behaviors co-evolve as individuals interact with system dynamics. If we want to change individual or local behaviors, we have to tune into these system-wide influences. We have to use what is going on in the whole system to understand individual behavior, and we have to inquire into individual behavior to learn about the whole. (p. 142)

Finally, structuration theory (Giddens, 1984) suggests that attention must be paid to the influence of structures on individual agency and cultural theory (Geertz, 1973) suggests that cultures and people within the system co-construct one another.

#### *Influence of Organizational and Leadership Theories*

Because this study is concerned with the way in which the problem of academic dishonesty has been framed and proposes to offer a reconsideration of academic dishonesty as a complex organizational problem requiring leadership rather than management, it is necessary to briefly review the literature that helps to explain organizational problems and organizational complexity (e.g., Bolman & Deal, 1997; Heifetz, 1994; Selznick, 1957; Senge, 1990; Wheatley, 1999). In particular, the difference between types of organizational problems is critical to this study. One type of

problem, referred to as technical (Heifetz, 1994) or routine (Selznick, 1957), is easily definable and has known solutions. On the other end of the spectrum, there is the problem, that is not easily definable and for which no known solution exists. This type of problem has been categorized as generative (Senge, 1990), critical (Selznick, 1957), or adaptive (Heifetz, 1994) but I will refer to it as complex to reflect its multi-dimensional nature influenced by the system and systemic cultures and structures. Complex problems are usually experienced as a gap between values or between values and reality, creating tension and a feeling of disequilibrium for the persons involved.

I integrate organizational and leadership theories with sociological theories to describe and explain complex organizational problems. The writings point out how people, structures and cultures interact together to create complex problems, but the interaction among the three has not been specifically and clearly delineated as a theory of complex organizational problems. An understanding of the “whole system,” developed from systems theory, is useful because it provides a framing that considers the role and responsibility of the individual agent while not centralizing the agent. While useful, this idea of systems seems rather difficult to articulate and apply because of its expanse and lack of reference to specific constructs. What is called for is a way not only to explain complex organizational problems, but also to provide an analytical framework that can be used to understand the nature of specific organizational problems. Bolman and Deal (1997), perhaps the most known for providing an analytical framework to “develop greater appreciation and deeper understanding of organizations” (p. 15), suggest that their four-frame model be used in place of a more rational, mechanical or simplistic view of organizational reality.

Bolman and Deal (1997) developed their four-frame model from the leadership and management literature in order to consolidate “major schools of organizational thought into four major perspectives” or “frames” (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 12). The Bolman and Deal (1997) four-frame model, then, is really more of a tool than a theory to help managers develop the ability to reframe situations so that they become less like “mechanics” and more like “leaders and artists” (p. 17). While Bolman and Deal’s analysis introduced me to the idea of framing, their model falls short in explaining complex organizational problems that are mediated and co-constructed by larger systemic forces.

*Systemic Interactionism: A Theory of Complex Organizational Problems*

Systemic Interactionism,<sup>9</sup> the theory of complex organizational problems offered here, is based on sociological, leadership and organizational theories and specifically builds on Datnow et al’s (2004) model as depicted in Figure 2. Systemic Interactionism premises that complex organizational problems are socially composed by the interaction among agency, structures and cultures. These three main constructs (agency, structure, and culture) are “interactants,” the broad classifications of the aspects inherent in all organizations (e.g., people, policies, practices, departments, and rituals). The term “interactant” emphasizes the active and interactive nature of these aspects that, together, produce and reproduce multiple organizational realities.

Systemic Interactionism is a dynamic model, then, in that agents are constantly producing and reproducing realities through their alteration of structures and cultures, and agency is in turn altered by the existing structures and cultures. Agents, then, are not only

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<sup>9</sup> Systemic Interactionism is not to be confused with symbolic interactionism. The similarity between the two is, of course, the focus on interactionism. However, Systemic Interactionism accounts more adequately for structural effects and the influence of macro-level issues (system forces) than does symbolic interactionism.

inputs but “continuing outcome(s) of interaction, always in process” (Wendt, 1999, p. 316). Datnow et al. (1999) talk about the interactive nature of agency, structure, and culture, but they do not apply this framework to understand the shaping of complex organizational problems in higher education, nor the leadership required in response. Integrating organizational, systems, and leadership theories into the analysis by Datnow et al. (1999) can both enhance understanding of complex organizational problems and inform the practice of leadership toward the resolution of these problems.

The arrangement of the three interactants can create different compositions. The general composition changes as each interactant exists in different proportion, strength, or relation to another interactant. Sometimes these compositions are not problematic, that is, there seems to be a mutual agreement among the interactants and an organizational reality<sup>10</sup> is composed. Other times, the mixing of the three interactants composes an organizational reality in which there are co-existing conflicting notions and competing interests. Systemic Interactionism suggests that complex organizational problems, then, are embedded in the conflict between notions and the competition between interests. Together, these conflicting notions or competing interests create a tension, an imbalance, striving, or disequilibrium (Heifetz, 1994; Senge, 1990) that is difficult to pinpoint and resolve. In other words, complex problems are embedded in underlying tensions.

Systemic Interactionism also theorizes that the relationship among the three systemic interactants creates a framework for understanding organizational realities. The

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<sup>10</sup> As a constructivist, I use the term “reality” loosely as a representation, perception, or understanding of the way something is. This “reality” is not an objective fact or truth, but subjective and, in a sense, in the eye of the beholder. Although, as a critical constructivist, I acknowledge that some socially constructed “realities” become more real than others as those with power make them manifest in structures that function to continually reproduce the “reality.” In other words, there are realities in so much as they do structure and shape agency.

framework used serves to produce (or reproduce) expressions, ideas, and realities. Thus, when used purposefully, framing can be a way to analyze and reanalyze organizational realities or problems to make more cognizant the complexity of the situation and to generate more creative solutions. Because they are socially constructed, framings are neither right nor wrong but they can be more or less robust. That is, a framing that emphasizes agency is less complete than a framing that attempts to comprehend agency, structure, and culture together. The way in which a problem or situation is framed is critical because it shapes the construction of available solutions.

The use of Durkheim's theory of suicide by Tinto (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005) to explain student attrition and retention is one example of how an alternate framing can change the way in which higher education organizations respond to a complex problem. Before Tinto's work, college attrition was framed as a problem of student agency; those students who dropped out of college were perceived as lacking the personal characteristics or abilities to function successfully. However, Tinto suggested that student agency is "subsequently modified and reformulated on a continuing basis through a longitudinal series of interactions between the individual and the structures and members of the academic and social systems of the institution" (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p. 54). Thus, the reframing of attrition as co-constructed by the interaction among agency, structures, and cultures successfully informed new practice. Framing, then, is a way to explain the underlying tension created by the interactants as well as a way to generate new forms of practice that account for the complexity and more robustly respond to the problem.

Acknowledging and attempting to understand the relationship among the three interactants is critical in resolving complex organizational problems because otherwise they are framed too simply as technical problems (Heifetz, 1994). Ignoring this complex relationship is a misanalysis often caused by the difficulty in seeing the complexity. However, downplaying the complexity can also be a defense mechanism for those who might lose power or authority if their privileged notions or interests are questioned. By labeling agents as deviant and removing or reforming them, privilege can be protected and the perception of problem resolution can be sustained. However, Systemic Interactionism helps us to understand that the problem will continue despite the “elimination” of the agent to whom the problem is shifted because the underlying tension among the interactants is not resolved.

Let’s apply this view of complex organizational problems to academic dishonesty. As has been demonstrated, the existing research on academic dishonesty has simplified the problem by centralizing the student agent (see again Figure 1). In other words, the student represents the source of the problem. Changing student behavior, then, is considered akin to resolving the problem. When simplified in this way, the remedy for the problem seems simple; implement structures that allow the institution to eliminate the problem through the removal or rehabilitation of the problem student. Systemic Interactionism argues, however, that the problem is not locatable within the individual agent alone but within the complex interplay among agent, structure, and culture. Thus, the problem cannot be resolved through the problematizing of the agent, or the elimination of one interactant or another. To further investigate this contribution of



Systemic Interactionism toward understanding academic dishonesty requires a revisiting of the problem in the context of each of the three interactants.

*Agency.* In Systemic Interactionism, the agent is not the center of the problem, but only one of three interactants that construct the academic dishonesty problem and frame organizational responses. The individual agent's role in, and responsibility for, constructing the problem is acknowledged but not in isolation of the system and the interplay with structure and culture. A concern with agency, then, is a concern about how it is exercised within structure and mediated by culture to reproduce dominant organizational realities and inhibit organizational change, or produce new realities and enable organizational change. Agency, then, is considered at both the individual and collective levels of action that can both sustain and resist dominant ideologies. Considering agency in this way transcends (but includes) the notion that students are "misbehaving" or engaging in "deviant" behavior to a consideration that their actions may be forms of compliance or resistance to dominant ideologies. In other words, by moving student agency from outside the center of the discourse to merely one aspect of a complex relation among agency-structure-culture, the complexity of academic dishonesty can be considered.

*Structure.* In Systemic Interactionism, structural analysis is interpretive; structures are viewed as socially constructed by "the words, symbols, and behaviors of its members" (Putnam, 1983, p. 35). In this way, structures are perceived to function as reinforcement of the beliefs, values, and norms of those who have the power and authority necessary to construct and implement the structures (Deetz & Kersten, 1983; Putnam, 1983; Tierney, 1991). The members who are most successful within these structures are those who "buy

in” to and act in line with the pre-approved structures. Thus, structures are both a result of agency and an influence on agency; structures both represent culture (beliefs and values) as well as influence culture. This re-framing of structure enables the critical examination of the role structure plays in reproducing dominant realities and marginalizing others. In the case of academic dishonesty, the structures that co-exist alongside the integrity policy (such as curriculum, assessment, auxiliary services) are considered as co-constructors of the problem in that they contribute to agency mediation as well as the culture (i.e., norms, values, notions, and interests) in which agency occurs. Thus, structures are not simply seen as ways to manage student conduct (i.e., as a solution to academic dishonesty), but as forces that must be analyzed for their contribution to the construction of notions of acceptable and unacceptable academic conduct.

*Culture.* Systemic Interactionism incorporates the postmodernist view of culture as “a struggle over meanings and about meanings” of events, representations and interpretations (McLaren, 1991, p. 237). Thus, culture is not considered to be homogenous and rooted in consensual agreement, but rather it is “multivoiced” (Bahktin, as cited in Quantz, 1988). In this view, the predominant culture does not represent the only voice, but the voice that is heard as a result of embedded power relations that allow certain interests to win out over others. Within the context of higher education organizations, Tierney (1992) also talks about the notion that culture is “multivoiced.” This notion is important because the traditional labeling of cultures of consensus as “strong” and cultures of dissent as “weak” within the organizational culture research (Peters and Waterman, 1982) discounts the multiple realities that tend to exist in organizations. Institutions working toward “strong” cultures of integrity in higher

education institutions need to be careful not to ignore dissonant voices as they work to understand the problem of academic dishonesty.

The idea here is not to promote a cultural relativism that sanctions blatant dishonesty and theft of intellectual property. Rather, it is to suggest that an “integrity culture” is a construction of those who “occupy positions of dominance and privilege with respect to shaping discourses and hence defining human subjects (i.e., defining what are appropriate values and actions) while others are subordinate to them” (McLaren, 1991, p. 238). The question then is not whether students should be allowed to act in dishonest ways, but what behaviors are subsumed as academic dishonesty and who benefits from the prevailing definition. As a social construction, then, culture can be socially reconstructed to suggest alternate ways of framing and responding to the problem.

### *Summary*

Understanding complex organizational problems in the framing of Systemic Interactionism opens the possibilities for hearing the “deviant voices” (Heifetz, 1994) that are not part of the dominant framing of academic dishonesty. In this way, the interaction among agency, structure and culture can be re-conceptualized as both constraining and enabling organizational change. I argue in this dissertation that agency, structure, and culture can be seen as systemic interactants that reproduce certain realities and marginalize others and, as a result, limit the available options for organizational responses. Thus, this current investigation intentionally diverts from the perspective previously taken in the research literature. Academic dishonesty is not seen here as an objective social structure, but a socially constructed notion sustained to serve the interests of a dominant group. In this sense, academic dishonesty and organizational responses are

symbolic representations of underlying meanings that, when examined, enhance understanding and develop explanations of the problem. This perspective allows for an investigation into dominant interests, alternative (competing) notions, and conflicting practices, i.e., what is emphasized, and that which is ignored or downplayed. In the end, Systemic Interactionism enables the understanding of how dominant problem framing enables or inhibits leadership toward organizational change.

### Chapter Summary

In this chapter I reviewed the key constructs fundamental to this study of academic dishonesty: agency, structure, culture, ideology, and power. The review of the existing research literature on academic dishonesty suggests that the centralization of the student actor has limited the possibilities for understanding academic dishonesty as a complex organizational problem. The existing research has tended to ignore the contributions of sociological, organizational, and leadership theories and their potential for informing our understanding and resolution of the academic dishonesty problem. I present a reconsideration of the way in which agency, structure, and culture are interrelated to suggest Systemic Interactionism, a theory of complex organizational problems that can be used to help understand academic dishonesty and the influence of agency, structure and culture on co-constructing the problem. The research here, then, takes us beyond a consideration of what to do about student behaviors or how to change student behaviors so that they are in line with the rules of the academy. Rather, this research seeks to investigate how agency-structure-culture interact to create the interpretation of certain behaviors as dishonest (i.e., underlying values), and how this construction limits our ability to see competing or conflicting definitions. It is in this

sense that I seek to describe not only the commonalities in the group but to explain the existing tensions and conflicts. As Quantz (1988) affirms:

It is in the disagreements, the interstices of community that we can understand the potentially regenerative themes. It is by giving expression to the silenced and legitimacy to their struggles that we advance the possibility for social transformation. (Quantz, 1988, p. 6)

Social or institutional transformation cannot occur through the application of authority to control or manage the actions of individual or collective agents because underlying tensions remain unresolved. Leadership is needed to change the dynamics of the relationship among the interactants to resolve a complex challenge or issue facing a person or group of persons. Exercising leadership means actively focusing attention on the issues of structures and cultures and how they mediate action within the organization. That is, through leadership, agents become aware of the systemic interactions that affect their behavior and are mobilized to address the tension that results. In this sense, leadership toward the resolution of complex organizational problems cannot be simply directed at changing the actions of particular agents (e.g., students). Being able to exercise leadership for organizational change requires that agents challenge the predominant problem framing and suggest alternative explanations, actively working to re-frame the problem rather than quietly resisting in a way that subverts organizational change from occurring. This study offers implications, then, for the leadership needed to resolve the complex problem of academic dishonesty.

#### Research Questions

The questions raised in this framing then are less about the students' behaviors and more about the system of which they are a part. Thus, the research questions guiding this study are:

1. How do three case institutions frame the problem of academic dishonesty?
2. What is protected by the dominant framing of the academic dishonesty problem?
3. Using the alternate framing, what are the limitations and consequences of the dominant framing?
4. What are the implications for leadership practice and research?

## CHAPTER 3

### DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I set the stage for the remainder of the dissertation by delineating the design of this research study as well as the methods employed. I begin by reviewing the research perspective out of which the design originates. This section clearly contextualizes this study as a qualitative study that assumes participants to be co-constructors of organizational reality and therefore knowledgeable informants. I follow this framing with a review of the research design and methodology, including the methods used to select research sites and participants, as well as to collect and analyze the data. I finish this chapter with a discussion of the trustworthiness of the data, role of the researcher, and limitations of the study.

#### Research Perspective

The critical interpretive perspective taken in this study draws on communications, sociological, and anthropological methodologies grounded in social constructivist theories. In this perspective, organization realities are viewed as socially constructed shaped out of member interactions and differing and competing interests (Deetz & Kersten, 1983; Putnam, 1983; Tierney, 1991). It is assumed that “organizations are not discursively monolithic, but pluralistic and polyphonic, involving multiple dialogical practices that occur simultaneously and sequentially” (Humphreys & Brown, 2002, p. 2). If left unaddressed, such diverse practices may give rise to various and conflicting cultures. Regardless of the existence of such individual and small group realities, institutionally embedded power and authority relations tend to support one dominant culture or a hegemony that is “articulated as ‘common sense’ or ‘natural’” (Humphreys &

Brown, 2002, p. 3). Organizational change, then, can be difficult because hegemony silences voices that would otherwise challenge the dominant discourse. Because the critical interpretive perspective focuses on giving voice to the contradictions and counter-hegemonies, it assists the researcher in uncovering the “type of insight that is vital for organizational change and increased awareness” (Deetz & Kersten, 1983, p. 155).

The goal of the critical interpretive perspective, then, is to make explicit the “multiple dialogical practices” and the barriers that are inhibiting cultural change (Alvesson & Willmott, 1992; Deetz & Kersten, 1983; Forester, 1993). Thus, “alternate” voices are considered critical inclusions in the research because they enhance the understanding of complex organizational problems. The interpretive aspect provides “thick descriptions” (Geertz, 1973) of organizational realities as seen through particular individual perceptions and experiences. The critical aspect uncovers contradictions and “unarticulated assumptions,” that is, the “way [in which] deep structures embedded in the status quo constrain human behavior” (Putnam, 1983, p. 48). Thus, the critical interpretive perspective is concerned with what is articulated and what may be “prevented from being articulated” (Alvesson & Willmott, 1992, p. 8).

Framing the study of academic dishonesty in a critical interpretive perspective allows for a different analysis than has been offered up to this point in the research. The existing research has taken a post-positivist approach, accepting current dominant conceptions of academic dishonesty as truth, thus focusing on explaining, describing and predicting student behaviors based on those “truths.” In other words, strategies employed in both academic dishonesty research and practice function to legitimate dominant



conceptions of academic dishonesty, prescribing ways to control and manage student conduct in line with those conceptions. The critical interpretive research paradigm, on the other hand, views individuals as operating within a social reality that they co-created according to norms and values constructed to serve that perception of reality. Because of inherent power relations in organizations, the critical interpretive research paradigm then sees concepts such as “academic integrity” as social constructions that support the ideologies of those in power and authority serving to fulfill their needs and goals. Thus, as social constructions, academic dishonesty and academic integrity can be reconstructed to enhance understanding.

### Research Design and Methodology

In this section, I describe the research design, the selection of research sites and respondents, as well as provide a description of those involved in the study. I also describe the methods for data collection and analysis.

#### *Multiple Case Study*

The research design for this study is the multiple case study. Case study research focuses on a discreet entity as the unit for investigation (Merriam, 1998), for example a college or a university. The multiple case study build on the single case study by including two or more units within the investigation. The potential participants for a multiple case study are limited to those who work, study or live within the cases, and those outside the institutions are not considered in the research. The research design for this study is most particularly an instrumental multiple case study in which the cases are “examined mainly to provide insight into an issue” rather than to provide insight into the cases themselves (Stake, 2005, p. 445).

Case study is an appropriate design for this study for four main reasons. There is, first of all, the issue of interest which is to understand the problem of academic dishonesty as an organizational, rather than individual, problem. Choosing organizations as cases, then, aligns with this research purpose. Second, the case study design supports the constructivist research perspective in that it emphasizes and acknowledges the influence of context on the phenomenon under study. Third, academic dishonesty is a very practical problem which raises questions and concerns in practice. The “specificity of focus” of a case study offers “thick” description of the phenomenon that may be helpful in informing practice (Merriam, 1998). And fourth, a case study that can “bring about the discovery of new meaning” is particularly useful for reconsidering a problem in new ways (Merriam, 1998, p. 30).

The multiple case study design adopted for this study provides a more “compelling interpretation” than the single case study (Merriam, 1998). The critical interpretive research perspective assumes that organizations are not closed, bounded, systems but influenced by the larger system of which they are a part. The multiple case study approach enables a comparison across contexts and an analysis of their common larger system (e.g., educative system, society). Three case institutions were ultimately chosen because: 1) three cases provide one way of triangulating the data; 2) three cases allow for a comparison across institutional type (i.e., religious, land-grant, elite), institutional size (i.e., small, medium, and large), and geographic location (i.e., west, middle, east); and, 3) three cases allow for the development of thick description with a

manageable amount of data. The next section details the method for choosing the three case institutions.

### *The Three Cases*

Chapter Four presents a detailed description of the three case institutions so at this time only the method for selecting the three research sites will be discussed. The selection of research sites was purposefully narrowed to four-year non-profit United States universities and colleges that are actively responding to the problem of academic dishonesty. The delimitation to four-year non-profit institutions reduces the amount of variation and increases possibilities for comparison among the three institutions. The variance among community colleges, proprietary institutions, and four-year non-profit institutions, in other words, might have inhibited the ability to compare and contrast the three cases. Ultimately, the delimitation of institutional type centers the study on the problem framing rather than on the institutions themselves. The selection of the eventual three case institutions provides for an enhanced understanding of a previously unexplored topic—the way in which the problem of academic dishonesty has been framed by those organizations actively responding to the problem. The thickness and the breadth of data offered add significantly to the current body of literature on academic dishonesty.

The Carnegie Classification<sup>11</sup> of higher education institutions was used to determine the institutional pool from which to choose the cases. Because focus of this study is on the way in which the problem is framed and responded to, the case institutions had to have already identified the problem and initiated an organizational response. In order to determine those institutions actively responding to an identified problem of

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<sup>11</sup> The 2004-2005 Carnegie Classification was utilized.

academic dishonesty, the completion of the CAI Assessment Survey before the end of 2002 was used as a selection criteria. The assessment survey provides a picture of the occurrence and prevalence of academic dishonesty at the host institution, as well as offers recommendations for addressing the problem. The completion of the survey, then, was used as an indicator of organizational response to academic dishonesty; completion of the survey before 2002 helped to ensure that the institutions had moved beyond the completion of the survey to institutional action.

Applying this criterion to the pool of non-profit four-year institutions narrowed the site selection possibilities to eighteen universities: four Doctoral/Research Extensive private; seven Doctoral/Research Extensive public; three Masters I private; two Masters I public; one Masters II private; and, one Masters II public. Contacts made at two of these universities revealed their interest in participating in the study. After obtaining IRB approval from University of San Diego and their institutions, those two universities officially became a part of this study. Elite University (EU)<sup>12</sup> is a Doctoral/Research Extensive private, medium sized, university in the eastern continental United States. Heartland University (HU) is a Doctoral/Research Extensive public, large land-grant university in mid continental United States.

To ensure variance in the three sites, the selection of the third institution was purposely narrowed to a Masters I or II university of a smaller size. One by one, the CAI Assessment Survey contact at each of the eligible institutions was contacted via a formal letter that explained the project and invited participation (see Appendix A for the introductory letter). As a result, Lasallian College (LC), a small Masters I private

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<sup>12</sup> The names of the institutions, groups, people and programs in this study are pseudonyms.

Catholic college in the western continental United States, agreed to participate. Once the IRB approval was obtained from LC, the process of identifying individual respondents began.

### *Respondents*

The primary respondents at each site were the student, faculty and administrative members of the group leading the organizational response to academic dishonesty, herein referred to as Council members. At Lasallian College, this group is called the Honor Council (HC). The HC of Lasallian College has fourteen student members, two faculty members, and three administrative members. At Heartland University, the primary research participants are members of the Honor System. In total, there are sixty-five members of the Honor System; forty-four on the Honor Council, ten on the Graduate Honor Council, and fifteen in the sub-group called Just Education Dealing with Integrity (JEDI). At Elite University, the primary participants are members of the Council for Integrity in Academics (CIA). Students, faculty and administrators are represented on the nineteen-member CIA, and specific seats are reserved for representatives from three related bodies: Board of Judicial Affairs, Honor Council, and EU Student Government. Members of the undergraduate Honor Council, which has about twenty members in total, were included as additional primary participants at EU.

General calls, sent out to all Council members at each of the three case institutions, explained the research and requested participation. Interested respondents signed up for an interview day and time. Additional respondents were secured by individual email requests to ensure a target number of no less than fifteen and nor more than twenty primary participants at each institution.

The secondary respondents at each site were non-Council members (students, faculty, administrators or staff). These respondents were chosen through the snow-ball sampling method and random selection from high-traffic campus locations. The snow-ball method was used to secure interviews with non-Council members. Primary respondents were asked, 'who else should I speak with to ensure I hear a variety of perspectives?' and those people were contacted with an invitation to participate. Finally, random selection was utilized to obtain general opinions held by the university student population. In total, there were over 390 people included in this dissertation study (see Table 1). At the time of the interview, each participant received a copy of the Consent Form and asked to sign a copy for my file (see Appendix B).

#### *Data Collection*

Data was collected during the 2004-2005 academic year through non-participant observations of meetings and events, documents, random student surveys, individual interviews, and group interviews. The research process was flexible, iterative and inductive in order to focus on emergent themes. Thus, data collection, analysis and writing, at times, occurred simultaneously.

The first round of data collection occurred in the fall of 2004. Five days were spent at each institution. The primary respondent interviews during this phase were focused on the respondents' perceptions and experiences with a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix C). Using a semi-structured interview guide allowed for a standardization of questions between respondents and research sites while providing the space and opportunity for spontaneous conversation and question-asking to occur. Secondary respondents were engaged in a conversational interview to gather their

Table 1.

*Breakdown of Study Participants*

	LC	HU	EU	TOTAL
<b>PRIMARY – Council members</b>				
Undergraduates	13	7	8	<b>28</b>
Graduates	0	3	1	<b>4</b>
Faculty	3	6	6	<b>15</b>
Administrators	3	3	2	<b>8</b>
<b>TOTAL PRIMARY</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>SECONDARY - Non-Council Members</b>				
Student Interviewees	0	1	3	<b>4</b>
Faculty Interviewees	3	1	3	<b>7</b>
Administrator Interviewees	2	2	1	<b>5</b>
Student Surveyed	100	100	100	<b>300</b>
Focus Group Interviewees	8	12	0	<b>20</b>
<b>TOTAL SECONDARY</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>336</b>

perceptions of the problem and organizational responses to the problem. Almost all interviews were digitally recorded although there were some technical difficulties that resulted in two interviews not being recorded. Extensive notes taken throughout all interviews allowed for these interviews to remain a part of the data analysis. Students involved in an academic integrity seminar at Heartland University were also engaged in a group interview for secondary data.

The second round of data collection occurred during the spring of 2005. Again, five days were spent at each institution. The second round of primary interviews were semi-structured to focus on the contradictions, interpretations and unarticulated assumptions uncovered during the first round of analysis. That is, an interview guide was developed from the analysis of the first round of interviews, observational field notes, and documents (see Appendix D). Secondary respondents were engaged again in a conversational interview to gather their perceptions of the integrity culture creation

process. All of these interviews were digitally recorded and extensive notes taken. There were no technical difficulties experienced in the spring semester. Students involved in an academic integrity seminar at Lasallian College were also engaged in a group interview.

Documents were also collected during all of the site visits. These documents came in hard copy and electronic forms (via the university websites) and include the university's mission statement and strategic plan, all academic integrity documents (e.g., policies and procedures), student newspaper articles relating to the topic, university brochures, student handbooks, council meeting minutes, and university bulletins. See Appendix E for a list of all documents used.

Purposeful observations were conducted of: three honor council meetings (Lasallian College, Elite University, and Heartland University), one honor council hearing (Heartland University), one honor council workshop in an academic classroom (Elite University), three community dialogue events (Lasallian College and Elite University), one academic integrity seminar (Heartland University). Extensive notes were taken during the observations. I attended these meetings in order to get a sense of the system as a whole, to hear the various perspectives that may be expressed in a meeting dedicated specifically toward the topic of academic dishonesty, as well as perspectives on the organization as a whole.

Perspectives were also collected from randomly selected students during the site visits. High traffic locations were identified and included: dining hall(s), student centers, and cafés. In the fall semester, randomly selected individuals were asked to participate in a short, four question interview. Given time restraints, few respondents were able to be



included using that method. Thus, in the spring semester, randomly selected individuals at each institution completed a survey (see Appendix F).

After both the fall and spring semesters of data collection, fifty-five primary respondents (Council members) and sixteen secondary respondents (non-Council members) had been interviewed for a total of 114 interviews (see Table 2). Because not all respondents were interviewed twice, different numbers of interviews were conducted in the fall and the spring semesters. In addition to these interviews, three hundred students were surveyed and twenty undergraduates participated in two focus groups.

Table 2.

*Breakdown of Interviewees by Primary and Secondary participants*

	Lasallian College	Heartland University	Elite University	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>INTERVIEWS</b>				
<b>Council Members</b>				
Fall	18	18	16	<b>52</b>
Spring	18	15	12	<b>45</b>
<b>Total Primary</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>Non-Council Members</b>				
Fall	3	2	3	<b>8</b>
Spring	2	2	5	<b>9</b>
<b>Total Secondary</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>114</b>

*Data Analysis*

Writing and analysis occurred simultaneously throughout data collection as interviews were transcribed. All interviews from the fall semester were transcribed and coded before the spring semester interviews began. In both the first and second rounds of transcribing, notes were made in the margins of the transcripts during the actual transcribing process. The fall semester transcripts were preliminarily coded in order to

develop the second interview protocol. Each transcript was read in full, with the coding occurring simultaneously. At this phase, the coding was inductive, categorizing bits of data as they emerged from the transcripts. The interviews and observations conducted in the second phase of data collection focused on furthering understanding and explanation of the information that emerged from the fall semester interviews.

All archival documents were first assessed for their usefulness as a data source by asking “does the document provide insights or information that are relevant to the purposes of the research?” (Whitt, 1992, p. 449). The relevant documents were subjected to qualitative content analysis, an iterative process (asking and answering questions) for constructing categories and comparing those categories to other data. Critical university documents in which norms and values are normally expressed (e.g., student and faculty handbooks) were searched using Adobe Reader for the key words “honor” and “integrity.” Sections including those words were also subject to content analysis.

To construct the case of each institution, a narrative analysis (Polkinghorne, 1997) was conducted in which the disparate data was organized into coherent wholes to present the “integrity stories” for each institution. To construct these stories, the observational, interview and document data was used to construct a “sense of the situation” (Forester, 1993, p. 245) as well as a sequential, time-oriented story of the academic integrity movement on each campus. This narrative analysis was inductive, focusing on what information emerged from the data and synthesizing the data elements into a coherent whole, a thick description that “goes beyond fact to detail, context, emotion, and web of affiliation and micropower” (Denzin, 1983, p. 144). Narrative analysis links the context

and situation to the interpretations and experiences of the participants. The narratives reflect the “key themes that are built up from multiple sources of data” (Smirich, 1983, p. 169). As the narrative analysis was constructed, the data were also examined through a critical theory lens. Contradictions and unarticulated assumptions made within, and between, the data sources were unitized and categorized, using Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) constructivist inquiry methodology and Glaser and Strauss’s (1967) constant comparative method. However, rather than attempting to integrate data into a few categories, contradictory data were purposefully highlighted.

After all the data collection was complete and interviews transcribed, each of the transcripts from the fall and spring semesters were read again. The fall semester transcripts were re-coded to categorize data bits more fully and to identify data that did not fit in the original emergent categories. Re-coding allowed for a more thorough analysis than what was completed before the second round of interviews. The transcripts from both semesters at Heartland University were read and coded, creating new categories, noting themes of conflict and tension, generating ideas of the ‘unarticulated,’ and formulating questions of meaning. This coding occurred on the transcripts as well as in a coding book that allowed for the tracking of questions, unresolved ideas, and formulating thoughts. By moving between fall and spring semester interviews, as well as the interviews with students, faculty and administrators, the analysis focused on comparing and contrasting the data to uncover contradictions expressed by the participants. This analysis formed a template to guide the analysis of institutional documents, as well as the data from the other two institutions while still leaving open the

possibility for additional dissimilarities and conflicts between the data sources (e.g., interview transcripts, observational field notes, and institutional documents), both within and between the institutions. Eventually, electronic files were created for each theme area and representative quotes from each institution were pasted into these files, categorized according to sub-themes. The analysis was facilitated through the writing of analytic memos.

At this point in the research, data analysis was somewhat deductive as a critical theory lens was used to answer the specific research questions. Particular attention was paid to references of power and conflict, or underlying assumptions and values, often revealed through the metaphors used, or the stories told, by the participants. Specific language used and repeated by the participants was noted and the issues surrounding the use of these words were examined in order to offer critical interpretations of the language. Although language was a critical symbol for analysis in the study, other “nonverbal forms of symbolic discourse such as rituals and complex forms (e.g., the practice of leadership, which has verbal and behavioral components)” were also used in the analysis (Smirich, 1983, p. 171). For example, honor or integrity pledge signing rituals at two of the three institutions were analyzed for their meaning in the institutions. The way in which positional leaders (e.g., presidents) involved themselves in the resolution of the problem also suggest the way in which the institutions frame the problem. Connections between symbolic discourses and context were made, including current structural inhibitors or enablers of the work (gained from interviews, observations and document analysis). The goal at the end of the analysis was to have a theory that can

explain and criticize the dominant framing and re-frame the problem to mobilize organizational change (Fay, 1984).

### Trustworthiness

Research “trustworthiness” (Glesne, 1999; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998) is a term commonly used by qualitative researchers to speak to the traditional research concerns of reliability and validity. While traditional (positivist) researchers are concerned with replicability, establishing laws or truths, and consistency of findings over time, the concern with critical interpretive research is that the research is useful, applicable and increases understanding. Thus, reliability and validity of the data analysis are “tested” differently in qualitative research.

The trustworthiness of this research is enhanced in five ways: 1) triangulating data collected from interviews (multiple sources), observations, and document analysis; 2) studying three different university types; 3) conducting member checks (sharing the analysis with research participants); 4) gathering data at two different times (fall and spring semester) and maintaining an audit trail; and, 5) articulating the researcher’s assumptions and biases at the beginning of and throughout the study.

Triangulation of the data is achieved in this study by the gathering of information from multiple sources within a single institution. Interviews were conducted with people of divergent backgrounds including Council and non-Council members, as well as faculty, students, and administrators. The common data that emerged from multiple interviews across these role divides are considered trustworthy. Observations of Council meetings were conducted and documents were analyzed (e.g., meeting minutes, policies) to buttress the interview data with other sources. Similarities between these sources of

data were treated as indications of data credibility (i.e., validity) and contradictions between the sources were treated as manifestations of underlying tensions that may provide data for increasing understanding of the problem under study. For example, the reader will see in Chapter Four (footnote thirteen) that the triangulation of data (and member checks) uncovered a contradiction between the interview data and university policies; while the policies state that teaching is important, many faculty, students, and administrators expressed the perception that teaching is not as important as research or the athletic program. Ensuring trustworthiness means not only acknowledging this contradiction but analyzing it, using it as data to better inform the findings of the study (Daniel & Onwuegbuzie, 2002).

The trustworthiness of this study is also enhanced by the collection of data from three higher education institutions. Data shared across the three institutional types is considered dependable (i.e., reliable) data, a function of triangulation. Data not shared among the three case institutions is triangulated using the multiple data sources within a single institution (as described above). For example, the reader will see in Chapter Five the emergence of the prominent theme of protecting the institution by reforming the student agent. This theme is consistently expressed across all research participant roles (faculty, student, administrator, Council member, non-Council member) in all three case institutions.

The trustworthiness of this data is enhanced in a third way by conducting member checks in the spring visit and after the completed analysis. Themes and inconsistencies or contradictions that emerged from the data collected in the fall were checked with

members during the spring visits. For example, the reader will see in Chapter Five the “policy talks” for each of the three case institutions. These “talks” emerged from the fall data and were checked with the participants in the spring research phase. Disagreements with my interpretations were explored, analyzed, and noted when they were commonly felt by more than two or three participants. Members also had the opportunity to check the final analysis. Every research participant received a copy of the draft analysis via email with the opportunity to read and provide feedback. The reader will see several footnotes added to Chapters Four and Five that clearly indicate data that emerged from these member checks, but less distinguishable to the reader are the changes made to case institution descriptions (in Chapter Four) based on the information obtained from member checks.

Collecting data at two different points in time over a period of eight months adds to the trustworthiness of the data because it allows for “negative case analysis” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and, as mentioned above, member checking. The member checks and the opportunity to revisit each case institution, conduct second interviews, and add additional interviews allowed for the continual refining of working theories. Theories were tested with different people at different times in different institutions, all in an attempt to enhance the credibility of the analysis. Maintaining an audit trail of the data aided in this process as well. Coding tables that linked themes to quotes to data source to collection time were maintained. Analytic memos written throughout the process created an audit trail of emerging interpretations and help to ensure the dependability of the data. Again, in order to explore the dominant and alternate framings that might exist in each of the

three case institutions, contradictory data that emerged from the analysis was not automatically excluded. Data inconsistencies or contradictions expressed by multiple participants were attended to for the information they might reveal about the underlying issues that construct the problem but have yet to be addressed (Daniel & Onwuegbuzie, 2002).

Finally, trustworthiness of the data is enhanced by making research assumptions and biases conscious and explicit at the beginning of the study and throughout data collection and analysis. Patton (2002) and Morrow (2005) both talk about the importance of “researcher reflexivity” with Morrow explicitly stating that reflexivity “provides an opportunity for the researcher to understand how his or her own experiences and understandings of the world affect the research process” (p. 4). As I review in the next section, a constructivist approach to research requires that the researcher herself is cognizant of the frames she uses in constructing a sense of the situation. Being cognizant and explicit about the role I play in the analysis of the data acknowledges the natural and reflexive relationship that occurs between myself as researcher and the participants, as well as myself and the data, and enhances the credibility of the findings.

#### Researcher Role

My role in this research is to broaden the academic integrity dialogue to include a critical and systemic perspective that has otherwise been marginalized. In my view, the dominant academic integrity hegemony has privileged the values and assumptions of certain members of the academy and the resulting practices have worked to reinforce that hegemony. In this sense, I took on an advocate researcher role (Glesne, 1999), championing the possibility that there might be other ways to think about the issue of



academic dishonesty and academic integrity. The critical interpretive mode of inquiry reflects this bias; I purposefully sought alternative perceptions and worked to create a space in which the unarticulated could become articulated. Instead of seeking only confirmations of the dominant rhetoric, I invited research participants to explore the conflicts and tensions they had with dominant discourses and practices, as well as the conflicts and tensions within the university, the institution of higher education, and society. This meant that, at times, especially during the conversational portions of my interviews, I dialogued with the participants about alternative ways of looking at the issues. If research participants asked about my thoughts and ideas, I often shared with the intent of stimulating their own thinking and exploration of the topic at hand. In this way, I felt that there were some moments of reciprocity in this research. Although the participants provided me with an invaluable quantity and quality of data, I believe that I also provided them with “food for thought,” so to speak. As an educator by vocation, I firmly believed that my role as researcher necessitated my role as facilitator so that I was not simply collecting data to stimulate my own thinking, but stimulating new ideas and ways of thinking for the participants. To ensure that participants are able to use this research as much as they want, I emailed a draft manuscript so they could review my analysis of their institution, as well as the analyses of the other two institutions. Although I can not say that I partnered with the research participants, I can say that I took on my researcher role as co-constructor, all the while recognizing that I would be spending more time thinking and constructing than would my research participants. This was particularly

influential in the research during the second phase because the ideas and questions I posed to the participants were shaped by what I observed and heard during the first phase.

### Limitations

I attempted as much as possible to reduce the limitations of this study first and foremost by conducting a significant number of interviews on three different campuses with a cross-section of people who have varied interests in, and notions of, the topic. In this way, this study fills a void in the current academic integrity research by going beyond the predominant survey approach to this topic to speaking directly with those faculty, students, and administrators who are working on the problem. Regardless of these strengths, there are some limitations of this study.

First, the time spent at each institution was rather limited. A ten day period does not produce the sort of “thick description” advocated by cultural theorists such as Geertz (1973). The study does, however, develop “thicker” descriptions than what is currently available from survey research, while at the same time, offering a breadth of data necessary to understand the influence of structure and culture on agency.

The second limitation of the study is its inability to speak to the issue of academic dishonesty beyond the non-profit, four year United States higher education institution. There are community colleges, professional schools, for-profit, and Canadian institutions also framing and addressing the problem of academic dishonesty. However, this limitation is inherent in the strength of purposefully delimiting a study to substantially focus research and break new ground. In addition, the delimitation offers some degree of complexity containment. Community colleges, professional schools, and for-profit institutions differ significantly from non-profit four-year institutions and so it would be

compounding the complexity of the study by including institutions across those boundaries. With respect to the exclusion of Canadian institutions, there is not a Canadian university at this time that has experimented with the use of integrity Councils comprised of student, faculty and administrator representatives. Largely, the academic integrity initiatives at Canadian universities are led by one administrator or a group of administrators and therefore are too divergent of approaches to be useful for this study. However, I plan to study this in the future in order to explore the underlying meaning of the differential structures, and the consequences of the differential responses.

A third limitation of this study is its inability to speak to the framing employed by higher education institutions not yet actively responding to the problem of academic dishonesty. It is possible that the integrity approaches taken by these three institutions are similar because they all began the process in the same way (by conducting an academic dishonesty assessment). However, the lack of generalizability is a limitation of all thick description case study qualitative research (Merriam, 1998). I argue though that the use of three cases that differ significantly in type, size, and geographic region reduce this limitation significantly because the finding of similarities among them suggest some potential for generalizability. In addition, I argue here that my attention to the trustworthiness of the data enhances the generalizability of the dominant framing to other four-year non-profit higher education institutions in the United States.

I originally was also concerned that the respondents, by virtue of being on the Council, may have participated out of a sense of responsibility rather than personal interest. This could be a limitation if the feeling of responsibility influences the way in

which respondents respond to interview questions. However, because several people declined to participate and others simply did not respond to the voluntary call for participation, I believe that the impact of this limitation was reduced substantially. This was done in three ways. First, I, rather than the administrator responsible for the Councils, recruited the participants, reducing the possibility for participation coercion. The procedure employed at each of the three case institutions was consistent; I simply received the emails of possible participants from the administrator contact and then emailed the invitation to them directly. Second, I communicated very clearly (in writing as well as in person) that confidentiality would be maintained and interview transcripts would not be shared with anyone. Thus, participants could be assured that any controversial views expressed would not be attributed to them. Third, I assured them that the institutions would also be referred to by pseudonyms and not even the Center for Academic Integrity would know who participated in my study. Fourth, I believe that the number of follow-up interviews demonstrates that the participants experienced a personal value from participating. Several of the interviewees expressed to me that the interview was helpful in their own thinking about the issue and the moves that they could make within the Council or institution to help stimulate organizational change.

The fifth limitation of the study was my pre-existing biases, assumptions, life experiences and lenses through which I viewed the data. In the critical interpretive paradigm, the researcher is acknowledged as a human being who approaches any data or experiences with subjectivity and intellectual filters. I am conscious of several “Tricia factors” that affected my interpretation and critical analysis of the data. First, in the pilot

study conducted in March-April, 2003, I uncovered competing interests and issues of power and domination amongst four student Council members. This analysis, along with my first-hand experiences with the embedded power relations and political behavior in universities, led me to adopt the critical interpretive framework for my dissertation study. So, the nature of the study, how it was designed, is focused on uncovering conflicting notions and competing interests, rather than being focused on uncovering best practices or uncontested leadership. Second, I am biased toward seeing the problem of academic dishonesty as a complex problem not easily resolved through the use of technical solutions. Thus, this study is prefaced on the idea that there are many competing forces, beyond student agency, that are contributing to the problem of academic dishonesty, and I am biased toward uncovering and understanding these issues. Rather than limiting the value of this study, however, these lenses act as delimiters of the study to provide a focused, novel approach to the research problem.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE THREE CASE INSTITUTIONS

In this study, I critique the way in which the problem of academic dishonesty is predominantly framed and suggest a reconsideration of the problem to facilitate organizational change. I do this reframing in the context of three case institutions that have all, at least on the surface, approached the problem of academic dishonesty in a similar fashion. Each institution has assessed student and faculty perceptions of the prevalence of various academic behaviors as well as their attitudes toward those behaviors. Each school has also identified an academic dishonesty problem and implemented a policy in response. The implementation of a policy and Council (i.e., structures) is advocated and supported by a large portion of the research on academic dishonesty. The ultimate goal of these structures (which I collectively define as an integrity policy approach) is to create a culture or climate<sup>13</sup> of integrity. The common components of the integrity policy approach to culture creation are: clear and consistent communication about expectations and standards; fair adjudication procedures; faculty and student buy-in to the policy; the highlighting of the importance of academic integrity through rituals and ceremonies; and, community participation in the implementation and maintenance of the policy.

#### Chapter Overview

In this chapter, I describe the three case institutions included in this study. The three institutions are: Elite University, the medium-sized private elite research institution

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<sup>13</sup> Neither the literature nor the institutions themselves are consistent in their use of culture or climate. In general, it seems that the use of either term refers to an institutional ethos in which there are shared norms around expected and accepted academic behaviors and a shared value of integrity that would ultimately make unauthorized academic conduct unacceptable within the student body.

in the eastern United States; Lasallian College, the private small Catholic liberal arts college in the western United States; and, Heartland University, the large public land-grant institution in the mid United States. For each institution, I provide a brief introduction including organizational culture, priorities, and external forces. I then describe the creation of the integrity structures (the policy and Council) as well as the defining characteristics of the structures and the interpretations of surveyed students. This chapter, then, in highlighting the structural and cultural differences between the institutions, establishes the context for the study.

#### Elite University

Elite University, just over 80 years old, is a research-extensive private university with over 12,500 students (6,300 undergraduates; 6,200 graduate/professional students). The university started as a normal (i.e., teacher's) college in the early nineteenth century in eastern United States. The first major transformation of the normal college occurred during the German university era when several colleges in the United States began to emphasize research and academic freedom. The second major transformation occurred in the early twentieth century when a local business man provided a large endowment enabling the college to become a complex university. Now in the twenty-first century, there are nine colleges or schools within the university: arts and sciences, divinity, business, law, graduate, medicine and health, environment, nursing, and engineering. Undergraduates can enroll in either the college of arts and sciences or the school of engineering. By 2005, students of color represent almost forty percent of the undergraduate population while women represent just over fifty percent.

The urban setting of the university is somewhat masked by the massive 8000+ acreage in which it is situated. Upon entering the front of the main campus, I am

immediately struck by the gothic architecture and the formidable presence of the buildings. The architecture, along with the constant cycling of traffic and the density of the crowds, speaks to me of vibrancy, ambitiousness, and intensity. This feeling is only magnified by the extensive construction and renovation occurring on the campus. Sounds of jack hammers, drills, hammering, and construction calls fill the air, almost drowning out the sound of the bells that are ringing from the tower of the large and prominent chapel located in the center of main campus. The university seems both grounded in tradition and yet on the move. The chapel bells reflect the history of the institution, but the extensive building construction and the high national ranking of the university communicate that EU is well beyond its beginnings as a normal college.

Nearing the end of its current strategic plan to “steepen the trajectory of improvement,” EU seeks to increase its reputation as an elite university.<sup>14</sup> Specifically, EU hopes to become “as good... as any of the leading private research universities in the country, with comparable breadth and depth, and deserved reputation for excellence in teaching, research and wide-ranging contributions to society.”<sup>15</sup> Despite this desire to move up in the rankings as a research university, a portion of the publicly declared mission of the university retains an emphasis on providing a liberal education for undergraduates, concentrating on “intellectual growth” and the development of adults “committed to high ethical standards and full participation as leaders in their

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<sup>14</sup> According to Keohane (2001), elite universities are ones that can “choose their students carefully from a much larger pool of applicants and offer an expensive education by the most distinguished faculty members they can attract. Because their graduates, even if not born to wealth and privilege, are disproportionately represented in privileged and powerful positions in society, these institutions are also associated with the concept of the elite in a socioeconomic sense” (p. 182).

<sup>15</sup> Quotes used throughout this chapter are taken from interviews and documents. When the citation is not noted, the quote can be assumed to be from a university publication. Proper citation rules in these cases were not followed because referring specifically to the documents could threaten the confidentiality of the case institutions.



communities.” This focus on undergraduate education is complemented with a commitment to graduate education and research in order to “promote an intellectual environment built on a commitment to free and open inquiry” that will enable the university to advance “the frontiers of knowledge” and contribute to the “international community of scholarship.” As I speak to the participants, observe the surroundings, and read cultural artifacts (such as the website and other public relations materials), I experience a sense of being among a serious group of students, faculty and administrators. Whether academically or professionally serious, they seem to share an intense drive to make their lives better. Accordingly, the university tends to attract pre-professional students, those who are obtaining an undergraduate degree in order to pursue further education or the credentials necessary for their desired career, most commonly in business, medicine, or law.

### *Organizational Culture*

EU is characterized as high-stakes, pre-professional, secretly competitive, and strongly oriented to a work hard-play hard environment. Because it is a “very competitive college with a lot of very good students coming to it” (EU graduate Council member), a high-stakes environment is created in which the students feel pressure to succeed and continue to achieve the successes that earned their EU admission. This notion of competition and high-stakes seems to be particularly prevalent because EU students believe that social mobility is not simply advanced by an undergraduate degree, but an undergraduate degree from an elite institution. As explained by a faculty non-Council member, the “elite-ness” of the institution seems to exacerbate the high stakes feel common in higher education today:

There's this kind of narcissism of the top, of the U.S. News & World Report, top ten. And so it seems like everything hangs on, you know, little things. And so there is that sense of... 'this B+ is going to keep me from going to,' you know? So if the stakes are so enormously high for every third of the grade. The stakes are just too high.

The high stakes nature of the academy is also illustrated by a faculty interviewee who comments on the effect rankings have on the institutional atmosphere:

Students see themselves entering a very competitive world of business and the corporate culture, and even academics feel this competition in a way that is...different from in the past. Even in the time I've been involved, I sense a change in the way many academics approach competition amongst themselves and between universities. There's so much emphasis on rankings, you know, all of this, that it can't help but...it can't help but permeate the atmosphere for the students.

It is expressed to me, however, that the competitive environment is much different at EU than at its "peer" universities. The work hard-play hard value embedded in the student culture is lauded as that which separates them from students at rival institutions. One undergraduate Council member expresses it in this way:

You've got a lot of work hard, play hard, we're going to be...we're going to be known for our basketball, and our parties, and we just happen to do well as well because we're EU students and we're smarter than you and better than you, and our basketball players can jump higher than you.

So there is also a great sense of pride in being an EU student, which seems largely connected to this balance EU students strive to attain between strong academics and strong athletics. The EU pride is exuberantly proclaimed by this undergraduate non-Council member:

People love EU. People love being here. They're proud of their school. They're proud of the fact that, in addition to our....national athletic programs that we also are a very strong school academically and have a world class reputation in these other areas.

The pride associated with the “name brand” of EU is evident throughout the stories told by the students interviewed. One student put it this way:

A lot goes with the name. We’re one of the top colleges in the United States and whatever you pursue in that college is going to be viewed as a, you know, your degree is going to be worthwhile and not just that. Colleges are top colleges for a reason. They have the best resources. The best teachers. Smaller class sizes. And EU definitely has that. I’m amazed every time I walk on campus.

The climate of this institution is definitely, then, marked by a confidence and assuredness there is no better degree than the EU degree. Yet another student made this comment:

You’re at EU University. You are the best of the best and it’s a status symbol. You graduate with a EU University degree and you are saying, ‘I graduated from EU University degree. Hear me roar.’ And I’m going to be really happy when I graduate from Elite University with that degree and people take notice. Its like receiving any high honor.

The pride, competition, high-stakes, and pre-professional environment of the campus is supported by an institutional tradition, which is to bring “smart and ambitious people to campus...and then let them do what they want” (EU faculty Council member). This also, however, produces a sense of segregation and decentralization and, thus, a lack of community feeling. I repeatedly heard stories of “voluntary” segregation on campus by racial, ethnic, and sexual orientation groups, as well as the valuing of individualism over community. So, as one student describes it:

In terms of the campus having an over reaching community sentiment, I don’t really feel like there is one. And it probably contributes to this me-first kind of environment.

### *Organizational Priorities*

The foremost priority of the organization may be to “move EU to the next level” (EU faculty Council member). This priority is thought to have originated in the late eighties or early nineties when some influential people on campus started “criticizing the ‘work hard, play hard’ approach to doing things...and [the] lack of intellectual

engagement” among the student body (EU faculty Council member). This faculty member elaborated by saying:

And I think that spurred the administration to work to change the undergraduate student population. I think the research university ambitions in terms of changing the nature of faculty and changing the ranking of the university in intellectual stuff had already been under way, during the 80s, and so that kind of set the stage for the emphasis in the student population too I think.

As a result, the current organizational priority is to admit a different population of students into the undergraduate degree. Specifically, EU wants to reform the student population from one that is pre-professional and oriented toward the ‘work hard, play hard’ culture to one that is intellectual and oriented toward a more scholarly, academic environment. And, apparently, this shift is already being felt by members of the institution. One faculty member had this to say:

We have a more interesting group of students, more who are academically oriented. Or that’s my perception from compared to when I first came here. So I think the population is kind of shifting a bit. I think there’s a concerted effort by admissions to go towards more academically oriented students. The university is ambitious.

The ambition of the university is described as directed toward enhancing the university’s reputation as one comparable to institutions in the Ivy League. Although some of my interviewees expressed distress at the thought of becoming “Ivy League” (mostly because of perceived athletic weaknesses), it became clear that the administration has this goal in mind. The focus on becoming “ivy league” is probably made most evident in the consistent hiring of new faculty and administrators who hail from Ivy League institutions. For example, the newly hired president not only attended Ivy Leagues as a student but taught and administered at one for several decades. Although some students are distraught at the possibility that EU might become just another Ivy

League, other students, as implied in the following quote, share with administration the idea that becoming Ivy League-esque would be progression:

We are continuing to progress as a university and as a community of scholars and becoming better and brighter and attracting better and brighter students and challenging them and asking them to challenge themselves... harder. (EU undergraduate Council member)

Thus, in general, EU is prioritizing a transformation of the organizational culture by ridding the school of the work-hard play-hard and professional student, and increasing the presence of the intellectual student. This prioritizing of an intellectual environment is explained by an undergraduate Council member:

EU is trying to achieve the broad liberal arts education, that you know, focuses on sort of the traditional liberal arts, so EU has an incentive to try to breed that intellectualism. Other places might not, but its definitely something that's active at EU.

This organizational transformation includes structural changes beyond the implementation of the integrity policy to the moving of troublesome groups off campus (including fraternities), changing admissions policies, and changing residence structures.

An example of the change in residence is described by one faculty member in this quote:

There's a whole new....they actually hired a whole new cadre of professional residence advisors. They've also put faculty in residence, in the dorms. And they've created a kind of a quad system where, and there's resources for intellectual activities. You know, inviting faculty in to discuss their work and stuff like that. Um...all of which I think is directed....trying, I think, to generate more, more of that kind of co-curricular learning experience.

Extending learning beyond the classroom is one way in which EU is attempting to trump the pre-professional culture with an intellectual culture. Most clearly the above quote demonstrates that the implementation of an integrity policy is only one structural change among many directed at an overall student body transformation. This transformation may

already be occurring because as one undergraduate Council member observes, EU is now “a more high pressure, intense place than [before]” (EU undergraduate Council member).

### *External Forces*

The national ranking system and competition for prestige within the higher education system seem to be perceived as directly influencing the culture and priorities of EU. Specifically, it is suspected that it is the pressure of rankings and all that is associated with that (i.e., money, better students, better faculty) that is driving the cultural transformation described in the previous section. As one EU faculty Council member explains, this drive to “climb into the next tier” seems to put “less emphasis on individuals that constitute the university and a lot more on what is EU’s name.” The desire to reduce the pre-professional, party nature of the institution, and increase its intellectualism or contribution to the scholarly and research community is directly associated with enhancing the “name” of EU.

### *The Creation of the Integrity Policy*

The notion of honor and integrity in academic work has a long but controversial history at EU. An honor system was put into effect when the university was established, but after a period of time the system lost its potency and relevancy for the student body. For the subsequent thirty-five years, there was no mention of honor in the men’s undergraduate catalogues. A group of students, faculty and administrators revived the code in the middle of the century but it was repealed by the undergraduate faculty council just two years later. In the early 1980s, an honor commitment and honor council were initiated at the urging of the president. The honor council was created, according to a faculty non-Council member, in order to return the issue of honor to the institutional conversation. He went on to say “we all know that every time there’s a serious

conversation about academic honor on campus, cheating goes down. When there isn't, it goes up." The honor commitment then underwent another change in the early 1990s when it was transformed into a more formal honor system. This system included an honor code, a fundamental standard, and a judicial code. The honor code asked students to not lie, cheat or steal and to oppose the actions of others that do. The fundamental standard was added in 1996 to explicitly state the underlying values of community, honesty, integrity and respect for others.

In the 1999/2000 academic year, EU initiated a campus-wide assessment of academic dishonesty. In order to facilitate this process, the Provost's office established a committee co-chaired by a student and administrator and comprised of ten other faculty, student and administrator members. This committee surveyed students, faculty, and administrators, and evaluated the existing academic integrity policies and procedures. The committee assessed the honor system for its effectiveness in "promoting academic integrity as well as the way in which the details of that system are communicated in publications." After a year of collecting data, the committee found that despite the existence of an honor code, EU "does not yet have a robust culture of academic integrity." According to a written document released by the committee:

The code is not a highly visible feature of campus life for students, faculty, or administrators. It is little discussed in EU classrooms and does not shape campus behavior in prominent ways.

An undergraduate Council member expands on the finding that the code had little impact on student behavior:

People didn't take [the honor code] very seriously, that it really was just a paper on the wall. So one of the things we really tried to work on was sort of thinking about how you create a culture in which students take the code seriously. It wasn't

lived. It wasn't, it wasn't.....a part of the culture as I knew or had heard was the case at [other institutions].

As a result of this finding, the academic dishonesty assessment committee determined that the process of promoting academic integrity required a renewal of energy and commitment because, in their words, "academic integrity is at the heart of the university's core enterprise of teaching, learning, and scholarship." Thus the committee recommended that a new body, the Council for Integrity in Academics (CIA), be created to "act as kind of an umbrella organization to scrutinize policies, to work with other groups on campus, and to enact new practices" (EU administrator Council member). As a result, the CIA began its first year of operation in the 2001/2002 academic year. And in that first year, according to an administrator Council member:

All we did, "all we did," was get the lay of the land and scrutinize the EU Honor Code and talk about policies and come to some kind of consensus ourselves about what we would recommend as the next steps.

In April 2002, as a result of much "debate, discuss, debate, discuss," the new Council finally submitted a proposal to the undergraduate faculty council recommending a revision to the Honor System. The Council highlighted the fundamental standard by changing the name of the integrity policy to the Student Body Standard. They hoped to emphasize that EU is "a community committed to certain principles---honesty, trustworthiness, fairness and respect for others." The new policy also added a pledge for the student to affirm "his or her commitment to uphold the values of the Elite University community and to not lie, cheat or steal in one's academic endeavors [and] not to accept the actions of those who do." Beyond the highlighting of community, the proposal made some policy and procedural recommendations including an obligation to report, an elimination of a requirement for exam proctoring, a one-time faculty/student adjudication



process, a wider range of sanctions (rather than the standard two-semester suspension), a reconsideration of excuse protocols, and an added focus on graduate and professional school issues. The proposal in its entirety was approved by the undergraduate faculty council in May, 2002. Subsequently, the Student Body Standard was implemented in the fall of 2003 for the undergraduate student body. In the spring of 2003, after lobbying by the Council, the standard was adopted by the graduate and professional schools as a preamble or part of the various codes. Still, at the time of my research there was an acknowledgement that the process of creating an integrity culture would be slow and long-term. One administrator Council member said it in this way:

It's a very slow process and it's going to take a while. But I think that's where we're moving to. To get awareness heightened and then increased buy-in from the students to a culture of integrity and then ultimately I guess, have them feel like there's a culture here where they wouldn't cheat because it would be such a violation of their own integrity and the principles established by the community. And then they would feel compelled to report others' behavior should that happen.

#### *The Nature of the Integrity Policy*

The Student Body Standard stands on its own from other undergraduate policies, occupying the first four pages of the undergraduate student bulletin as a sort of preamble to the student code of conduct. The Student Body Standard includes a pledge and an obligation to report but is fundamentally a statement of principles rather than a policy or set of procedures. In particular, the Student Body Standard “expresses a standard for behavior---a set of expectations of students who claim membership in EU’s learning community.” Following the explanation of the standard are the policies, rules and regulations of the university that “define the conduct for which students can be held accountable.”

The policies on academic dishonesty outlined in the undergraduate handbook detail the definitions of lying, cheating (which includes plagiarism) and stealing. All violations of the Student Body Standard are expected to be reported to the Dean of Students Office and student violators may or may not have to appear before a Board of Judicial Affairs that hears all cases of student conduct violations (not just Student Body Standard violations). The use of one hearing panel for all student conduct cases is quite different than the structures found at LC and HU, both of which have distinct academic integrity hearing panels. EU is also unique in that it has three separate bodies involved in some way with the Student Body Standard: the Council for Integrity in Academics (CIA), the Honor Council (HC), and the Board of Judicial Affairs (BJA). One interviewee described the roles of the three bodies in this way:

The CIA acts as a sounding board, as well as creator in incorporating...the various bodies on EU's campus...in determining the most effective way to address the issue of academic integrity. [The] honor council's the educating body. [And the] BJA [is] the punitive bunch. (EU undergraduate Council member)

More specifically, the CIA is the "umbrella organization" that consists of BJA, Honor Council, undergraduate student government, faculty, graduate student, and administrative representatives. As the umbrella organization, the CIA is responsible for developing and revising policies and procedures, as well as monitoring the progress of the Student Body Standard and the culture creation process. The BJA simply hears and adjudicates conduct cases. And, finally, the Honor Council is an undergraduate student body that, according to one member:

Is more of a student club I think. We're stewards of the Student Body Standard and what that means, according to EU is that we throw honor week, promote honor throughout the school, we hand out t-shirts and we hand out cow stress balls. We do get to have our opinions heard, they're not...we don't get to draft

legislation. We get to council the people who do draft legislation. (EU undergraduate Council member)

It appears, albeit tentatively, that the efforts of the Honor Council to promote the policy and increase awareness may be effective. Of the one hundred students randomly surveyed at EU during my spring research visit, 91% are aware of the Honor Council and 73% said they are “fully aware” of the Student Body Standard. However, it is important to note that only 25% of those students said that they are “very familiar” with the content of the standard and only 18% indicate that the standard substantially impacts their academic conduct. This lack of familiarity or impact of the policy on student behavior may be related to a perceived lack of relevancy of the standard to the student body; only 21% of the students surveyed think that cheating and plagiarism occur all the time on campus and only 20% think that cheating and plagiarism are a serious problem on campus. Yet, there seems to be some ambiguity around the issue as 55% of the same students expressed that they are “very concerned” that their peers are cheating or plagiarizing.

### *Summary*

The situation at Elite University can be best summarized with the words intensity and competition, describing both the institution itself as well as its members. Although already a highly ranked university, there is a clear desire for the university to become even more prominent and prestigious. In this sense, the Student Body Standard is seen as a necessary element to ensuring the university’s ability to compete with peer institutions. The main cultural tension is that between professionalism and intellectualism. That is, there is a conflict between valuing the degree for the privileges it affords versus valuing the degree for the opportunity to engage in an intellectual conversation. In essence, the

main thrust at EU is to change the student body from one that embraces the work hard-play hard tradition to one that works hard and barely plays. My sense of the situation is that EU students perceive the work hard-play hard tradition as distinguishing them from their Ivy League peers, a value they strive to uphold. This, then, creates a tension between the institution and the student body over the preferred culture of EU.

### Lasallian College

Lasallian College (LC), over 100 years old, is liberal arts, private Catholic college with 4800 students. The location of the institution in the western continental United States is neither urban nor rural but, I suggest, suburban. The campus, surrounded by three bedroom communities within a commuting distance to several major cities, provides the opportunity for LC members to have a culturally rich and active lifestyle. The landscaping of both the college and the surrounding communities reflects this richness in their meticulous beauty.

The college, originally formed as a men's college, has more than tripled in size since opening its doors to women in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Undergraduate students at LC can choose a program in the liberal arts, business, or science schools. Traditional undergraduates make up over fifty percent of the total student population, while the remaining population consists of graduate or extended education students. Approximately sixty-five percent of the undergraduates are female. Sixty-five percent of the students are also locals from the neighboring communities. Half of all the students are Caucasian with Hispanic, Asian, Black, and International students rounding out the population. A majority of the faculty teaching these students received their terminal degrees from well-known, even Ivy-League, research universities.

The small size of the student population, the compactness of the campus, and the significant acreage surrounding the campus all come together to present the illusion that LC could be a private K-12 boarding school for affluent families in the area. The buildings are white and beautifully understated, and the grounds are immaculate with a church prominently located in the center of a horseshoe shape drive that cradles the front entrance. I get a feeling of comfort, safety and tranquility as I walk onto the campus.

Walking on to campus, I am first greeted by a large statue of John Baptist De La Salle. It is not long before I am given the story of De La Salle and the meaning his legacy holds in the organizational culture. As the story goes, De La Salle, a “renegade” from the Catholic Church in seventeenth century France, initiated schools for the poor because he believed that every human being, not just those who could afford it, should receive an education. Historically this education has been provided by Lasallian Brothers rather than Catholic priests. More recently, however, lay persons have increasingly become the predominant faculty and administrators in Lasallian College, although the president of the college continues to be a Brother.

In the spirit of what has become known as a Lasallian education, De La Salle focused on the pragmatic skills needed by the lower caste and, when dealing with misbehavior, advocated the use of correction rather than punishment. In the words of the Vice-Provost of Lasallian College:

[De La Salle] taught French rather than Latin because French was going to be the practical language for them to use, who taught pragmatic skills for them to be out in the major industries of the time, who in the areas of correction...was saying, ‘when you have to correct a student, not punish them, correct them, you should first consider what you might have done in your own behavior that caused that behavior in your students.’

This vision of John Baptist De La Salle guides the college to maintain small class sizes and foster close mentoring relationships between faculty and students. Fellowship and friendship among all community members (e.g., teacher-student; student-student; teacher-teacher) are fundamental principles of a Lasallian educational community shaped by a spirit of faith and the belief that student potential must be nurtured. A Lasallian education attempts to establish a reciprocal rather than hierarchical relationship between the faculty and the students. In this sense, it is acceptable not only for faculty to have expectations of students, but for students to have expectations of faculty, and that each have faith that the other is meeting expectations to the best of his/her ability. Faith, expectations, and reciprocal relationships are considered essential to the ability to serve others, justice, and the society at large, a central tenet of the social justice mission common in Catholic institutions such as LC. The motto, “enter to learn, leave to serve,” exemplifies this tenet and is seen throughout the campus at the doorway of many faculty and administrative offices.

The social justice and service missions are not necessarily the dominating missions of Lasallian College. Rather, they seem to supplement a traditional focus in a liberal arts education. Lasallian College is one of the few higher education institutions in the United States that retains a common core requirement for all undergraduates. Each undergraduate is required to take four seminar courses in which they read the books perceived to be key influencers of western thought and civilization. This “great books” program is part of LC’s goal to achieve excellence, innovation, and responsiveness within a Lasallian, liberal arts tradition. According to LC documents, this tradition is based on an assumption that an institution of higher education should offer “a unique,

personalized, student-centered learning environment” in order to create “lively dialogue and deep relationships” within a “community of learners.” The core principles then of a community of learners within a Lasallian institution are: faith in the presence of God, respect for all persons, inclusive community, quality education, and concern for the poor and social justice. Again, according to the Vice-Provost:

The Lasallian focus is [on asking the students] ‘what are your passions? What are your gifts, given through grace? How do I help you maximize your potential?’ So when we say ‘student centered’ it has this real value added that’s at the core of the tradition.

The above quote demonstrates that a goal of LC is to integrate faith and personal development in undergraduate education. Although pragmatically oriented, this quote helps the reader understand that LC is concerned less with career preparation and more with vocation, i.e., the students’ calling. I sense from administrators, students and faculty that this is always the ideal goal, if not always the realized goal.

### *Organizational Culture*

The Lasallian culture as well as the small size of the campus strongly influences a student-centered community culture. Student participants repeatedly told me that they feel supported and encouraged within the institution because they sense that teaching, rather than research, does come first for the majority of the faculty. This value of the student-centered community is affirmed by a faculty Council member:

The faculty here are really very student centered. And so I think their sense of community is more so, them and the students. So the students are a big part of my community. Rather than say, other faculty members and then the students which is what you see more in research settings. So its definitely a teaching school and the students are a big part of what we think of when we think of community.

This feeling of community is not shared equally by all. Some feel that the sense of community is not as strong as would be expected given the small size of the institution.

Students attribute this lack of community feeling to the large percentage of commuting students, local students who leave campus at night and on the weekends to go back to their home communities. Other students attribute the lack of community to the lack of pride students feel for the institution. Because LC tends to be the default rather than choice institution for many of the students, there is a paucity of a shared sense of identity and pride as LC students.

Yet, one interesting legend of community among the student body continues to be told. Apparently, the on-campus residence culture is known for what I call its “student learning cooperative.” In this “cooperative,” sophomores freely share their “great books” papers with freshmen. Obviously considered a major violation of the integrity policy, many of the students see this sharing as part of the community feeling at LC because it represents “fellowship and friendship” among the student body. Friends share their papers as a helpful resource to freshmen who are perceived to be overwhelmed with all the demands of college life. Regardless of how it is defined or manifested, community is definitely a core value of the Lasallian culture as students, administrators, and faculty continually talk and act in ways to enact the value on campus.

The cost of an LC education and the affluence of the local area require the administration to balance the Lasallian philosophy with the reality that LC students are predominantly not the disadvantaged and poor that De La Salle sought to educate. Quite the contrary, the student population largely comes from privileged backgrounds in which college attendance is expected, regardless of grades. Thus, there is the perception that students attend LC more because of familial expectations rather than from an inherent personal desire to be further educated. It is in this sense, then, that the Lasallian mission



to educate the less fortunate is applied to an economically privileged population; regardless of their level of “fortune” in academic ability or motivation, these students are afforded a pragmatic and nurturing education at Lasallian College.

The nurturing aspect of LC is a critical characteristic of the Lasallian culture. Faculty are actually expected to act in a “pastoral” way with the students, as counselors and mentors for personal and faith development, not just as teachers of information. Students who are traditionally at risk for not succeeding academically are expected to succeed in this pastoral Lasallian environment. This nature of this pastoral culture is explained by one of the Council’s administrative members:

They don’t want anyone to fail or flunk or not succeed. But I wouldn’t say that’s just handed to you. I mean, if you’re in trouble, you still have to ask for help. But its very loving and very supportive. Nurturing.

This sense of a loving, supportive and nurturing community is very strong on campus and extends from the classroom into daily life, giving an impression that in parentis locus is alive and well at LC. This tradition of in parentis locus dates back to the establishment of Lasallian College when it was a boy’s boarding school with live-in Brothers as teachers and caretakers. The continued presence of Brothers at LC keeps alive this notion of a caretaking community primarily based on helping rather than challenging the students. One administrator Council member described that the image of the Brothers is so powerful to the culture of LC that if the Brothers are involved, it feels like LC and if they are not involved, it does not feel like LC. In other words, the Brothers embody the culture of Lasallian College. The following comment from this same administrator illustrates the symbolism of the Brothers:

[The brothers are] a symbol of a particular kind of attitude toward students and toward education. This individualized attention. This 'we're here to help you get an education.'

Again, what the above quote illuminates is the absence of competition and struggle within a Lasallian education, the idea that anybody can achieve a higher education degree if they try and reach out for the available help. It is this sense of extending learning opportunities to those who might not otherwise engage that characterizes the traditional Lasallian philosophy in the contemporary age.

Despite the empowering and nurturing characteristics of Lasallian College, there is a tremendous amount of strife and uncertainty being experienced by organizational members. In fact, before I even step foot onto campus in the fall semester, my contact informs me that the President of the college is resigning under great controversy over some "unrealized funds." In addition, the campus newspaper is filled with stories about additional administrative turnover, turnover viewed as secretive and suspicious by the student body. Between the fall and spring semester visit, the former president resigned and a new president had been hired.

What emerged from the data is an indication of a split on campus between those who support the former president and those who favor his resignation. This split seems to represent a rift between those who prefer the traditional ways of the college and those who are looking to embrace the legacy of De La Salle in light of contemporary society. According to some, embracing the legacy maintains the aspects of De La Salle's philosophy but within a professional, rather than familial, environment. The greatest concern with the latter group is that the traditional ways of the college coddles students rather than challenges them, a characteristic felt to be contributing to the academic

dishonesty problem and lowering the academic standards that should be expected of undergraduates. Some faculty, such as the following non-Council member, view the shift from tradition to legacy less positively:

The institution is transforming itself from one that works on personal relationship to one which works as a bureaucracy. Its rationalizing its procedures. And that's consistent with working from the top down. The people who are seated in that kind of institutional power (e.g., Provost or Assistant Vice-Provost) are enthusiastically in favor of a uniform practice. This is bureaucracy's drive to rationalize its behavior. This is a kind of an in-built drive in institutions to achieve a kind of efficiency and that efficiency in the case of dishonesty, would be catching all the cases and treating them all similarly. Which is also something like justice; equal cases being treated the same way.

In the above quote, the faculty member is referring specifically to the implementation of the integrity policy as a bureaucracy that he considers contradictory to the personal, pastoral, culture of LC. The pastoral culture of LC operates on the assumption that faculty are less teachers and more mentors, even to the extent that they are expected to provide their home numbers to ease access between the student and faculty member. The integrity policy, on the other hand, is perceived to objectify and institutionalize part of this faculty role. The integrity policy, however, is just one example given by this faculty member of the many ways in which he sees the administration trying to change the culture of the institution from a collegial, familial environment to a techno-rational one. This perspective is shared by a few other faculty members, although those faculty and administrators involved with the integrity Council do not see the connection among policy making, bureaucracy and the losing of the Lasallian legacy. These conflicting perceptions of the organization create a divided and fragmented culture caught in tension between tradition and future.

### *Organizational Priorities*

Several high level administrators (e.g., former President, Vice-Provost, and a Dean) indicate that organizational change is a central priority for LC. Although these participants express an organizational intent to hold on to legacy values (e.g., teacher as counselor, forgiveness, trust, correction, and services), they wish to do so within the context of contemporary society and the agency of the economically privileged and millennial student. One of the administration's key priorities seems to be to advance Lasallian College in the national rankings and improve the reputation of the college as a scholarly place. As one administrator Council member stresses:

We want to produce that level of commitment to the enterprise that will make us a stand-out, avant-garde, liberal-arts college on the west coast that is where the student and faculty and alums feel this sense of collective pride in the awe that we have created for ourselves and everybody who comes through here.

In this sense, there is a significant portion of the college constituency that hopes to balance the tradition of "helping" with a sense of fairness, equity, and community participation in the organization. This is a critical point in understanding the reason why Lasallian College adopted the integrity policy approach in response to the self-identified academic dishonesty problem. Many administrators and faculty feel that the traditional method of problem resolution through pastoral counseling undermines the integrity of the institution as a scholarly place. If we revisit the concern expressed by some faculty members that structures such as the integrity policy are "bureaucratizing" the college, we can see that this concern speaks to a move away from one-on-one problem resolution to community resolution through established uniform processes and procedures. So, essentially, there is a tension between the institution of old and the institution envisioned for the future. In the words of one administrator Council member, the tension exists

somewhere “between that image of being helpers and that need to be more consistent with sending out the message of where the line is.”

The transformation of the institution, then, requires a merging of the Lasallian legacy with the complexity of a contemporary heterogeneous society in which the “line” is less clear and students are in more need of definitive boundaries. Students, faculty and administrators, express a felt tension between a helping environment and one that is fair and equitable in applying the “line.” This tension is rooted in an underlying educational goal of the college to help students develop into more independent human beings. The difficult challenge for LC is to determine how they can help and nurture the student while encouraging independent development. An administrator Council member expresses the tension in this way:

Our image of the college is ‘we’ll take care of your son or daughter’ but...taking care of them has a certain tension, because the protectiveness of that, goes against the other goals...educational goals of the college which is to make them independent, think for themselves, be responsible for themselves, challenge them, have them grow and so forth.

In terms of priorities, then, a significant piece of the institutional transformation is to shift the institutional culture from one that focuses on helping or enabling the students, to one that is focused on encouraging, supporting and challenging the students. A nuanced difference to be sure, but one strongly felt by many of the research participants.

Another significant focus of the institutional transformation is a re-centering of the academic life. Many of the students, faculty and administrators feel that the culture at Lasallian College has somehow become centered on the social life, receding academics into the background of the undergraduate experience. At the time of my visit in the fall semester, several changes along this line had already been made. Symbolically, freshmen

orientation has been altered to emphasize the academic challenges of an undergraduate education at LC. Structurally, the reporting lines of the vice-provost for academic and student affairs have become one, both reporting to the Academic Vice-President or Provost. This structural change is also, of course, a symbolic move to communicate to organizational members that the social life serves the academic life, not vice versa. An administrator non-Council member expresses the re-centering of academic life in this way:

[We are taking the] larger L.C. traditions and values and what we are building and continuing to improve, to use [accreditation] language, as an institution that's focused on teaching and learning.

Thus, LC values such as nurturing and helping become in service to the mission of teaching and learning, rather than the forefront of the organizational culture. Overall, then, the organizational and financial troubles being experienced by LC seem to be the stimulus needed to significantly rethink and re-envision the future of the college and ensure its forward momentum and sustainability in a competitive American higher education system.

### *External Forces*

Speaking to the organizational members creates this sense of protection or cocoon-like essence because very few comment on the pressures experienced from the outside world. Of course, as a private college, they are not as intimately affected by such forces as government cut-backs in higher education funding. However, I also suspect that as a suburban non-elite institution, they live much further under the radar screen than either the public or private elite institutions in my study. Of course, very few organizations have impenetrable boundaries and eventually three forces emerged as affecting Lasallian College: accreditation, competition, and parents.

Accreditation requirements are perceived by LC administrators as powerful instigators of their organizational transformation. The Vice-Provost in particular shared their latest accreditation self-studies to refer proudly to that which she feels LC is doing right and to how their weaknesses are being addressed. This attunement to accreditation is, of course, tied to the organizational priority to “move forward” and become an “avant garde” institution. But, there is a keen sense that the college wants to be accountable and responsive to the current society. I suspect that this is, again, tied to their Catholic social justice roots and the Lasallian tradition. The importance of connecting the institution to the broader society is speculated on by the Vice-Provost:

I think you constantly have to be thinking about... ‘what is society today? And ‘what’s happening in higher education?’ And if you’re not, and you’re just insular, you’re going to fail. You know, because society keeps changing, learning changes, the way we exchange information changes, and so you have to always be able to make a decision about ‘we’re going to take on this change or we’re not,’ but we know why we’re not. (LC administrator non-Council member)

We can see from the above quote that this desire to be in tune with society is also a requirement to remain competitive within the contemporary higher education system. In the United States, to be competitive means to be positioned highly in national rankings and to be perceived as “prestigious” or, as one participant terms it, a “Cadillac” institution. Thus, many of the structural changes (including the integrity policy) being implemented at LC are intended to more effectively communicate the prestigious vision of the institution and to enhance its reputation as a “top-notch institution” whose students are capable of doing their own work in their own words.

The final external force originates from the parents. In a fall edition of the campus newspaper, there is a story about a parent suing the college for several million dollars because his child was removed from residence after several under-age drinking

violations. Although the research participants to whom I spoke believe this parent to be out of line, they also are not surprised at the lawsuit given the promise LC makes to support and nurture the students. The parent suing the college believes that although his child is “guilty of the violations” he is not responsible for his behavior. In other words, the parent is claiming the college as the responsible party. While this parental involvement is not necessarily welcomed by LC, it seems to be consistent with the perceived influence parents have on institutional agency. Again, many of the participants acknowledge that the tradition and promises of the college encourage a high level of parental involvement and intensive college aide. As a private Catholic college, I suspect that this external parental influence will continue to be forceful as LC continues in its move away from a “helping and enabling” culture to a “supporting and challenging” culture.

#### *The Creation of the Integrity Policy*

It is within the context described above that LC adopted the integrity policy. As noted previously, LC has been undergoing a rather significant organizational transformation that began several years prior to my 2004/2005 visit. According to the former President, the organizational transformation from a “helping and enabling” to a “supporting and challenging” culture began as far back as 1997/1998. Several significant organizational changes were made that year, including, according to the former President:

[A] restructuring [of] the president’s office; approving a doctoral program; opening up two new campuses; starting a new MFA; doing capital improvements here on campus; dealing with a new faculty structure of EPB. We were reallocating technology. We were restructuring the board of trustees. We were hiring a VP and CFO, General Counsel and Student Affairs Vice-President. And that was just one year.



As noted in the above quote, a significant creation that year was a sub-committee of the faculty senate designed to revise and manage various academic policies to align them with the more academic vision of the college. After one year of operation, this sub-committee formed an academic regulations sub-committee in 1998/1999. This sub-committee was chaired by a third year, untenured, faculty member in the arts and sciences college. And, according to this faculty member, it was in the context of this committee that “somebody said, ‘why don’t you look at our honesty policy. It’s terrible’.”

The faculty member elaborated on this comment to say:

If you look at that [former] policy, anybody’s going to go, ‘why shouldn’t somebody cheat at least once? Because they’re going to fail the assignment and they were already going to fail the assignment and this way they might get a B or an A. Who knows?’ So we’re not really encouraging it but we’re not really discouraging it and we were never talking about this other side of why its worth going the other way.

Communicating the “worth of going the other way” became the major focus of the policy revision. The revision was led by two junior faculty members, seen by all I interviewed as the “original framers” of the problem and the policy solution. In particular, the goal was to create a stronger integrity policy more effective at reducing academic dishonesty and at producing a “beautiful vision” of what academic and college life is all about — the importance and value of the struggle of independent work. The goal was also greater compliancy with, and consistency in the application of, the integrity policy. The concern was that students may be “getting away” with repeat violations in a system perceived to be unfair and biased. In the end, an honor code (as the representation of an integrity policy) was perceived as the best method for transforming organizational culture.

So from 1999 until 2002, the two “original framers” conducted research on honor codes. Then, in summer 2002, a stipend was given by the Provost to enable the framers to

create a group composed of faculty & students who eventually designed the Honor Code proposal. The honor code proposal received approval from both faculty and student bodies by the summer of 2003. According to university documents, the ultimate purpose of the LC Honor Code is to express support for integrity, discourage academic dishonesty, and operate as a symbol of the mutual trust and respect between student and faculty considered fundamental to a Lasallian education.

The implementation of the Honor Code was stalled, however, in fall 2003.

According to one administrator Council member, it was stalled:

Primarily because there was so much happening here. We're in the middle of WASC accreditation. It really wasn't getting on the radar screen in terms of 'when are we going to start this?' 'We need to start it' and 'in order to start it we need to get going.'

But then in the spring of 2004, an interim honor council was formed to review the policy, come to know it, and plan for its implementation in the fall of 2004. At the time of my fall visit, a full Honor Council was in operation, and by the spring visit, twenty-five cases had been reported.

#### *The Nature of the Integrity Policy*

The Honor Code falls under the college Code of Conduct that is "designed to facilitate the academic, personal and spiritual development of students and other members of the community." Four principles form the foundation of the broad code of conduct: intellectual responsibility; respect for persons and relationships; respect for property; and, respect for the law and college policies. Some of the key values underlying these principles include: truth, honesty, trust, ethical standards, respect, fairness, and civility. The intent of the Honor Code is to: "foreground the importance of academic integrity in an academic community; enhance community education about academic

integrity; encourage student leadership and broad community participation in the promotion of academic integrity; and, secure from students a public commitment to uphold standards of integrity.” The college also officially expresses that the honor code is intended to reduce academic dishonesty because “it undermines the bonds of trust and honesty between members of the community and betrays those who may eventually depend upon the College’s academic integrity and knowledge.” Thus, the college expects that faculty will fully support the honor code by talking about it in class, providing clear expectations and definitions of acceptable academic conduct, attending public honor council events, reporting academic code violations, and modeling appropriate behaviors.

Academic dishonesty is generally defined as any academic conduct that threatens or damages the stated values, but more specifically it is not doing “your own work in your own words.” The undergraduate handbook takes one full page to define and describe all of the honor code violations. A violation is only considered to be academic dishonesty if it is “conduct that represents falsely one’s own performance or interferes with that of another.” Thus, “intent to deceive” distinguishes academic dishonesty from academic inadvertence. All code violations, including inadvertence, are expected to be reported to the Honor Council which will hear any contested cases and apply the sanction. An XF (failure by dishonesty) is the standard sanction for students who are found to intentionally violate the code. The X can be removed if the student completes an Academic Integrity seminar, but a letter stays in the student’s file “so that would be available to certain institutions or organizations if they ask, but for the most part, it’s a sealed file” (LC undergraduate Council member). The Honor Code occupies a full six pages of the handbook section on student responsibilities and privileges.

Of the one hundred students surveyed at Lasallian College, 75% are aware of the presence of an Honor Council and 99% are aware of the honor code. This high level of awareness can be attributed to the extensive promotion of the code in its first semester. However, similar to the students surveyed at EU, the LC students are significantly less likely to be familiar with the content of the honor code (33%) or impacted by the presence of the honor code (25%). The lack of influence of the code is a somewhat expected finding given its infancy in the institution; students may be aware that a code exists without understanding its meaning and implications. Also similar to EU, only a small percentage of the students surveyed think that cheating and plagiarism occur all the time (25%) and are definitely a problem (16%), even though 34% are “very concerned” that their peers cheat or plagiarize.

### *Summary*

The general tenor felt at Lasallian College is one of tension. The institution is struggling to maintain traditions (or legacy) while competing in the academic marketplace for faculty and students who will bring the institution prestige and a “Cadillac” reputation. There is an explicitly felt tension between the legacy of the “pastoral relationship” and the contemporary need to deal with the complexity of a diverse organization with centralized policies and procedures. There is also a felt tension between empowering students to independently engage in their academic work and enabling student dependency on external sources. These felt tensions are only exacerbated by the exiting of several highly recognizable administrative figures including the college president, all of which suggest that the planned organizational change may be meeting great resistance or objection. A primary focus of Lasallian College at this time,

then, is to facilitate organizational change within the boundaries of the legacy of De La Salle's educational philosophy.

### Heartland University

Heartland University (HU), over 150 years old, is a public land-grant research university in a rural area of a Midwestern state. With approximately 23,000 students, HU is in the heart of a college town teeming with eateries, pubs, and residences an easy walking distance from campus. The geographic location of the university reflects its roots in agriculture and its land-grant mission, but the offering of a multitude of programs in nine different colleges reflects the contemporary nature of the university. The campus itself is expansive and impressive in magnitude yet surprisingly easy to navigate. The thigh high stone wall representative of centuries old architecture and a prominent alumni building at the front of the campus ensure that visitors know when they have stepped out of town and into the university. As I face the enormity of the campus, I feel insignificant, unprepared, anxious, and lost, and wonder if my feelings mirror those of incoming freshmen.

I learn early on in my visit that white students from the home state represent eighty-eight percent of the undergraduate student body (which comprises eighty-three percent of the total student body). Men and women each make up half of the undergraduate student body. Over half of the undergraduate students are enrolled in engineering, business, humanities and education, while the remaining students major in agriculture, human ecology, and other sciences. Of the graduate students (which comprise seventeen percent of the total student body), sixty-nine percent are white students and about half are from the home state. There are slightly more female than male graduate

students and enrollments in social science and education are larger than those in business or the hard sciences.

As with all land grant universities, HU is expected to serve the people of its state and the world through research, teaching and service. There is little information on the website regarding the history of HU, a contrast to the extensive explanations of university roots and traditions offered by the other two institutions. The National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) website describes the land-grant college or university as:

An institution that has been designated by its state legislature or Congress to receive the benefits of the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890. The original mission of these institutions, as set forth in the first Morrill Act, was to teach agriculture, military tactics, and the mechanic arts as well as classical studies so that members of the working classes could obtain a liberal, practical education. (1995, ¶ 1)

Of course, the land-grant colleges of today are much more expansive and eclectic than originally formulated but the tradition and original purpose seem to remain present and influential in organizational culture. Research, especially in agriculture and the sciences, remains critical to the university, as does a commitment to teaching and service to the state community.

### *Organizational Culture*

The research participants describe Heartland University as caring, friendly and helpful, a sort of second family to the students who attend the institution. Despite the large size of the campus, this characterization does not surprise me. Its regional location as well as its agriculture tradition maintains a sense of community despite the significant growth that has occurred at the institution. The sense of community is also just inherent in the Heartland where tradition and legacy are the ties that bind persons and generations. As one undergraduate Council member noted:

Eighty-five percent of the students are Heartlanders. I think a lot of the parents are alumni... [so] they've had strong sense of HU before they came. They're from here. Yeah. [HU is] a learned thing before you get here.

The legacy factor, shared culture and history, as well as pride in the tradition and successes of the university lead to a feeling of a "very unified campus" where "students are very close and very connected" and "people truly care if you're going to succeed or not and they want to do their best to help you" (HU undergraduate Council member). Again, this feeling of care and support seems rooted in the mission of the land-grant college to take care of the local middle class and support social mobility. In other words, in the words of one faculty member, the university cares for and tends to its students as farmers care for and tend to their crops. This idea of "tending to the crops" is directly tied to the belief that the institution has a role to play in facilitating the growth and development of the individual. The focus on individual development is supported by a stable and secure environment that, despite slight changes, really does not significantly transform from year to year. The unchanging nature of the culture of HU is affirmed by a faculty Council member:

We're in the Heartland. You stay the course. You stay the course. It's a farm mentality. It's a farm mentality. You know, one year the crops are good and one year they're not, but you're still farming and the children grow and then they work on the farm and then they go away, but you're still farming. We really don't intend to change very much. If we change, we're not going to change in ways that are significant.

The tremendous pride felt by the students, faculty and administration of the university is tied to this ability, I think, to weather the storm, stay the course, and help produce morally responsible citizens and workers.

A value of shared governance and a commitment to excellence in the classroom is also part of the culture at HU. Stories of the honor system implementation reinforce the

shared governance value, but there are many structures that seem to conflict with the value of classroom excellence, for example, large classes, untrained graduate student teachers, undergraduate students running recitation sections, and a prioritization of research over teaching (to be discussed in the next two sections). Overall, though, there exists a strong perception that HU is a “very open and friendly university that offers a good quality education for the money” (HU faculty Council member).

### *Organizational Priorities*

Although “commitment to excellence in teaching” is an expressed key value for HU, it does not seem reflected in organizational priorities. The former provost had individualized the rank, tenure and reward system so that research, teaching and service weighed in differently for faculty depending on their key role in the institution. However, one faculty member argues that despite her sixty percent focus on teaching, her tenure seems to continue to depend on her scholarship:

What really matters is bringing prominence to the unit, bringing in money, getting grant dollars, and publishing. Having students go off to prestigious places after they’ve worked with us. My primary focus is the undergraduate students and the majority of the department’s interest is certainly not in that. That’s just a time waster. You really want to be involved in getting grant dollars and publishing.

Other faculty and students express a similar concern; while the institution espouses the value of teaching excellence and maintains a structure that manifests that value, research seems to be what is truly valued in the culture, that is, that research is what really counts.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> I think it is important to note here that upon reviewing this write-up, the Assistant to the President at Heartland University expressed his disagreement that research is valued over teaching. He reminded me of the policies that HU has in place to reward teaching, as I have indicated in this write-up. I think that this disagreement in perceptions points to a possible gap between policy and practice, as well as to the conflict between different structures which reinforce or reward different behaviors. This also, of course, points out that policies do not by themselves express actual priorities or change the culture of an organization.



The focus on research despite institutional policies to support teaching is ingrained in the tradition of the land-grant institution and seems to remain a top priority for HU when viewing other institutional policies and practices. In current times, this priority goes beyond research for knowledge creation toward research for commercialization. The current provost expresses pride in the commercialization of Heartland University:

We are out front in the nation as far as commercialization. We have a national institute for strategic technology, commercialization of patents and we have over 800 patents at the university that we're trying to commercialize and we've developed some new spin-off companies in relation to that.

The priority on the commercialization of research is evident in the changes that have been occurring on campus and those that have not. For example, the university grew from 16,000 to 22,000 students and from \$18.5 million to \$100 million in extramural grants and contracts all "with the same number of core faculty." Delving into the commercialization of research is a rather typical act on the part of a public university that faces shrinking funds and decreasing resources from the local state and federal governments. Of course, the increase in students and in grants requires additional staff. Rather than increasing the number of full-time faculty, HU saves money by hiring adjunct faculty and graduate students to do much of the teaching.<sup>17</sup> The worry expressed by some higher education theorists (e.g., Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004) is that research

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<sup>17</sup> This point was also contested by the Assistant to the President of HU. He noted in an email to me that according to institutional statistics, 85% of all classes are taught by faculty with a terminal degree. Again, this may point to the difference between policies/publications and practices. I heard from several students that although a faculty member may be assigned on paper as the professor for a class, in practice, the graduate students do the majority of the in-class teaching and both graduate students and senior undergraduates handle recitation classes. This, of course, is not a consistent practice and cannot be quantitatively proven, but the perceptions of many of the participants in this study indicate that faculty may not be doing as much teaching as university documents would portray.

commercialization eventually becomes the primary goal, superceding concerns for basic research and teaching.

Though administration seems quite pleased at the research commercialization accomplishments and the increase in the number of students without an increase in the number of core faculty, several faculty and students feel a sense of loss at the perceived devaluing of teaching and student-teacher relationships. Naturally, as research increasingly becomes a focus of the institution, undergraduate students are going to feel less and less primary to the institution. As one undergraduate said:

I know we're a land grant institution with a lot of research focus, but I think they need to say more about the student focus. And they might think that they're saying more about student focus, but kind of that perception thing is that most of my peers walk around thinking that all the faculty are here to research and participate in the land grant institution thing.

Even faculty bemoan that many of their colleagues do not seem to care as much for teaching and the students as they do for their research. The following comment by one faculty member best illustrates this concern:

I can't see most faculty member's caring. I mean, not...I mean, to be honest with you, I see that. I see faculty members is they have a tunnel vision, 'here's my research agenda, this is the road that I'm traveling, and teaching, for example, in math, in sciences, is just, you know, in the arts and sciences, part of teaching is kind of something people don't want to have to do.

The above quote is interesting because it not only demonstrates an awareness of the organizational priority on research, but also the simultaneous faulting of the individual faculty member for that priority. While teaching is perceived as something that faculty members "don't want to have to do," clearly there is something in the system that mediates faculty preferences for research. Although parts of the culture (prioritizing research and commercialization over teaching) and certain structures (e.g., tenure and

promotion) support research over teaching, deficiencies in teaching are ascribed to problems within the faculty agent. As with locating the problem of academic dishonesty within the individual student agent, blaming faculty for the shortcomings in teaching allows the institution to ignore responsibility. I think it is important to emphasize here again that members of the institution (e.g., the former provost) have attempted to increase the prioritization of teaching but the implementation of a policy has not seemed to resolve the conflict.

The commercialization of faculty research is not the only organizational priority that seems to be competing with teaching and learning. There is a general feeling among the research participants that the athletics program is a strong priority for Heartland University. One of the graduate student Council members in particular insists that the university population understands that that which happens on the field matters much more than that which happens in the classroom:

The students know that the most important thing at this university is that football team...its not the students that are in my class (laughter). Its not my class, its not the students. Its not even a department or anything like that. Its sports.

Strong athletic teams hold great profitability for this university in terms of reputation, finances, and enhanced school pride. One interviewee recollects that the more recent successes in football have really impacted the revenue generating capacity of the university. As this faculty Council member said:

Athletics has really impacted the university strongly. A big turnaround in the attitude and the effort. A big turnaround in alumni giving. We've seen tremendous growth in scholarship funds, in our area anyway. I think the whole university has. Not just athletics but to academia because you get alumni interested in what's going on in the university. I think, whether we like it or not, athletics has inspired a lot of that.

As seen in the above quote, athletic programs are perceived as critical fund-raisers in today's public university. Ironically, as Bok (2003) argues in Universities in the Marketplace, most athletic programs actually cost the university money because as funding increases so do the costs associated with the program. But, as the above quote also demonstrates, donations are not the only types of revenue generated from athletic programs. Revenue comes in many forms and popular athletic programs seem to generate much pride and alumni attachment to the institution.

Most of the participants seem to judge organizational priorities by the rhetoric of the president and other high level administrators, or representatives of the university to the American public (e.g., admissions officers). Unfortunately, the lack of air time given to academic integrity in public rhetoric conveys that it is not a priority for the university, especially when compared to research commercialization or athletics.<sup>18</sup> One undergraduate Council member expresses her concern with this prioritization:

I haven't really heard much out of [the president] and that's unfortunate. I think that the system would be a lot better off if we did...ah...for a lot of reasons. And its not even just financial. He talks about, you know, the football team that, by the way, was 4 and 7 last season or 4 and something because it wasn't a good season. Talks about the football team being so great and the volleyball team being so great and the...high scholarships, that are very important, being so great, which, by the way, we're an academic institution that should be first, not the football team.

The above quote demonstrates the frustration many Council members feel about the perceived lack of support from the administration for the work that they are doing. The perceived lack of support is an interesting finding because by all appearances, the Council at HU is strongly supported. They have an office space and dedicated staff,

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<sup>18</sup> The Fall 2005 state of the union address by the president listed these areas of excellence: recognized research areas; commercialization of intellectual property; research funding; diversity; technology and distance education; fundraising; and, infrastructure.

substantially more structural support than provided at the other two case institutions. For the HU Council, however, there never seems to be enough space or staff given the amount of work generated by such a large student population. In addition, many of the Council members express disappointment in what they perceive to be a lowering of the priority of academic integrity by the new Provost who had replaced the “founding father” of the honor system.

### *External Forces*

The public land-grant institution is experiencing particularly challenging and untenable systemic forces at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Universities like HU are rooted in a tradition of accessible and affordable education for local youth yet are also facing substantial decreases in state appropriations, subsequently requiring an increase in tuition and other fees as well as attention to external fundraising. The following faculty member comment best describes this change:

We’ve seen a change from being a state supported school to a state assisted school. The amount of funding given by the states has been greatly reduced because the tax money has not been there. We’ve seen that happen over a period of years. I believe, if I’m right, I may be quoting the wrong numbers, but I believe that our funding from the legislature’s now dropped below twenty-five percent. It used to be much, much higher.

Budget reductions have required significant changes in the priorities of the university. Ventures and innovations that profit the university, such as the commercialization of research and the success of the athletic teams, become a greater focus of high-level administrators. As argued in the following faculty Council member quote, decreasing budgets alter the way in which students, faculty and administrators relate to one another:

When you think about what that means in terms of how I teach....I use [the online system] a lot. We communicate by email, not by telephone. So we’ve kind of moved into this, it just feeds into this whole idea that everything is in that box or on your cell phone. For everyone.

The university is then left with balancing this “boxing in” feeling created by decreasing public funds and the resulting pressure to be more “entrepreneurial.” It is very easy to see the link between organizational priorities and external forces at this land grant university. Overall, I am struck by the focus on “staying the course” and how that might be done in such turbulent times and in the face of complex problems. If “staying the course” is most important, it seems reasonable for the university to do what it takes to survive, even if that means (in terms of research commercialization for example) drifting away from part of its core mission: teaching.

#### *The Creation of the Integrity Policy*

This creation story is extremely different from that of LC or EU. The impetus for the implementation of an integrity policy at HU was, as I was told, a “cheating crisis.” In 1994, a substantial number of students in a general education course were accused of cheating but the crisis ensued when the media caught on to the story and generated a significant amount of bad press for the university. A comment by the former provost describes the situation:

We had, as I’m sure you know by now, a major cheating incident here in biology with several hundred students involved and....that really brought a sense of urgency and immediacy to our concerns about academic integrity and it also came at a time when that was a big issue nationally and there had been some high profile events at other institutions.

The early 1990s is the time when academic dishonesty began getting substantial attention in both the research and popular presses. McCabe (1992) published his first major study of academic dishonesty across several campuses and the Center for Academic Integrity (CAI) was formed. The media was tuned to the issue and when a prominent televised magazine program aired a special on academic dishonesty, HU was one of the

universities featured. As to be suspected, the Board of Regents, the President and the Provost felt that a response on behalf of the university was mandatory.

The Provost at the time took the lead on the response and immediately began to rally the university to address the issue. In particular, as he told me, “the faculty and I initiated a forum, kind of an open faculty forum, and some students were there, about the fact that we couldn’t just let this go.” In order to not “let this go,” the provost established a task force of faculty and students to determine an appropriate policy approach to deal with student academic dishonesty. After two years of work, the task force proposed to the university community an Honor System that they felt would “enhance the climate of academic honesty” at HU. The proposed integrity policy and corresponding procedures were first approved by the student senate in 1997 and then the faculty senate in 1998.

The implementation process was not smooth by any means, however. Some of the participants who were involved at the time conveyed that it was a process accentuated with several points of resistance and roadblocks. According to one faculty interviewee:

Both students and faculty were equally cynical about whether or not this was going to work. It wasn’t like students were in love with the idea and faculty hated it, it was that they were both cynical.

Students and faculty were cynical, I was told, largely because they saw a lack of congruency between a large research university and a policy that is more typically perceived to be effective in small liberal arts colleges. The former provost spoke of this cynicism but believed that the resistance was overcome by including two elements that precipitated policy adoption: faculty control and educative value. Faculty control meant that the instructor had the option of abiding by the new policy and procedures, that is, they could chose to go through the central office or handle the case themselves. The

educative value of the policy was represented by the XF sanction that could be removed if the student successfully completed an academic integrity seminar. The former provost described the effectiveness of these two elements in the following way:

[These two elements] made it feasible to get everyone on board, made it something that people could believe in philosophically and understand the logic, appreciate the logic inherent in the program. Faculty still retained the option of using it... [and]... the XF... makes it clear that it has a second chance, it has educational value. I think that was kind of the common ground for both the students and the faculty.

The creation of a “common ground” was critical for ensuring policy implementation and eventually for the generation of community involvement in the management of the policy. After the policy was approved, the university needed faculty, students and administrators to serve on the Honor Council. This initial Honor Council had about thirty-five members who were charged with implementing the new policy and procedures. The Honor Council Director recalls the first official meeting of the Honor Council:

Everyone showed up. I mean the whole damn honor council. Thirty-four people. Everybody showed up. All the students. All the faculty. And Barbara and Robert had already said, ‘we need three committees. The constitution committee would write the constitution and bylaws. Training committee would figure out how to train honor council members. And the communications committee would figure out and be responsible for trumpeting the honor council to the community. So I [chaired] the constitution committee... and by the end of that semester, we had had a constitution and bylaws ready to go to the honor council.

Once the constitution and by-laws were created, the honor system was officially established for undergraduates at HU in the fall of 1999. The hope was that the system would “ultimately foster a culture of personal responsibility and honor... which would lead to a decrease in academic dishonesty.” In 2004, the graduate school was included under the honor system umbrella. Currently, only the veterinary students are not



subsumed under the honor system although that is also under discussion. By the time of my second visit, over eighty cases had been reported to the Honor System that year and it was suspected that they would “break 100” (Honor Council Administrator) by year’s end.

### *The Nature of the Integrity Policy*

The honor system is more than an integrity policy. According to university documents, it comprises the “people, procedures, and processes helping to promote academic integrity” and includes an Honor Pledge, the Honor Council, constitution and bylaws, as well as the policies and procedures. The Honor Pledge states that “a student has neither given nor received unauthorized aid on his or her academic work.” The full explanation and details of the honor system are included in the university handbook under four sections: Academic Conduct, Academic Honesty, Honor System Bylaws and Constitution, and Student Grievance Procedures. According to the handbook, the rules and guidelines associated with the honor system are “intended not to replace an atmosphere of trust and cooperation in the pursuit of knowledge, but rather to assure due process and to provide guidelines for action in those instances where the proper relationships and attitudes have broken down.” Following this introduction, the definitions and explanations of various academic dishonest behaviors (i.e., plagiarism and other forms of academic cheating) are given, as well as the procedures for reporting and adjudicating such honor pledge violations.

Students and faculty are expected to report violations to the Honor System, although faculty members retain the option of handling the issue and assigning the sanction on his/her own without involving the Honor Council. The reporter or the alleged violator can request investigation and adjudication by the Honor Council. The Honor Council only becomes involved in the case at that point. Otherwise, if the matter is

handled between the student and faculty member, the case is simply required to be recorded in the Honor System office. The standard sanction for a violation of the Honor Pledge is an XF on the student's transcript. The X denotes failure due to academic dishonesty but the X can be removed upon completion of the Academic Integrity course under the teaching direction of the Associate Director of the Honor System.

A student development perspective forms the foundation of the Honor System. This perspective is rooted in the belief that "becoming more congruous in integrity is one of several developmental tasks of college students." This means for the Honor System that they are most concerned with educating the students in ethical decision making and character so that they can "learn what it means to be a good person and a good citizen."

The effectiveness of the Honor System in impacting the student body at HU seems to be higher than at EU or LC. According to the one hundred students surveyed, 58% are familiar with the content of the honor pledge and 41% are "very much" impacted by the presence of the Honor System. These higher percentages are congruent with a high awareness of the existence of the Honor System (93%) and a relatively high awareness of the presence of the Honor Council (62%). The fact that the awareness of the Council is lower at HU than at EU or LC even though the impact of the system is higher can most likely be attributed to the size and complex bureaucracy of the campus; students on large campuses may be aware of policies and rules without really understanding the bureaucratic structure behind the policy. Again, also similar to EU and LC, only a small percentage of the students surveyed think that cheating and plagiarism occur all the time (24%) and are definitely a problem (11%), even though 36% are "very concerned" that their peers cheat or plagiarize.

### *Summary*

The sense of the situation at Heartland University can be best described as typical of the contemporary public research university being influenced by systemic forces toward a survival, market-oriented, model of higher education. As public funding continues to be reduced and calls for accountability continue to increase, HU is forced to respond more in ways that are business or share-holder friendly, rather than in ways that are oriented toward improving the learning and teaching environment. As Chambers (2005) argues, organizational members may not be consciously oriented toward this activity because the contemporary public research university is reframing economic good as a public good, thereby maintaining the perception that university actions are still oriented toward the public. Administrators attempt to balance the marketization trend with institutional policies (e.g., the revised tenure and promotion policy), but these structural implementations do not seem to translate into practice, most likely because they leave underlying tensions unaddressed. I sense this real concern with education at HU, including moral and personal development, but yet systemic forces push this concern into the background rather than the foreground of the institution. The Honor System seems to be a way, then, for some organizational members to address their increasing concern with the focus on the economic, rather than learning, benefits of the undergraduate degree. Teaching students to be good people and citizens may appear to be a simple task compared to the task of addressing the inconsistencies and inequities within the institution as a whole.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter constructs a sense of the situation at each of the three case institutions. Elite University is a medium-sized, private research university attempting to

renew its focus on the undergraduate population and rise in the national rankings as a formidable force in the league of ivy institutions. Lasallian College is a small, private, religious liberal arts college, deeply entrenched in tradition yet positioning itself to rise in the national competition for prestige and reputation as an “advant-garde” institution. Heartland University is a large, public, research university focused on achieving excellence in teaching and research while remaining bound to its land-grant mission and agricultural roots in the face of decreasing public funding and increasing public demands.

Regardless of the institutional differences among the three institutions, each follows the integrity policy approach advocated in the academic dishonesty research. This approach centers the problem and the solution within the student agent suggesting that organizational structure may be of some mediating influence. The structure in all three cases includes: an integrity policy, corresponding adjudication and remediation procedures, and at least one representative body primarily responsible for facilitating managing the policy and reducing academic dishonesty.

All three case institutions seem to view academic dishonesty as a threat to the integrity of higher education, and all three want to be perceived by the public as addressing the problem at an institutional level. The integrity policy approach is public and participative in the sense that the bodies charged with managing the policy and processes at all three institutions are visible and comprised of representatives from three main campus constituencies (students, faculty, and administration). The findings tentatively suggest that the majority of students are aware of the existence of an integrity policy and Council, although a smaller percentage of students feel that the presence of the

policy actually influences their academic conduct (See Table 3 for a summary of the random student survey from all three case institutions).

Table 3.

*Partial Results from Survey of 100 Random Students*

<b>As a student, I:</b>	<b>EU</b>	<b>LC</b>	<b>HU</b>
Am fully aware of the integrity policy	73%	99%	93%
Am very familiar with the content of integrity policy	25%	33%	58%
Am very much impacted by the presence of an integrity policy	18%	25%	41%
Am aware that there is an integrity Council on campus	91%	75%	62%
Am aware of what the Council does and its purpose	21%	25%	21%
Think that student cheating and plagiarism occurs all the time	21%	25%	24%
Think that student cheating and plagiarism is definitely a problem	20%	16%	11%
Am very concerned that other students cheat or plagiarize	55%	34%	36%
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	46%	33%	48%
Female	52%	60%	49%
<b>Academic Program</b>			
Business	1%	14%	8%
Education	0%	1%	8%
Engineering	7%	3%	15%
Science	19%	31%	26%
Humanities	19%	11%	3%
Social Science	29%	17%	21%
Undeclared	22%	7%	4%
<b>Year</b>			
Freshman	36%	22%	32%
Sophomore	15%	35%	15%
Junior	18%	26%	20%
Senior	15%	11%	25%
Graduate Student	16%	0%	7%

There are, however, fundamental differences among the three institutions.

Foremost there is a difference in the reason or impetus for the integrity policy implementation. The EU integrity policy explicitly communicates the expectations and standards for an intellectual student body. LC perceives the integrity policy as addressing some fundamental values of a Lasallian education—empowering learners to engage in

independent learning within the trusting relationships traditionally found in a Lasallian community. HU implemented the integrity policy in response to a “cheating crisis” to ensure the existence of a fair and just due process for adjudicating matters of contestation between faculty and students.

There are also, of course, differences among the three institutions in their cultures, priorities, and the felt forces from the external environments. On a continuum of managing the status quo to engaging in organizational transformation, I would place Heartland University at the first end, Lasallian College at the other and Elite University somewhere in the middle. Heartland University is experiencing significant challenges from external forces, but is generally “staying the course,” managing and tweaking institutionalized features. Lasallian College is currently in the midst of significant organizational transformation to change the institution from an easy and nice place to do an undergraduate degree to a challenging and progressive institution. Elite University is somewhere in the middle; they are already, by definition, elite, but seem to be looking to transform some potent social traditions in order to highlight their image as an intellectual community. See Table 4 for a summary of the main characteristics of each institution pertaining to this study.

Developing a sense of each of the three case institutions provides context within which the results of this study can be understood. In the next chapter the reader will see that the policy talks in each of the case institutions are slightly different, shaped by organizational culture, organizational priorities, and external forces. Yet, the reader will also see that there are some common elements to the integrity policy approach across the three case institutions, elements that indicate a common underlying ideology shaping

Table 4.  
*A Comparison of the Three Case Institutions*

	<b>Elite University</b>	<b>Lasallian College</b>	<b>Heartland University</b>
<b>Institutional Characteristics</b>	Medium	Small	Large
	Research	Liberal arts	Research
	Private, Secular	Private, Catholic	Public, Land-grant
<b>Institutional Priorities</b>	Improve national reputation	Rise in national rankings	Increase research commercialization
	Change the Student Culture	Change the Student Culture	Build on the athletics program
<b>External Forces</b>	National Rankings	Parents	Reduced public funding
	Competition	Accreditation	
		Competition	
<b>Challenges to Integrity Policy</b>	Large classes	Faculty Resistance	Large Classes
	Faculty and Student Resistance	Student Collaboration	Not a priority for administration
	Teaching not a priority	Conflict between policy and tradition	Teaching not a priority
	Lack of shared assumptions	Lack of Shared Assumptions	Lack of shared assumptions
<b>Supports to Integrity Policy</b>	Substantial intellectual climate already exists	Small size of institution	Local Heartlanders--shared culture
	Administrative & Faculty buy-in	Powerful champions	Institutionalized policy and procedures
	Under Provost's Responsibilities	Under Provost's Responsibilities	Under Provost's Responsibilities

organizational responses. This commonality is important to highlight because it demonstrates that the problem is shaped not only by institutional context but by the larger system of which each institution is a part.

## CHAPTER 5

### DOMINANT PROBLEM FRAMING: INTEGROUS INDIVIDUALISM

In the last chapter, I set the stage by profiling each of the three case institutions. A sense of the organizational culture, organizational priorities, and external forces of each institution were developed as discerned from artifacts, observations, and interviews. The creation and natures of the integrity policy along with student perceptions of the policy were also described. Constructing a sense of the situation at each of the three case institutions is important because the results presented in this chapter are embedded in these contexts. Any nuanced differences in problem framing can be attributed to the organizational culture and priorities of the institutions and any similarities can be attributed to the larger systemic culture of which each institution is a part. These differences and similarities are the focus of this chapter.

A recap of the theoretical framework is in order as it has explicitly shaped the form and discourse of this chapter. This study is framed by Systemic Interactionism, a theory of complex organizational problems that suggests that human agents simultaneously construct, and are constructed by, structure and culture. The existing literature on academic dishonesty has tended to locate the problem of academic dishonesty within the individual student, suggesting that academic dishonesty is primarily a phenomenon of agency; if students chose to refrain from academic dishonesty, the problem would be eliminated. This centralizing of the student agent locates mediating structural (specifically integrity policies and faculty practices) and cultural forces in the periphery (see again Figure 1). That is, student agency occurs within the framework of peripheral institutional aspects. Regardless of the acknowledgement of structural and



cultural influences, the solutions predominately advocated in the existing academic dishonesty research have centered on the will of students to have the integrity to do honest academic work despite the context in which they find themselves. Structure and culture, in other words, should support integrous agency, but the student has the ultimate responsibility for resolving the academic dishonesty problem by simply refraining from engaging in academic dishonesty. Student agency is expected to exert a significant amount of influence on organizational culture so that academic dishonesty would become counter-cultural. Thus, in the literature, the dominant prescription for reducing academically dishonest behaviors has been to increase each individual student's capacity to act with integrity or to "resist temptation" (HU faculty Council member).

#### Chapter Overview

This chapter explores the way in which the problem of academic dishonesty is framed in three case institutions of higher education. To do this, the remainder of this chapter is divided into four sections. In the first section, I describe the dominant framing by examining the "policy talk" at each institution, that is, the way in which the Councils talk about the problem and the solution. Through this examination, I demonstrate in the second section that the "talks" are embedded in an underlying ideology that furthers the interests of those who hold the power and authority to construct definitions of academic dishonesty and integrity.

#### Policy Talk

The three case institutions each delineate the source of the dishonesty problem and thus the resolution of it in slightly different ways. What I am describing here is the dominant talk, the orientating framework from which the Council members operate on a daily basis and make their decisions for action.

*Elite University: Intellectualizing*

The problem of academic dishonesty at EU is framed as a consequence of the lack of intellectualism in a student body that emphasizes pre-professionalism or careerism.

The policy talk, then, is focused on protecting the *intellectual reputation* of the university from being overtaken by a pre-professional student culture. It is thought that this can best be done by *intellectualizing* the student body.<sup>19</sup> According to one administrative Council member, this means that students act as part of the “intellectual conversation” rather than, as an undergraduate council member said, focus on the “grade as a path to whatever success.” Being a part of the intellectual conversation means that students have a “greater appreciation of the material” and an interest in “furthering what other people have said.”

The equating of intellectualism with integrity is underscored by an undergraduate Council member:

I think if students were more intellectually engaged, we'd have a much more interesting and vibrant campus, and I think it would certainly influence integrity. It has to. Its almost natural. Its one of those situations where everyone that you know who discusses integrity tends to have that intellectual air to them. At some level they are working harder or thinking harder than other students around them.

Implicit in the intellectualizing talk at EU is the operating assumption that students who are focused on the degree as a ticket to professional mobility do not work or think as hard as students who pursue the degree purely for an educative value. It is assumed that there is a “natural” connection between intellectualism and integrity. This perception of a natural connection is rooted in the underlying value of intellectual property. The

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<sup>19</sup> After the fall interviews, I originally thought of this talk as “protecting” because I heard repeated messages of the integrity policy working to protect the institution (e.g., the value of the degree, the intellectual conversation, and the scholarly community) from the deleterious actions of the student body. However, after the completion of the spring interviews, I came to realize that the policy talks at all three schools functioned to protect something (to be discussed later in this chapter). Thus, in order to accurately communicate the differences in the talks between the three schools, I had to uncover what the talk at each school was serving to protect, as well as what the talk revealed about the predominantly conceived root of, and solution to, the problem.

assumption is that if students care about the furthering of ideas and the constructing of knowledge (as intellectuals do), then they would also understand and value the need to treat ideas and intellectual creations as property. In the words of one undergraduate Council member, intellectual students have a sense of “owning their work,” of being the creators and purveyors of the intellectual work they do during their undergraduate degree. This sense of a student being a creator and purveyor is, of course, considered in opposition to the pre-professional student who sees him/her self as a consumer or agent within an educational marketplace.

Strongly connected to this consumerist assumption about pre-professional students is the assumption that they are more competitive and over-extended than intellectual students, which ultimately creates a high stakes university environment. In this high stakes environment, learning (the material) and thinking (independently) are assumed to become secondary goals to earning a certain GPA or building a strong resume. Consequently, the Council further reasons, pre-professional students will not care about maintaining the integrity of scholarship. This reasoning is explained by an undergraduate Council member:

Pre-professionalism tends to reduce the amount of ownership that I think people have over their work. If I'm using the four years that I'm here to get from point A or stepping stone A to stepping stone B and follow the company line, then it really doesn't matter that I come up with independent thoughts when I'm here.

The focus on the pre-professional student culture is central to the talk at EU. That is, the EU Council does not assume that EU students lack morality or integrity, but that the student culture (pre-professional) inhibits their natural integrity from being exercised. So, it is assumed that a more intellectual student culture will be more supportive of integrity. In other words, the pre-professional culture, characterized as competitive, social, and

high stakes, is considered to be a mediator of academic dishonesty. This point is argued by an undergraduate Council member:

I don't think that the people who cheat at this school cheat because its part of their character. I think that what you really see at this school is people who panic and don't know what to do and feel like they don't have any other way out. And do it truly as a one time, last minute resort.

The reformation of the student body from pre-professional to intellectual, then, is the predominant solution employed at EU. It is important to make explicit that the solution is focused on changing the student body rather than changing the institution. The vision for the future student population is best articulated by this faculty non-Council member:

I guess what I'm hoping is, over time, the students with that kind of intrinsic commitment to intellectual work....um...will not feel like they're a beleaguered minority. They'll feel like they may not be in a majority, but they're at least a critical mass.

Only two participants, one faculty member and one undergraduate student, spoke to the importance of increasing intellectualism through structural and pedagogical changes.<sup>20</sup>

According to the majority of the participants, a "critical mass" is attained by attracting more intellectual students to the campus, promoting integrity and intellectualism, and eliminating non-intellectual students from the system. Students who refuse to become part of the intellectual conversation are removed from the campus; a typical sanction for

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<sup>20</sup> This faculty member is one who I would characterize as a strong "alternate" voice to the dominant framing. He, I'll call him Tom, expressed to me (in an email) his difficulty with my labelling of the dominant framing as "intellectualism." Tom is opposed to this characterization because he does not see EU addressing intellectualism as he believes the university should---by altering pedagogical approaches and basic structural changes to the classroom and curriculum. Thus, he thought that my attributing this framing to the Council as "too nice." While I hear Tom's contention with the method being adopted by the Council and the university to increase intellectualism, the talk remains consistent. Ironically, it seems (as relayed to me by the Council Chair) that the Council picked up "intellectualism" as the dominant framing from Tom who had been speaking to the importance of integrity to the intellectual conversation for years. The framing is actually congruent with an institutional priority to reduce the pre-professional culture on campus. This is a tension that I think is inherent in framing; a tension between rhetoric and practice, or between underlying meanings.

violators of the integrity policy is a two-semester suspension from EU. The hope is that student violators will eventually be “rehabilitated and reintegrated into the community” (administrator Council member), but if it is determined by the judicial board that this “rehabilitation and reintegration” is unlikely, policy violators are expelled from the community.

The EU Council is largely responsible for the promotion of integrity and intellectualism on campus (other groups focus on the admission and expulsion functions). The primary vehicle for this promotion is the statement of principles referred to as The Student Body Standard. The use of “community” and “standard” within the statement are intentionally reflective of the focus on protecting the standard of intellectualism (or scholarly work). The actions of the Council, other than policy creation and management, are predominantly focused on altering the collective student body’s desire and willingness to meet a university standard of intellectualism. The focus of the Student Body Standard is to bring students into the fold of the academy, to inculcate them into the community of scholars. It is assumed that if students can be convinced of the value of this, they will become more interested in constructing knowledge and forming ideas rather than in obtaining a grade and a degree.

In this way, then, the purpose of the intellectualizing policy talk is to “appeal to the emotional, intellectual side of the students that’s positive about these issues and try to get them to listen to the angel on their shoulders” (faculty, non-Council member). If integrity and intellectualism is “the angel on their shoulders,” then professionalism is the devil on their other shoulder. In this sense, the Student Body Standard is an articulation

of the need to “protect the integrity of scholarship. Protect intellectual integrity. Protect a discipline or scholarship in general” (EU Faculty Council member).

*Lasallian College: Empowering*

The problem of academic dishonesty at LC is framed as resulting from the lack of student willingness, confidence, or motivation to engage in the struggle of independent academic work. The solution constructed in response to this problem framing is to “empower”<sup>21</sup> the students to engage in the tough work of college, in the struggle of *doing their own work in their own words*. This policy talk orients the Council toward empowering the students (albeit through policing and punishing) to accept the challenge and importance of doing their work independently.

When LC Council members speak about the integrity policy approach to the academic dishonesty problem, they highlight the ability of the code to communicate the beauty and joy in struggling to earn one’s degree through one’s own effort. According to one administrator involved in the creation and implementation of the Honor Code, she and others see the honor code as portraying “a beautiful vision of what academics is all about, of what college life is, how important and valuable the struggle is.” So, the empowering talk at LC is less about stopping students from cheating and more about convincing them that to engage in the struggle of doing work independently is the right, and better, choice. This notion of struggling through independent work is at the heart of the liberal arts education, one that goes beyond acquiring discipline specific knowledge to the development of well-rounded human beings who can think critically and

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<sup>21</sup> This policy talk was originally labeled “engaging” after the fall interviews. However, after extensive negative case analysis in which data was investigated and re-investigated for the relevancy of the term, “empowering” emerged as the more credible term. This is not to say that LC does not want its students to be engaged, but that the focus of the Council and the integrity policy is to empower the students to engage independently rather than collaboratively or cooperatively with others.

independently. The following undergraduate Council member's comment expresses the beliefs inherent in the empowering talk particularly well:

There's a struggle behind not going to other people for help with your papers or not looking off your neighbor's exam. It's learning how to use your self to push yourself and I think that's part of growing up where you have to face the blank page and work on your own and grow from there and not rely always on other people to help you with things.

Properly framing the integrity policy to facilitate an organizational fit is particularly important at LC that is rich in the tradition of De La Salle. As we saw in Chapter Four, there is some faculty resistance to the integrity policy because it is seen to interfere with the expectations of a pastoral relationship between faculty and their students. The empowering framing, however, connects the integrity policy directly to a key Lasallian educational tradition of empowering the under-privileged to develop and express their own ideas and thoughts. Although the majority of the students attending Lasallian College (an expensive private college) are not underprivileged in the traditional economic sense, the LC student population seems to be predominantly perceived to be in need of empowerment because "doing your own work" or feeling satisfaction from developing one's mind is an "uncool thing" in the student sub-culture (undergraduate Council member). Thus, the Lasallian tradition in the contemporary age gets translated from helping students who lack the economic ability to helping students who lack the academic ability. As one administrator Council member phrased it:

The needy are the ones who need help academically, so if there is someone who is struggling in class, the expectation is that as a professor, you will do everything humanly possible to help them succeed. The message doesn't come across quite as strongly to the students that they need to do everything humanly possible to struggle to succeed.

The integrity policy, then, is thought to be a tool to assist faculty in developing a community of empowered learners by imparting in students their own responsibility to struggle with independent work.

It is also important to point out that this empowering talk also helps to situate the integrity policy approach into a larger organizational reform effort spearheaded by LC administrators. Specifically, LC administration is hoping to increase the academic reputation of the college, as well as a sense of pride and value in the degree earned at LC. Administrators perceive the integrity policy approach as one tool for obtaining their vision of the college as a serious place for thinking and inquiry. This vision is best described by an undergraduate Council member:

I'm seeing students who are not apathetic in the classroom. Everyone's contributing to classroom discussion. People are eager to learn, they're asking questions. And not just any questions but intellectual, intelligent questions.

Thus, for the Council, an empowered student (i.e., a non-apathetic student) is synonymous with an integrous student. That is, empowered students will be integrous because they will be "eager to learn" and excited to independently contribute to the community of learners.

#### *Heartland University: Moralizing*

The HU Council predominantly frames academic dishonesty as a consequence of deficient moral reasoning on the part of the student. Thus, the policy talk at Heartland University (HU) can be best described as "moralizing."<sup>22</sup> Moralizing is about developing the students' abilities to make morally sophisticated decisions and choose morally

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<sup>22</sup> I originally conceived of the talk at HU as "reforming," but it eventually emerged from the data that the intent of the integrity policy approach at each of the schools was to reform the student body to protect institutional features (to be discussed in the next section). When the talk at HU was analyzed for the focus of reform, what emerged from the data was a reforming of the students from underdeveloped moral reasoners to skillful ones.



responsible actions. The approach at HU is not about classifying policy violators as “bad” people who must be ejected from the community, but about helping them for the future.

This distinction is clearly made by an undergraduate Council member:

[When we] find an alleged violator to be guilty, we still aren't ‘okay you're a bad person,’ we're like ‘okay here's how we're going to help you. You take this class so that way you'll learn in the future how to cite well, know what's plagiarism and what's not.

The problem framing and solution construction at HU is grounded in student development theory to focus on producing responsible and accountable adults who are moral citizens. In this sense, the act of dishonesty is not viewed as a crime against the community, but as a teachable moment for moral reform. According to one faculty member, this teachable moment gives the Council an opportunity to take students who “adamantly deny any responsibility and accountability” and educate them until they understand that the consequences of their actions and choices. The personal responsibility aspect of the moralizing talk is directly tied to the goal of the Honor System to “foster a culture of personal responsibility and honor at HU, which would lead to a decrease in academic dishonesty.” The moral citizen aspect of the integrity policy approach is elaborated upon by an undergraduate Council member:

How can we make you a better person? We want to make you an ethical leader and [dishonesty] isn't good. This is not a good thing so here's how we're going to help you so that you can make sure that you're making good decisions for yourself later on.

I think it is important to remind the reader at this point that HU implemented the integrity policy approach specifically in response to a “cheating crisis” in which a substantial portion of the students in a large lecture class were accused of cheating. This, I suspect, had a great influence on shaping the talk toward moralizing rather than

intellectualizing or empowering.<sup>23</sup> By framing the crisis as systemic student deviance, a reformation solution logically follows. The implementation of a policy is important for providing clear expectations for student conduct, ensuring due process, and providing guidelines for action when, according to university documents, the “proper relationships and attitudes have broken down.”

The moralizing talk facilitates the adoption of a policy approach not easily integrated into large, research universities. In other words, the moralizing talk of the Council helped to garner faculty buy-in to a policy that might otherwise require a substantial change in their practices and behaviors. The moralizing talk, along with the policy and procedures (i.e., the structure), reduces the burden on the faculty by focusing on the reformation of students and lessening the responsibility of faculty. There seems also to be a sense that as a land-grant institution in the Midwest, a policy that focuses on reforming moral reasoning makes for good policy-organization fit. This is best explained by an HU faculty member:

Just because of where we are in the midwest, I think probably you picked up on reforming. The general cultural attitudes in this part of the country. You stay the course, you work to improve yourself, you know, its that good all-American work ethic and you can always be better and you just do what you're supposed to do. (Laughter) and not that our students or we as a university are terrible and need great, um...moral changes, but we...we need to continually, you know, reform.

### *Summary*

At each of the three institutions, the problem of academic dishonesty is framed as residing within the individual student agent or the general student population. Generally, the problem is framed as students choosing not to do their own work in their own words

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<sup>23</sup> Neither the policies at LC or EU were developed in response to a crisis. As mentioned in Chapter Four, the policies at LC and EU were developed when a small group of people decided that a new policy was required to communicate a specific message. At EU, this message was that the community has a standard of intellectualism, and at LC, this message was that the struggle of independent work is worthwhile and the right choice.

although each institution attributes this to different forms of student dysfunctionality. At EU, the dysfunctionality is a lack of intellectualism (i.e. pre-professionalism). At LC, it is a lack of empowerment. And at HU, it is a result of undeveloped moral reasoning. This specific way of defining the problem at each institution functions to orient Council members to a framework within which solutions are constructed. The intellectualizing talk at EU functions to orient Council members to be concerned about academic dishonesty because it undermines intellectual ownership, the cornerstone of the scholarly community. The intellectualizing talk frames the solution as decreasing the presence of pre-professionalism<sup>24</sup> and increasing the emphasis and presence of intellectualism or intellectual engagement. The techniques for enacting this solution include admitting a specific kind of student, promoting integrity and intellectualism, and removing integrity violators from the organization.

The empowering talk at LC functions to orient Council members to the Lasallian philosophy of education that seeks to increase the capacity of individuals as learners and empower students to be independent thinkers. This talk is not focused on making students more intellectual, but on empowering them to engage in the struggle of independent work. The corresponding solution at LC, then, is to increase student responsibility and accountability for engaging independently in academic work and decreasing dependence on aid from external sources. The techniques for enacting this solution include envisioning a community of empowered learners who are able to engage in their

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<sup>24</sup> After reading my analysis of the policy talk at EU, one of the research participants at EU expressed disagreement with the term “pre-professionalism.” She expressed that “credentialism” would be a more appropriate term to denote the treatment of the baccalaureate degree as merely a credential for the next step and the focus on the striving for success as measure by GPA. I argue for the use of “pre-professionalism” to convey that meaning because not one of the research participants used “credentialism” during the interviews.

academic work independently and empowering policy violators through an educational reform process.

Finally, the moralizing talk at HU provides a framework to orient Council members to the moral development of the student, not so much for the sake of learning as for creating a moral citizenship. This talk serves to remind Council members that their focus is not to catch and convict “cheaters” as an end by itself, but to use the process as a teachable moment. The corresponding solution, then, is focused on helping students become better people rather than helping them to become more intellectual or more empowered to engage in their academic work independently. The techniques for enacting this solution include educating the student population on the policy, providing a fair and just adjudication process, and engaging policy violators in a course that focuses on moral development.

I think it is important to note at this point that although the dominant policy talk at each institution focuses on reforming the student population, there is also significant talk about sustaining policies and procedures to ensure a fair and just system for both faculty and students. In that sense, each institution is concerned about the role of structure and culture in the mediation of agency. However, the key point is that any talk of structural or cultural reform is oriented toward the reformation of student agency; the student agent is centralized. In other words, the implicit question behind much of the policy talk is ‘how do we stop students from cheating’ or ‘how do we get students to buy into the integrity policy?’ See Table 5 for a summary of the characteristic features of each policy talk.

#### Underlying Ideology

Despite the differences among the policy talks described above, there also

Table 5.

*A Summary of the Three Policy Talks*

	<b>INTELLECTUALIZING</b>	<b>EMPOWERING</b>	<b>MORALIZING</b>
<b>Underlying Problem</b>	The Professional mentality of students is overriding the intellectual life	Students have 'no motivation to uphold their integrity' (LU18, fall, 44)	Students are good people who make bad choices
<b>Concerns</b>	Maintaining the enterprise as designed	Student learning	Students complying
	The academic climate – to be intellectual	The academic climate – to be engaging	The institutionalization of the system
	Infusing Honor & Integrity into the Institution	Fairness of the system	Fair adjudication
	Maintaining the value of the degree	Student leadership	Clarity and communication of rules
	Upholding the integrity of the community	Relationships within community	Betterment of the Community
<b>Center of the Discourse</b>	The Student Community	The Individual Student	The Individual Student
<b>College Should be About:</b>	contributing to the intellectual conversation	engaging in the struggle of independent inquiry	becoming moral citizens
<b>Students need to:</b>	own their work	understand the joy in creating their Own Work in Own Words	abide by community rules
<b>Students who:</b>	have a sense of owning their work will be a part of the intellectual community discourse	can be empowered to do work independently will learn and grow	abide by community rules will be responsible and accountable citizens
<b>Academic Integrity is Connected to:</b>	the integrity of scholarship and the intellectual life.	the way in which students are empowered to do their own work in their own words.	the way in which students who think through choices and understand the rules.
<b>If students are:</b>	intellectual versus pre-professional, integrity and honor will emanate	committed to independent work, then integrity and honor will emanate.	more aware of the rules and the policy, then integrity and honor will emanate
<b>Key terms</b>	High standards	Struggle	Right versus wrong
	"Especially here"	See in different ways	Consequences for actions
	Proud of Place	Proud of work	Morally right/good decisions
	Honorable	Confident of work	Negative choices
	Intellectual conversation	Focused on best (rather than good enough) work	Student development
	Degree value	Dynamic intellectual life	Accountability
	Excellence	Lively discourse	Responsibility
	Expectations	Personal transformation and development	Second chance

emerged two common, underlying themes. These themes describe the common way in

which the three case institutions frame the problem of academic dishonesty and the common way in which they construct the solution. There is, first of all, an emergent theme of student dysfunctionality. Referring back to the policy talks, EU students are considered dishonest because they are too pre-professionally oriented; LC students are considered dishonest because they are not independently empowered; and, HU students are considered dishonest because they do not make morally sophisticated choices. The second emergent theme is the common construction of a solution that is focused on reforming the student body to be, in totality, intellectually empowered moral citizens.

The presence of these common themes suggests that the three Councils are operating according to a common set of assumptions or ideology. It is critical to call attention to and understand these assumptions because they function unconsciously to socially construct the problem of academic dishonesty and shape organizational practices. According to the critical interpretive perspective, this ideology will naturally emphasize certain viewpoints and ignore or downplay others, thus constructing one version of reality that is incomplete but serves to protect dominant notions or interests. In this section, I will illuminate the underlying ideology by examining the operating assumptions that are emphasized and the dominant values (i.e., organizational culture) it serves to protect or support.

#### *Operating Assumptions*

There are five fundamental operating assumptions of the integrity policy response to academic dishonesty. These assumptions can be summarized as follows: 1) individuals have the personal power to act independently from systemic forces; 2) independent work is integrous work; 3) student dysfunctionality is the root of the problem; 4) student behavior must be authorized externally; and, 5) dysfunctional students can be reformed to

become integrous individuals. Together, these operating assumptions point to a shared ideology underlying the integrity approach in each of the three institutions. This ideology is not organization-specific as it is shaped by the larger system of which all three institutions are a part.

The first assumption of the integrity policy approach is very basic and fundamental: individuals have the choice to act in the ways they want, regardless of structural and cultural forces. Thus, if the individual has the ability to choose his/her actions, then the individual can be held accountable for the behavior in which he/she engages. This assumption, then, is rooted in the privileging of individual role and responsibility over the effects of the group or system of which the individual is a part.

The assumption of individual agency (i.e., power) is closely related to the second operating assumption that independent (rather than collaborative or aided) work is integrous work. Independent work is defined as any work completed without the aid of external sources or without collaboration. This is considered to be the integrous way of completing academic work because it is the assumed norm of the academic culture. That is, independent work is the default choice; if students are unclear, they should default to thinking that they are only authorized to work independently. The “default thinking” of the academy, then, is that independent work is the normal way to engage in academic work and collaboration or aid is the abnormal way or exception.

If individuals have the power to choose their actions and independent work is the default choice for academic work, then those students who choose to not do independent work are assumed to be dysfunctional. Thus, the third fundamental assumption operating under the integrity policy approach is that student dysfunctionality is the reason for

academic dishonesty. Student dysfunctionality is characterized differently in different contexts (e.g., as pre-professionalism, lack of motivation, or underdeveloped moral reasoning), but the problem is clearly located within the student agent. In other words, structural and cultural factors are not assumed to be critical in constructing the problem. Evidence for this can be found in how Council members respond to expressed structural and cultural issues. Specifically, when students, faculty or administrators offer external factors as possible influences on the problem, they are often characterized as offering “excuses” or “rationalizations” for dysfunctional behavior or academic misconduct. For example, many of the research participants mentioned that an increasing societal acceptance and expectation of collaboration and teamwork may cause confusion for students when they enter the higher education context where independent work is expected. However, other research participants see this as just as an excuse:

I think that on several occasions it is very clear that you are not to collaborate on work, whether its explicitly said or not. And in these instances, I think that students use that as an excuse for doing something that they feel is inappropriate, but that they did anyway and now they need to explain it away. (LC undergraduate Council member)

When the problem of academic dishonesty is framed as a result of dysfunctional students, it is assumed that students cannot be trusted to make the best decisions regarding how they should engage in their academic work. External authorization, then, becomes the dominantly accepted solution to the problem. In all three case institutions, faculty members have the ultimate authority to define that which is integrous and disintegrous work. Thus, definitions of integrous work differ between faculty, classes, and academic assignments. In other words, a faculty member has the authority to declare collaboration disintegrous on one assignment but integrous on another. Structures are put



in place to aid faculty in their authorizing roles; clear rules, transparent processes, and fair procedures all aid the faculty and the institution in identifying those dysfunctional students who seem unable to choose to engage in independent work or work authorized by the faculty member.

The point of this authorization and the integrity policy approach is the fourth basic operating assumption: dysfunctional students can be reformed to be integrous students. Specifically, it is assumed that the integrity policy and faculty authorization creates a culture of shared values and underlying definitions that will mediate student agency to choose authorized means of completing academic work. Council members, however, express the difficulty associated with getting students to “buy in” to the integrity policy and the underlying definitions:

We certainly don't have the culture where there's a buy-in into it and students feel duty bound to abide by the honor code, particularly at an institution like EU where it's a very competitive place. About 40% of our students are pre-professional so they're looking at going to law school, medical school, so they're looking at this as a credentialing to get them to the next position and so our focus now is getting buy-in from students about what it means to be in a culture of academic integrity. (EU Administrator Council Member)

Regardless of the difficulty of garnering “buy in,” the fundamental assumption that students can be reformed from dysfunctional to integrous individuals through the integrity policy approach remains strong. That is, it is assumed that the integrity policy approach can create a culture of shared values from which students will act from a sense of duty and identification with the principal of “academic integrity” rather than act out of a fear of punishment.

It is the integration of these operating assumptions that constitutes the ideology underlying the framing of the academic dishonesty problem and the construction of the

integrity policy solution in each of the three institutions. This common ideology exists, as I have said, despite organizational differences in the way in which the policy is expressed (e.g., Honor Code versus Standard for Student Conduct) and managed (e.g., through one body that educates and adjudicates versus separate bodies for education, promotion, and adjudication). The focus of the common underlying ideology is on creating integrous individuals within the student population, that is, students who will do their own work in their own words regardless of the surrounding context and mediating culture. I refer to this ideology as Integrous Individualism to highlight its focus on the individual agent as the problem and the increasing of individual integrity as the solution.

### *Cultural Protection*

What emerges clearly from this study is that the ideology of Integrous Individualism frames the problem in a way that supports or protects some fundamental interests of the dominant higher education culture. That is, the problem framing and solution construction are intimately tied to the larger academic culture of which the three case institutions are a part. Specifically, a focus on individual integrity protects three academic values: fairness, academic capital, and trust. In this section I explore each of these findings.

There is, first of all, a concern that the grading and evaluation system is not fair if students are allowed to break the rules to gain unfair advantage:

Everyone that leaves here should leave here with that same standard and that people didn't get an A for a different reason than I did in the same class. I guess its just that whole idea that...we're all getting the same...start. We're all starting at the same line and you shouldn't be able to finish early just because you cheated. (HU undergraduate Council member)

This quote demonstrates the finding that Council members at the three case institutions are concerned with equitable and fair assessments of student work assumed to be

completed independently. The “default thinking” of “independent work unless told otherwise” is rooted fundamentally in the idea of the meritocratic educational system. Meritocracy, a cultural value, expresses the belief that people achieve social mobility based on individual work and effort. Our meritocratic society depends on external certification of individual ability, largely through the awarding of education diplomas and degrees. This emphasis on meritocracy is best exemplified in a comment made by an undergraduate Council member at Lasallian College:

When you get a degree, your degree has your name on it. Not your name along with several of your classmates names. Its your work. You write a resume and apply for a job, those are your skills not the skills of you and your closest friends. Your boss wants to know that you have the ability to do what you put on your resume as a skill, not that you depend on other people.

The ideology of Integrous Individualism supports the fundamental idea of “independent work” by framing the problem of academic dishonesty as student agent dysfunctionality. That is, the disintegrous student who seeks out help from unauthorized external sources in order to complete an academic assignment fails to adhere to the cultural value and norm of independent effort. The point that students should not be allowed to “finish early” illustrates the students’ concern with the competition that is inherent in a meritocratic culture; students who do not do their work independently are disintegrous because they gain “undue advantage” over others who do complete their work independently. One LC undergraduate Council member laments:

It kind of stinks to be sitting there in class taking a test or writing a paper and someone cheats or they plagiarize, and they get this wonderful grade for these ideas that aren’t theirs, and then not only is it something they don’t deserve when you worked just hard, or even harder, but then it kind of skews the whole grade system as well. So not only are they not getting a grade that they deserve, but then everyone else in the class, because of that, may not be getting a similar grade that they should be getting.

The idea of “getting a grade they deserve” leads to the second value supported by the Integrous Individualism ideology: academic capital. The privileging of independent work validates the meritocratic value and facilitates the possibility of capitalizing off of the currency that academic products (such as the university degree, innovations, and literary creations) have in our capitalist society. The undergraduate degree has capital in a meritocratic society precisely because it is assumed that the degree is “earned” through independent effort. If the independence of the work cannot be assessed or assured, neither can ownership; this directly undermines the value academic products hold in our society. What is the degree worth if the student does not obtain it through his/her independent effort? What is an intellectual creation worth if authorship cannot be ascertained? The Integrous Individualism ideology supports academic capital by aligning the value of academic integrity with the cultural value of independent effort and intellectual ownership. This value alignment is best expressed by the following definition of academic integrity offered by an LC undergraduate Council member:

If I turn in something, I want to have that feeling afterward that I did it. [That I have] ownership of my work and of my intellect.

That is, the individual who completes her work independently and/or acknowledges external sources is an integrous individual because they own the work and acknowledge the ownership of work completed by others. The protection of independent work as intellectual property is fundamental in the current dominant conception of the academy.

An LC faculty non-Council member expresses this conception:

Our ideas are our only commodity. There is no other commodity. If there is not an understanding of the inviolate nature of those ideas in terms of... they stand alone as the end product of our investigative inquiries. If that's not acknowledged and celebrated, then the whole thing collapses like a bad house of cards. If you don't

have academic integrity, you don't have an academy because we deal in the realm of ideas and it just has to be that way.

The idea that it "just has to be that way" conveys the cultural currency embedded in aligning integrity with intellectual property law compliance. Intellectual property is considered the "commodity" of higher education because it is critical to creating an environment in which people will engage in the risk associated with knowledge construction and innovation (Vaidhyathan, 2004). In research universities, for example, faculty promotion and tenure depends on the number of times their works are cited by other researchers. Research universities such as Heartland University depend on research commercialization for financial stability and will thus lose capital if the valuing of intellect as property is not protected. In other words, if students (or others) plagiarize, that is, "steal" ideas, the commodity of higher education loses some of its currency. One student comments on the usefulness of Integrous Individualism for aligning student values to those privileged in the academy:

Students don't directly, necessarily see how plagiarism hurts, but it does affect the university as a business in the same way as if someone took money from you. And I think that's a great way to bring it to a student's level. If the university can put things in ways that make it relate to students more like that... [to] consider that knowledge is a currency like the money in your wallet, then you can see the relation [between dishonesty and plagiarism] a lot better.

The attempt to connect students to the cultural values and norms of the academy brings us to the final point in this section. The Integrous Individualism framing serves to protect societal trust in the institution of higher education and faculty trust in the student body. That is, by equating independent work with integrous work and by holding the student accountable for his/her own actions, the ideology supports the idea that students can be trusted to independently do their work in authorized ways, and the institution can

be trusted to ensure that this is occurring. I suspect that the Integrous Individualism not only supports this value of trust, but arises out of it. Faculty express feelings of being slighted or “duped” when students do not do their work in ways authorized by the instructor, framing this as a problem of trust:

If you cheat in my class you are breaking a bond of trust that exists between you and me. And you as the initiator and me as a victim, this bond is only to be repaired by us. It is primarily an attack on a person, not an attack on an institution. (LC faculty non-Council member)

This faculty member, and all those to whom I spoke, feel that a clear policy defining integrous work as authorized work is critical to supporting a trusting relationship between a faculty member and his/her students. Students and administrators also, however, mention how the Integrous Individualism framing supports the idea of relationships and community:

I fire the shot across the bow and the student knows that I’m looking and they can either keep cheating and, in which case I’ve got to deal with it, **or they can become a member of my community** which is what I would hope I would see them do...instead. (EU faculty Council member)

The framing, then, supports the idea that the academic community is based on the trust that students will do their work independently or in other authorized ways because that is the integrous way to be a student. And, aligning integrity with independent and authorized work serves to protect two other academy values, fairness and academic capital, both of which are fundamental to the success of higher education in a meritocratic and capitalist culture.

### Chapter Summary

“Doing your own work regardless of what else is going on” is the definitive statement of Integrous Individualism. The individual student agent is expected, in this dominant framing, to be able to resist engagement in academic dishonesty regardless of

mitigating structural and cultural influences. Thus, the problem of academic dishonesty is framed narrowly as agent dysfunctionality. Specifically, the dysfunctional student is perceived to be acting as a social deviant or ignorant scholar rather than as a moral or scholarly citizen. The organizational responses to the problem framed in this way are largely limited to the parameters of developing intellectually empowered moral citizens through preventing, policing, and punishing behaviors that are in violation of the integrity policy. Peripherally, changes are made to organizational structures to enable student compliance with the integrity policy or inhibit their violations, but the main thrust of the *Integrous Individualism* framing is to reduce the occurrence of unauthorized academic conduct not to better understand the complexity of the problem. My research findings show that the dominance of the *Integrous Individualism* framing may be a response to the perceived threat that certain academic behaviors pose to the institution of higher education. Students, faculty, and administrators perceive that if students earn their grades “unfairly” or if intellectual products are not protected as capital, the institution of higher education is immanently threatened.

Protecting the values of the higher education institution is certainly not reprehensible and is often a necessary action against external forces that threaten the integrity of the academy. Fairness, academic capital, and trust are important values in the academy and serve the function of assessing individual ability and facilitating knowledge creation and innovation. However, the reliance on the use of faculty authorization to define acceptable academic conduct implies that there is little consensus on what should constitute academic integrity:

I learned that our faculty are not in agreement and so, obviously, the take home message is, if we as a collective, very integrated, supportive, nurturing faculty,

aren't clear, no wonder our students may have a difference of opinion about how it works. (HU faculty Council member)

Emphasizing student accountability for complying with rules that differ by faculty or assignment downplays the significance of this lack of consensus. The argument is made that if students had more integrity or honor, they would refrain from unauthorized behaviors despite mediational effects of structures or cultures and despite the differing notions of what constitutes academic integrity. Students who are influenced by structures and cultures or who disagree with the construction of academic dishonesty are labeled "cheaters" making it relatively easy to remove them from the system or penalize them in some way. An emphasis on student development rather than deviance could label the students as intellectually incapable, morally unsophisticated, lazy, or inadequately skilled in such areas as time management, but the outcome is the same. Unfortunately, the emphasis on the responsibility of the student agent constrains institutions from examining the co-existing structures and cultures that may be contributing to the construction of the problem. These limitations of Integrous Individualism are the foci of the next chapter.



## CHAPTER SIX

### THE LIMITATIONS OF INTEGROUS INDIVIDUALISM

Ideologies tend to “emphasize some aspects of social reality...and neglect or even suppress other aspects” (Geertz, 1973, p. 198). The dominant ideology, Integrous Individualism, employed by the Councils in the case three institutions frames the problem in a way that emphasizes the role of the individual student agent in the construction of the academic dishonesty problem. This problem framing directs organizational responses toward focusing on the reformation of the student from the deviant student to moral citizen or ignorant scholar to scholarly citizen. The limitation of this framing is that it ignores or downplays other possible interpretations of the issue, in particular, the influence of systemic structures and cultures in constructing the problem of academic dishonesty. I argue in this chapter that, ultimately, by focusing on reforming student dysfunctionality, Integrous Individualism is limited because the over-simplification of the problem inhibits the leadership necessary for organizational change.

#### Chapter Overview

In this chapter, I apply the theory of Systemic Interactionism to explore the limitations of Integrous Individualism framing. This analysis is based on the “alternate” voices that speak beyond student dysfunctionality to structural and cultural forces. This analysis is considered “alternate” because it is not aligned with Integrous Individualism, but it is also considered significant because it is voiced by several participants and supported by external theorists and researchers. I argue that attending to these themes and the complex interplay among them is critical because otherwise the complexity is ignored and the problem is treated too simply. After providing evidence that the problem is complex, embedded as it is in conflicting notions and competing interests, I touch upon

four consequences of the over-simplification: (1) dissonant voices are silenced; (2) the issue is trivialized; (3) organizational incongruencies are not addressed; and, (4) Council change agency is constrained. In the end, I argue that these consequences inhibit leadership toward organizational change.

### Systemic Interactionism: The Complexity of Academic Dishonesty

Integrous Individualism highlights the individual student agent's responsibility to do his/her work independently using his/her own words, thoughts, and ideas. Participants speaking from Integrous Individualism label students as disintegrous when they challenge or act counter to faculty authorization. Disintegrous students are characterized as taking the moral low road, avoiding intellectual engagement and their responsibility to do their own work in their own words. This characterization of the problem, however, ignores co-existing structures and cultures that co-construct the problem. In this chapter, the voices that speak to these formalized structures and cultures are accessed for their contribution to reconsidering academic dishonesty as a complex problem (recall Figure 2).

What emerges specifically from this research is that the complex interplay among the interactants (agency, structure, and culture) creates conflicting notions about the nature of knowledge and information, and competing interests in the purpose of higher education. More to the point, this research points out that complex and ambiguous tensions remain unaddressed and unresolved, operating to continually reproduce the problem even as individual agency is addressed. The downplaying or ignoring of these tensions inhibits leadership toward organizational change because at a fundamental level, the underlying assumptions and values (i.e., culture) that guide normative behavior are not being addressed. That is, the complexity of the problem is ignored and the problem remains unresolved. This section is divided into three sub-sections to address the findings

of conflicting notions and competing interests, and the reconsideration of academic dishonesty using Systemic Interactionism as a more robust framing of the problem.

### *Conflicting Notions*

I found in this study that the complex interplay among agency, structure, and culture (within and between systems) has created some fundamental conflicting notions that seem to be shaping the academic dishonesty problem. Specifically, technology structures, the K-12 culture, and the larger American culture impact the agents and dominant culture of higher education to co-construct some fundamental notions of knowledge and information that conflict. These conflicting notions operate within the organizational culture to produce norms from which agents act. Some of these norms align with the dominant culture and some align with sub-cultures (e.g., the student culture). In other words, conflicting notions produce cultural and counter-cultural expectations that shape agency and understandings of what constitutes integrous and disintegrous academic conduct. Two prevailing conflicts emerge from the research data: a conflict between the notion that knowledge is independent versus collaborative, and a conflict between the notion of information as personal versus communal property. These two conflicts are described next.

*Collaborative versus Independent Knowledge.* As the reader recalls from Chapter Five, Integrous Individualism is embedded in a higher education culture that privileges independent work as the integrous or legitimate way to construct knowledge and engage in the work of the academy. It is in this way that Integrous Individualism supports meritocracy. By equating integrous work with independent work, Integrous Individualism marginalizes any challenges to the privileging of independent work over collaborative work. The notion that knowledge is collaborative, however, co-exists in the academy and

in the larger system of which higher education is a part. In particular, many research participants express that the K-12 system advocates collaborative or cooperative work as a legitimate way of learning and accomplishing academic tasks; students are encouraged to work together, receive aid from parents, and use the internet for help in completing assignments. A non-Council undergraduate student affirms this claim:

When we were kids, what was the number one thing they taught us that they've never taught before in the school system? Teamwork. Its not whether you win or lose, its whether you work together. So its teamwork, we're working together, we have the internet, we share and I think that could lead to better things. Why do we have to have everything memorized when I can rely on other people around me, specialty people?

The above quote demonstrates that the privileging of independent work over collaborative work is not a notion shared throughout the educational system or even within the specific higher education organization of which the students are a part. In other words, the very definition of what constitutes dishonest and integrous work is altered by the structures and cultures in which the defining is taking place. For example, the broader American culture is placing increasing value on the use of collaborative learning and external aid, expecting that educational institutions will provide students with enough aid (whether academic, psychological, social, or financial) to ensure greater chances of degree attainment (Hubbard, 1995). As a result of growing cultural acceptance of collaboration, several structures have been institutionalized to provide students with external aid beyond that traditionally provided by the teacher or parent (e.g., Writing Centers, tutors, SAT prep classes). The tension between knowledge as collaborative and knowledge as independent, then, is exacerbated by the co-existence of structures that simultaneously reinforce both the expectation of independence and the expectation of collaboration.

Thus, students come to college and university with several years of experience in, and reinforcement of, collaboration and information sharing. Yet undergraduates who continue to engage in behaviors defined as integrous (or at least not specifically defined as disintegrous) within the K-12 or larger American culture now risk punishment within the higher education culture where that same behavior is defined as disintegrous. Essentially, students are transformed from being good and active learners to cheaters simply by virtue of the structure and culture in which they are situated, not by virtue of their own personal agency. This creates an unresolved tension within the three case institutions as to how students at all levels of education should complete academic assignments and “as to what are the most powerful forms of knowledge” (Gould, 2003).

One administrator describes the tension in this way:

Young people are being ingrained in public ed with ‘we have to work together, we have to work together.’ Its okay to work together. Its not just ‘we have to, ‘but its okay. So then they’re bringing that to the academy where probably the majority of faculty are grey hairs who were not raised under that push to work together. We had to work alone. (HU administrator Council member)

This collaborative-independent thinking tension, then, is rooted in the structures and cultures produced and reproduced by various agents who hold conflicting viewpoints. Structures that support collaborative thinking (e.g., peer-learning groups) and those that support independent thinking (e.g., examinations) co-exist to create conflicting norms, values, and behaviors. In addition, structural disparities between educational systems (i.e., K-12 and higher education) seem to add complexity and ambiguity.

Several of the research participants also report a lack of structural support in high school for explicating the distinction between authorized and unauthorized academic

conduct. Take, for example, this comment by an HU undergraduate Council member who is also a student teacher:

I don't think in high schools they emphasize plagiarism as much as they probably should and really tell them the extent of how its really a bad thing to do. I think the high schools don't emphasize it as much so when you have a freshman come here and write a composition one paper and forget to cite stuff, I think it's just because they really honestly don't realize it. Now some people do realize it and they make that wrong choice and veer to the left, but I think some of it is honest mistake.

In other words, the conflict between the independent-collaborative notions of knowledge may be reproduced by structures and cultures that support one over the other, but also by the absence of structures and cultures that explicitly express the valuing and importance of independent thinking.

The conflict between the independent-collaborative notions of knowledge may also be a result of the interaction between technology (especially the internet and wireless capability) and agency. An EU administrator Council member illustrates the potency of the interaction when he describes plagiarism as: "in the same category as downloading music. You know, it's technically illegal but it's widely accepted in the culture." As the internet continues to mediate agency in a way that erases physical boundaries between people, it may become increasingly difficult to argue that knowledge is (or should be) constructed independently and in isolation. In that case, then, the way in which construct knowledge may be experiencing a reconstruction as a result of the emergence of an "ideology of peer-to-peer file sharing" (Vaidhyathan, 2004, p. 19). The ability of technology to structure collaboration, peer-to-peer sharing, as well as the increasing acceptance of collaboration in parallel sub-cultures (i.e., K-12) creates a tension within higher education. The co-existing collaborative culture conflicts with the dominant

culture that privileges meritocracy and the value of independent thinking and independent assessment.

The tension, then, really is about who gets to claim what constitutes legitimate academic work. Faculty and students are left to resolve this tension by attempting to accommodate both collaborative learning and independent assessment in their work. The co-existence of collaborative and independent effort creates ambiguity and confusion as it is difficult to ascertain when collaboration ends and independent thinking begins. As a result, students receive messages like the following:

What I say to the students, especially once they've gotten into this process, is... 'we want you to work together. We want you to discuss. We want you to lean on each other and talk to each other. We want you to talk to your professors and talk to people in other classes that are reading the same book. We want all of that stuff to happen. But there's a moment where we want you to step aside...and say now here's what I have to say. So that we can see the processes that you have gone through. And we can see where you've gotten from there.' So it's kind of a middling ground on that. It does favor...independent, original thought. But...after a whole series of process of collaboration. (LC administrator Council member)

Although the line between collaborative learning and independent thought is clearly drawn by this faculty member, it is much more difficult to picture how this works in practice, especially for students who are learning how to learn. This finding invites a reconsideration of some unauthorized student behaviors, specifically those that are oriented around information sharing, collaborative work, and the use of external aid (e.g., sorority or fraternity test files). For example, unauthorized academic behaviors could be framed as self-authorization (Baxter Magolda, 1999). Research participants express that oftentimes student self-authorization of legitimate academic work is a way to compensate for ineffective or unresponsive faculty members. Take, for example, this statement by an HU student who responded to a survey about academic dishonesty:

To me, discussing the assignment with classmates and friends is not only a very effective learning tool, but it is also a valuable way of using resources. Lots of times the teacher might be a bad teacher---if they can't get the point across, students should be able to learn in other ways, from other people.

This quote illustrates that students have some need to self-authorize academic methods because of weaknesses within higher education structures and agents. By routinely characterizing unauthorized academic work as “disintegrating,” we consequently deauthorize students to take responsibility and accountability for their own learning and education. Such a deauthorization of students may not, in the end, effectively serve the goal of developing intellectually empowered moral citizens because the focus becomes on the student doing academic work “correctly” rather than doing it for learning. This notion that it has to be “correct” is tied to the protection of meritocracy; if one does not construct knowledge independently, then he/she is guilty of academic dishonesty.

The preceding quote also illustrates that depending on the authorization of faculty to ensure that integrative learning occurs is an incomplete resolution to the problem. Regardless of their academic qualifications, not all faculty members have the independent capacity to determine how learning will best occur in every classroom and assignment for every single student. Thus, faculty authorization of “integrative” work will not always equate with work that is facilitative of learning. By relying on faculty authorization for directing student behavior, students are deauthorized for finding ways to do their academic work that makes it meaningful learning for them.

*Information as Communal versus Information as Personal Property.* Alternate themes also refer to an underlying tension between the notion of information as personal property and information as communal property as exemplified in the following quote:



The question of intellectual property rights is going through tremendous transformation. And it is in part, I think, because the community's conception of knowledge is changing. And who owns what piece of knowledge. (LC faculty non-Council member)

Challenges to the notion of information as personal property are not new (Vaidhyathan, 2004) and have been enlivened at various times in response to other technological advances (e.g., the photocopier). The challenges have always been related to the difficulty of applying a property theft law to something that is not in scarce supply. As Vaidhyathan (2004) notes, "If someone steals my car, I am left with no car. Yet if someone photocopies my book, I still have my book" (p. 87). Essentially, intellectual property laws are meant to protect academic capital, the ability of someone to profit off their ideas and information.

While the challenges to intellectual property may not be new, they may now be taken to new depths as the internet enables information sharing and constructs a culture of communal (free) information. An administrator at Lasallian College describes the effects of the internet on information in this way:

[There is a] shift where a lot of our students do believe that [the internet] is just collectively shared information and that's all of our kind of, mutual brain, that we can tap.

It is difficult to ascertain, or perhaps care to know, who owns what piece of knowledge when, via the internet, money is not exchanged for the information but for the information sharing service. Thus, the very structure of the internet may be creating a notion that information is communal property and, therefore, free. So, for this current college generation raised in the internet age, using the information that is widely available for communal use in order to accomplish a goal such as learning or passing a

test may be conceived of differently than those raised in the pre-internet era. One HU undergraduate non-Council member argues:

Its stealing to your old rules. Its theft to your old rules. But to my generation its culture and culture has to be shared. If I can download and listen to someone else's music, why can't I use this sorority house file?

This gap between the way in which the faculty generation views information and the way in which the student generation views information may only widen as students born in the nineties begin to enter the academy. The same HU undergraduate non-Council member observes the impact of the evolution of information sharing:

As the world got to be a smaller place and information was shared, it evolves faster and faster and, you know, clear up to the industrial age, just this huge boom and then the computer age and now we're dealing with the internet and I really think that the people in charge are stuck in this small box, old world kind of view, whereas we're a new generation and its all about information sharing.

One faculty member also expresses this generation gap in speaking of the difference between himself and his son:

Its more difficult to put myself in the position of students today who have had these tools available to them and much more sophisticated ones available to them from the start. My own son, who's in the fifth grade, uses a computer to do some of his writing at school and they do research for projects and things on the web, they pull up things and information and write reports and so on. And that's mind boggling to me and so it's definitely got to be influencing the way that they think about the...the value of information, and the proprietary nature of information and knowledge and the right and necessity of people to be credited for work. So much just appears to be free. It's a little bit like...the water. You turn on the water and you drink it, and it appears to be free. Right? The information on the internet, you just go there and you click and it appears to be free and so gives a very skewed feeling of its value. You use it differently if you think it's free. (EU Faculty Council member)

This faculty member's use of "appears to be free" occurs three times in this quote suggesting that he assumes information is not communal but personal property. However, his notion of information as personal property competes with the notion held by his son

that information is communal property. I find this quote particularly interesting because it suggests a concern that there will be a crisis in the academy's "water" (i.e., information) supply if it continues to be treated as free by subsequent generations:

Information is so accessible that people may feel that it, like most things on the web, are free to them. And while they might be financially free and logistically easy to obtain, they're not intellectually free and that distinction often doesn't cross the minds of students. (LC administrator Council member)

The analogy between information and water is tenuous since unlike water, information is likely to continue to grow in supply and thus, the difficulty of enforcing intellect as property (which is meant to produce artificial scarcity) may become exacerbated.

The concern expressed by several of the participants is that the notion of information as personal property is quickly losing value in the United States culture, i.e., students are "not putting a value on 'this is my idea'" (LC undergraduate Council member). If there is indeed a conflict between information as personal property and information as communal property, then students may find it increasingly difficult to comprehend the link between citation rules and their personal integrity. In other words, if information is "free" it cannot be stolen and therefore using it without attribution does not jeopardize personal integrity. One research participant expresses the confusion in this way:

I think that students could quite sincerely say, 'I have integrity,' and not see what they do as being a violation of that integrity when it involves certain kinds of things, like how they access information on the internet. (LC administrator Council member)

*Summary.* If there are conflicting notions of what counts as knowledge (collaborative versus independent) and whether or not information can be personally owned, as the findings from this study suggest, the problem of academic dishonesty can be considered

much more complex than students misbehaving or misunderstanding academic rules. Rather, it can be conceived that these conflicts are creating ambiguity out of which people are attempting to act. Also, the resulting tensions from the conflicts shape new ideas about education, learning, and the purpose of the undergraduate degree. The integrity policy approach, which seems to assume that the dominant hegemony of independent knowledge and information as personal property constitute the natural and unalterable reality, neglects to consider the unavoidable impact that technology exerts, and will continue to exert, on our conceptions of knowledge and information. The alternative voices in this study are supported by external voices who also comment on the impact of technology on higher education:

The essential process of higher education is the transformation of information into knowledge, and knowledge into insight. With technology catalyzing such massive changes in how we manage information, and with cognition, communication, and collaboration helping us transform information into knowledge and insight, the implications for higher education are immense. (Tuller, 1997, p. 35)

### *Competing Interests*

The alternate voices also suggest that there exists competing interests in the purpose or value of the undergraduate education. Specifically, what emerges from the data is the co-existence in the academy of a competition between what I call market and citizen interests. Market interests can be defined as rooted in consumerism, commodification, and industrialization of higher education; that is academic products are valued as capital, people are seen as consumers, and higher education is perceived as an industry (Gould, 2003; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). In the market interests of higher education, education is a commodity that “has a use for the world of work, professional and pre-professional training, policy development, inventions, and patents” (Gould, 2003, p. 102). The dominant framing at EU is most evidently an argument against the market

interests of pre-professional students. However, the influence of market interests is also seen in the other two case institutions. For example, one undergraduate council member theorizes that:

My generation as a whole, come to college to make more money. You know, they don't see it as getting an education or new experiences. They are just here so that they can make more money some day. When you have that kind of attitude where you really don't want anything out of your education other than the dollar amount at the end, you definitely develop an apathy toward, maybe, taking a harder way of getting to a conclusion.

Market interests are in direct conflict with the citizen interests privileged in the Integrative Individualism framing. Citizen interests can be defined as the valuing of social justice, democracy, learning for learning sake, and personal growth and development (Gould, 2003; Kezar, Chambers, & Burkhardt, 2005).

Although market interests in the three case institutions are generally attributed to the dysfunctionality of the student body, these interests are reproduced by the structures and cultures of the academy as well as the dominant culture of the larger society. The participants themselves, as represented in the following quote, note that the undergraduate degree is considered in the American culture as the key to social mobility:

[There is a] pressure that's on people, you know, you have to go to college. That's a big thing I guess. I know the parents are like, 'you have to go to college and then you'll be successful.' There's a lot of pressure on going to college and not a lot of people are meant for college. (EU undergraduate Council member)

In contemporary society, adults with a bachelor degree earn more money than those with a high school diploma enabling movement from lower socio-economic status to higher status, ultimately increasing the likelihood of marketplace prosperity. In this sense, the undergraduate degree is considered a valuable consumer purchase, the product one needs in order to be successful in the knowledge age. Students, are encouraged to act as free

market agents and, especially those who are “good,” are encouraged to shop the various institutions and “purchase” the degree they consider to hold the highest market value. Many of the research participants express that students are very familiar with this market and understand that degrees from certain institutions (e.g., Elite University) hold more value in society than degrees from other institutions (e.g., Lasallian College).

Market interests are not just subscribed to by the students but are reproduced within the institution of higher education by structures and cultures. One EU faculty Council member lamented that the competitive world of business and the corporate culture have invaded the academy to place a greater “emphasis on rankings [and that] can’t help but permeate the atmosphere for the students.” This market atmosphere appears to be further exacerbated by institutional structures that symbolize the academic degree as a product to be consumed, rather than an educative experience. Five structures in particular emerge in this study as influencing the market-like agency of the educational institution: concurrent enrollment; advanced placement classes; double-dipping; and, general education requirements. The first four of these structures seem to interact in a complex way to produce a normative value of expediting educational requirements to facilitate the acquisition of the bachelor degree. The last structure, general education, seems to interact with the culture of capitalism to convey the message that student learning or citizen development is less important than economic efficiency.

The concurrent enrollment practice enables high school students to enroll in one class for dual credit (high school and college-level). Students privileged enough to be in an educational system that has concurrent enrolment opportunities enter college with a

certain number of requirements already completed. This practice is explained by an HU administrator non-Council member:

Some students are coming to universities throughout the United States with as many as thirty hours of concurrent enrollment classes, i.e., one fourth of what they need for their university degree, taken at a high school. Taught by a high school teacher but given dual credit as a university/college credit.

The advanced placement (AP) structure complements that of concurrent enrollment. AP classes are high school classes that are intended to be more rigorous for college-bound students. Students who do well in these classes matriculate into college with a better than perfect GPA score. The concurrent enrollment and AP structures enable students to “jump start college” (HU Administrator, non-Council member). The third structure, elective “double-dipping,” counts one elective course as two general education requirements. These three structures co-exist with other structures such as the integrity policy to create a conflicting and ambiguous educational environment. Concurrent enrollment, AP classes, and elective “double dipping” all authorize students to use their resources to by-pass educational requirements at the same time as the integrity policy de-authorizes students from engaging in comparable academic conduct. This co-existence creates a tension within the institution of higher education that students are expected to live within and manage.

Students also seem to be struggling with the general education structure, which they perceive to be manifestations of economic efficiency concerns rather than concerns for student learning. One undergraduate non-Council member argues this tension between learning and economic efficiency:

I really see [academic dishonesty] in elective classes and big classes and busy work. [One] class was so big that when everyone showed up for it, there were over 50 people that didn't have a seat. I remember the whole front of the stage

was lined with people. People sitting on the walls. That's not right. And that's when it became clear to me, 'this is all about money.' They stack as many kids in this class. Why? Because, you know, you have to have these electives so they create these large classes that a professor who's needed elsewhere, only has to devote a little bit of time. Nobody really cares about the class and the university makes \$50, \$60 grand or more. And so...its money.

This class, a general education requirement, and others like it are perceived to be contributing to the problem of academic dishonesty in three ways: 1) they are usually extremely large classes; 2) they are not perceived to be relevant to enhancing life or career; and, 3) they are not perceived to be facilitative of significant learning. The structure of the large general education class communicates to students that teaching and learning are a lower priority than filling the seats with as many consumers (i.e., students) as possible. This point is reinforced by a graduate Council member who argues that "the institution doesn't value good teaching. They value the numbers. How many do you have in your class? How many students are you going to enroll? They value the numbers." Thus, class size seems to impact students' perceptions of the value placed on learning over capital. This perception may influence students to act more in line with economic efficiency than learning. The potency of structural influences on agency is best described by an EU Council student who, in the following comments, expresses his awareness that the general educational requirements are not effectively meeting the needs of the contemporary student:

I think that part of what contributes to academic integrity violations also is the major as its seen like as a course of study. I am very disappointed with the majors at EU because I don't think that holistic education involves me taking particular classes. I'm stuck with classes that I don't particularly enjoy. And a lot of what I hear from students that I talk to about academic integrity is, 'well this course is just a requirement. What do I care if I cheat? Like, I'm going to get through it anyway and I didn't really want to take it in the first place.' I think if you allow kids to take, you know, independent coursework and not have this sort of arbitrary a collection of courses that you deem appropriate for this major.



The above quote demonstrates that students may be seeking self-authorization, to have more say over what, when, and how they learn (Duderstadt, Atkins, & Van Houweling, 2002). When facing the prospect of having to pass required general education classes, students authorize themselves as market agents to secure the resources they need to obtain the credit capital. This may be why, according to the research participants, much of the unauthorized academic conduct occurs in general education classes, even at Lasallian College where these classes are not large. The “student learning cooperative” at LC, in this sense, is not perceived as a way to “cheat” but a way to tap into available resources to accomplish the goal of degree attainment. This distinction between cheating and using one’s resources is articulated by a student Council member at HU:

You’re not cheating, you’re using your resources. I think that’s a huge thing. Because its not cheating for...us to work on this project together. We’re just helping each other out. We’re just using each other for a little help.

The use of unauthorized resources (e.g., collaboration with friends, test files, technological aids) by students may, then, point both to their notion that knowledge is collaborative and information is communal, and to their interests in acting as market agents. It appears that market interests and notions of collaborative knowledge contribute to students’ beliefs about the way in which they should act within the academy. An LC undergraduate Council member argues that perhaps student agency evolves out of the resolution of this conflict between rule compliance and goal attainment:

What it comes down to is that you need to go to school to get a good job. And you need a good job to support your family. Right? And you need to support your family just to keep them alive, or something like that, right? So it all comes down to survival. And...if...you look like...if you look at the really, really big picture of it? If you cheat off two answers to feed your kid in the future? I mean that’s no question. Of course you would do it.

What this quote demonstrates is that agency is mediated by the competing interests created out of the complex interplay between structures and cultures. The interests of the marketplace conflict with the interests of being an integrous individual (defined as acting only in authorized ways).

Thus, the competition between market and citizen interests creates ambiguity and tension in two ways. There is, first of all, the ambiguity created by the simultaneous authorization of market-like behavior on the part of the educational institution and the de-authorization of market-like behavior by undergraduates. And second, there is the simultaneous authorization of behaviors that protect certain academic products as capital and de-authorization of behaviors that treat other academic products as capital. The same actions, then, are perceived in different ways depending on the interests being emphasized. Let's take, for example, the conflict that exists between the students and the Council over the use of external aid or collaboration. At LC, the Council is concerned about the extent to which students use Sparks Notes in the great books classes. At HU, the Council is concerned about the use of Greek test files. And at EU, the Council is concerned about students working together when they are expected to do independent work. When these actions are viewed from the Integrous Individualism framing, or citizen interests, the students are accused of academic dishonesty or lacking integrity because they "want to get ahead and advance themselves" (EU undergraduate Council member). However, when viewed from market interests, the students see their own behaviors as not cheating but "using our resources" (HU undergraduate non-Council member) to achieve a goal. The tension between these conflicting interests is real even though it seems possible that intellectually empowered moral citizens can also be market

agents who use their resources. However, the tension is unlikely to dissipate as it is embedded in a cultural war for power---whose ideas get privileged in the norms and values of the academic culture (Gould, 2003).

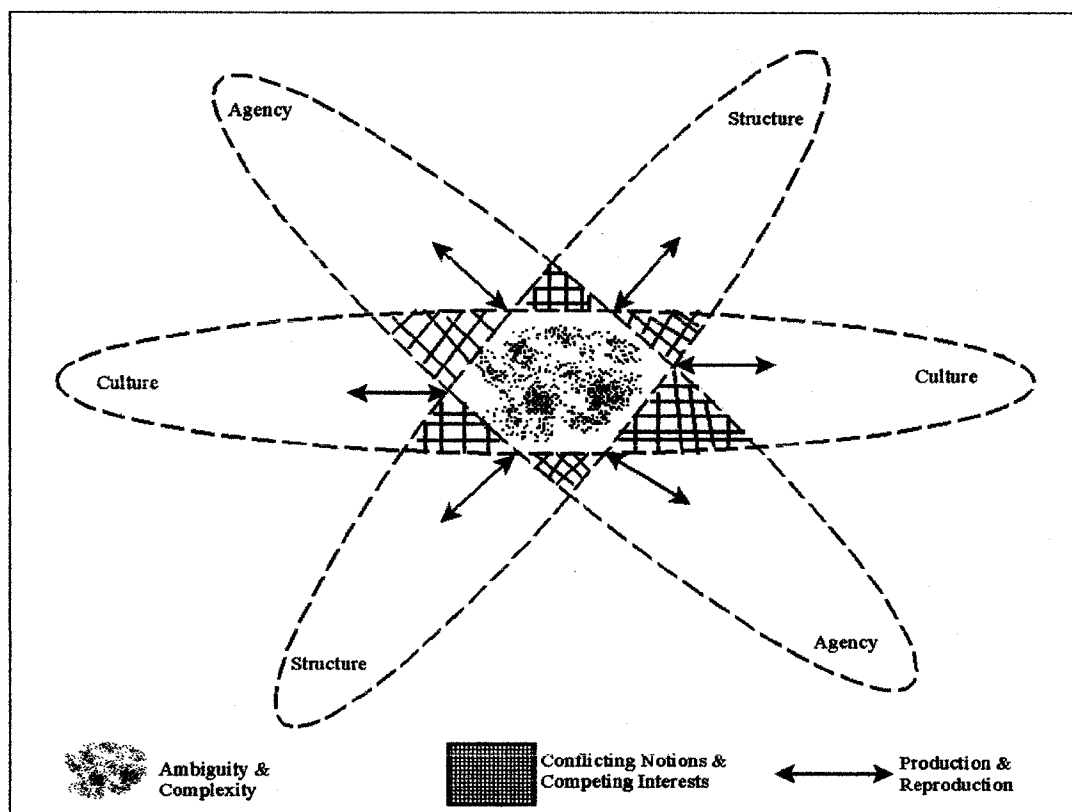
*Systemic Interactionism Applied*

Let's turn back to the theory of Systemic Interactionism for a moment to understand how these conflicting notions and competing interests suggest that the academic dishonesty problem is complex. In Chapter Two of this dissertation, I theorized that complex organizational problems are co-constructed by the complex interplay among agency, structure, and culture (recall Figure 2). The findings from this study, however, add to this understanding by suggesting that complexity is created out of the ambiguity that occurs when the complex interplay among agency, structure, and culture produces and is reproduced by conflicting notions and competing interests. I will unpack this.

In Systemic Interactionism, culture is considered to be "multivoiced," composed of multiple perspectives, norms, values, and assumptions that are produced and reproduced by diverse agents. The production and reproduction of cultural notions (i.e., norms, values, perspectives, and assumptions) is made manifest in structures that are constructed by agents to support their various interests. Because culture is "multivoiced," there is inherently conflict and competition among the various notions and interests co-existing within the academy. The notions and interests that rise to a position of dominance in a society or organization are those held by the agents with the most power or authority. However, the conflict between notions and the competition between interests remain despite the implementation of structures that privilege some of notions or interests over others. Persistence is the nature of the complex organizational problem that is rooted in unresolved but ongoing conflict and competition. As conflict and competition

become perceived by an increasing number of organizational members, ambiguity is created, serving to produce and reproduce the complex interplay among agency, structure, and culture. It is out of this ambiguous core that the complex problem is constructed.

This complexity is explained by Systemic Interactionism and pictorially depicted in Figure 3. The problem of unauthorized academic conduct is not, then, only a result of student agency or of ineffective structures or of a clash of cultures. Rather, it is the result of the dynamic interaction among agency, structure, and culture that produces, and is



*Figure 3.* Systemic Interactionism: a depiction of the dynamic interplay among agency, structure, and culture and the resulting conflicts and competitions that create complex and ambiguous organizational problems.

reproduced by, conflicting notions and competing interests. Structures, such as the internet, interact with agents and “multivoiced” cultures to produce conflict between notions of collaborative versus independent knowledge. When structures, such as concurrent enrollment, interact with agents and “multivoiced” cultures, the competition between market and citizen interests are reproduced. From the framing of Systemic Interactionism, then, unauthorized academic conduct can be seen less as the problem and more as the symptom of the complexity and ambiguity created out of this dynamic interplay. Conflicting notions of knowledge and information produce differing understandings of the purpose of higher education. If, for example, one subscribes to the notion that knowledge is independent and information is personal property, the purpose of higher education might be to independently produce pieces of intellectual property off of which one can benefit. If, however, one subscribes to the notion that knowledge is collaborative and information is communal, the purpose of higher education may be to use others and information for learning and the attainment of the degree. With information readily available to be independently accessed, in other words, formal education may become much more, not less, about collaboration and the sharing of resources.

Of course, the relationship is not this simple, nor I am suggesting that one person subscribes to one notion consistently over others. But I am suggesting that a more complex framing allows for the consideration that unauthorized academic conduct may be about more than a lack of personal integrity. It may be about students choosing ways to compensate for ineffective or misaligned testing and assessment structures perceived

to not be measuring what is “really important.” This tension is demonstrated in the following quote:

I think the cheating is really small things, more quantitative. Its tests and homework and quizzes and those are things... I mean I hate to say menial, but at the same time, I think there are levels of dishonesty. There's sort of a hierarchy. If we had a major problem with students plagiarizing papers, that would be a much more serious problem than cheat sheets or grading homework incorrectly. (EU undergraduate student)

The point being made by this quote, again, is that a shared conception of integrity does not exist; not all unauthorized acts are considered to be equally problematic. So beyond disagreement, there is a sense of a “grey area” in which students and faculty acknowledge the ineffectiveness of authorization to determine what is integrous and what is not. This grey area is elaborated upon in the following comment by an undergraduate LC Council member:

There's a grey area between group work and collaboration. You can say collaboration as in, 'you can talk to each other about the issue, just don't work as a group. You can go ahead and sit down and discuss a question, you just can't have the same answer on that question.' And I think that's the part where some clarity doesn't come through. You say students can talk over the work but they can't have the same ideas. What if somebody liked somebody else's ideas? Where does that leave us?

When the interests of completing an assignment and learning compete with the interests of abiding by authority (i.e., being integrous), the situation becomes very ambiguous and confusing for most students. Another LC undergraduate Council member spoke to some of the aspects of academic work that feed into this ambiguity:

A lot of things that seem like cheating are like the norms and the teachers expect you to do it, like group studying. That seems like cheating to me but of course its not because you're allowed to study in groups. But you have other people help you and they're tell you what to say when the test comes so I don't know. There's just a whole bunch of things that could be construed as you not doing your own work like going in for office hours. That could be seen as cheating your way out

of something just because the teacher's helping you out. So there's a whole... people expect you to cheat but you just can't cross a certain line.

What these quotes demonstrate is that beliefs and ideologies about integrity are not shared, that there is not a homogenous culture that supports common definitions of dishonesty and integrity. That which is cheating in one structure or culture but not in another supports the idea that culture and structure do influence behavior and that, therefore, the Integrous Individualism framing of the academic dishonesty problem is too simple. As a result of this over-simplification, students are forced to act out of these unresolved tensions. In this way, student engagement in unauthorized work may not always be about deviance or ignorance but a choice to self-authorize the resolution of the tension. The power of students to self-authorize appropriate academic behaviors can be diminished or enhanced in different contexts. This research has shown that students who engage in unauthorized academic behaviors may be doing so not from a sense of "cheating" but from a notion that knowledge is collaborative.

As more students, faculty, and administrators speak to or act in ways that support the notions and interests that are not dominant there will be energy or heightened tension created around the threat to institutional interests. A technical response to this threat is to frame the problem as one of agency or structure or culture and resolve it through the application of authority, attempting to make explicit what behaviors are authorized (i.e., integrous) and what behaviors are not (i.e., disintegrous). Although clarity of expectations is important in cultures that are "multivoiced," Systemic Interactionism suggests that this will not resolve the underlying complexity of the problem.

### The Consequences of Over-Simplification

The findings from this study suggest that there are organizational consequences to simplifying a complex organizational problem. That is, not only does the over-simplification mediate individual agency but also the ability of organizational members to resolve the problem. In particular, four organizational consequences emerge in this study: dissonant voices are silenced; the issue is trivialized; organizational incongruencies are unaddressed; and, council agency is constrained. I argue in this section that the most significant impact of these consequences is the inhibition of leadership toward organizational change.

#### *Dissonant Voices are Silenced*

Structures and cultures interact to create conflicting notions and competing interests and these conflicts and competitions limit the ability of members to dialogue about the issue. The voices that might speak to the conflicts and competitions are misaligned with the dominant hegemony, that is, they are “dissonant,” making it difficult for them to be heard. In all three case institutions, such dissonant voices are generally heard as expressing “excuses” or “rationalizations” for student misbehavior or dysfunctionality. This came to be very clear when several participants would begin to speak to the various influences of the problem but then refer to those perspectives as “rationalizations.” As one LC undergraduate Council member argued: “there’s always the ability to explain away and rationalize why [students] do these things and not really to focus on the real issue here which is doing your own work regardless of what else is going on.” In other words, the simplified Integrous Individualism framing silences those voices that might confuse the issue and question the privileged values of meritocracy and academic capital.



Delpit (1988) notes that a culture of silence is created when the dissonant voices are generally found in those that lack power or authority in the organization. For example, in the issue of academic dishonesty, students are going to be those most likely to speak to structural and cultural influences of the problem. The Integrous Individualism ideology silences the student voice quite easily because they are not authorized to do anything beyond manage their own integrity and report on other student breeches of integrity. Student voices are also silenced because the four year turnover of the student population significantly decreases the power and authority students have within the institution. One non-Council undergraduate student told a story about this problem:

[Administrators] are smart and, and if we come and say, 'we want this,' and they really don't want it, all they have to really do is just stall. Or stall it in a very non permanent way so that as soon as we leave, [the issue is] over. This is what EU's done with drinking, for example. Nine years ago, EU actually paid for kegs to be on the quad Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. And then it was cut back. They cut out Thursdays and then they got out Fridays and then they cut out Saturdays. And there was a bar on campus and they got rid of [that] four years ago. And, you know, at each point in time, these things are an outrage. When they moved the fraternities off the quad and sort of back, there was a huge stink. But what's going to happen? I mean, I was the last class to ever know that were fraternities on the quad. So as soon as I graduate, it's going to be gone. And nobody cares. And administrators know that. And so they just weather the storm for a while. And humor you with something token, and then you leave.

Faculty members, who should conceivably have sufficient power to speak, may not be willing to do so because challenging institutionalized features is not always in their best interests. For example, faculty might speak to the need to be rewarding for spending time on teaching and integrity, but this will not benefit the faculty member whose reputation and expertise in the discipline is established from time spent on research not teaching.

Beyond a real or perceived inability to self-authorize, people are unable to speak to the conflicting notions and competing interests because Integrous Individualism

presents a simplified view of a complex problem. That is, by framing the issue as one of personal integrity, any argument against the framing can be characterized as disintegrated. To borrow an argument from author Siva Vaidhyanathan (2004), *Integrous Individualism* is “a closed rhetorical system, a specific cultural instrument that extends a specific agenda or value... [and]... accomplish[es] what many closed-system ideologies hope to: they shut down conversation. You can’t argue for theft” (p. 22). In other words, any suggestion that academic dishonesty may be a result of something other than student integrity is perceived to be arguing against the value of integrity itself or the value of an integrity policy approach. This is particularly difficult in the three case institutions where the policy approach has, according to a LC faculty member, “mojo [because] it is the wave of the future.” Because arguments against the academic dishonesty/integrity dichotomy are difficult, voices are buried and a culture of silence results. One faculty non-Council member at LC expresses it this way:

There’s a certain fear of public speech especially around this issue. People are afraid to say what they actually think about revising the curriculum to reflect certain majority or minority ideological or philosophical views of things. It becomes so pervasive on a certain set of issues that we just live with it quite happily.

This non-Council faculty member is speaking to his acquiescence to the integrity policy with which he did not necessarily agree but could not rationalize arguing against.

The silencing of dissonant voices inhibits leadership toward organizational change in three ways. First, it creates a sense of false consensus around the issue; if only those who agree with *Integrous Individualism* can speak up (or be heard), then there is an assumption of a shared culture of values and shared understanding of integrity. Argyris (2000) also makes this point:

False consensus occurs when one or more members of the management team do not agree with the choice that emerges but do not reveal their concerns or discomfort to the group... If the concerns of these silent members are not voiced, the concerns cannot be resolved in the process and commitment cannot be built... The result: the silent but doubting members of the team drag their feet in implementation or work actively to subvert implementation. (p. 202)

The dragging of the feet is manifested in the case of academic dishonesty by the faculty and students who do not report cases of academic dishonesty to the Council.

Second, the complexity of the problem cannot be addressed because it is the dissonant voices who would speak to it. The tensions that do contribute to the problem are unspeakable and therefore ignored and deep change is paralyzed. Third, those who are silenced may choose to refrain from complying with the policy, further exacerbating organizational tensions and inhibiting change. This lack of policy compliance is clearly happening on each campus when as many as thirty percent of the students admit to engaging in unauthorized behaviors but less than one percent of the total student population is reported for policy violations. There is, then, the possibility of a conspiracy; when people keep silent about the issue it profoundly affects institutional culture. This possible consequence is most eloquently relayed in a story about a jazz course at EU:

The same papers were being recycled every year. Some papers were handed in as many as five times as near as we can tell. They didn't even give him a TA so the students knew that he couldn't possibly be grading these things. And everybody got a pretty good grade. And so....but everybody knew on campus. I knew for two years. And it was reported to the Dean several times but nobody wanted to do anything. (EU faculty non-Council member)

"Everybody on campus" knew about this case of students recycling papers from year to year but no one said anything to the professor. Perhaps voices were silenced because to speak to the issue would require not just the punishing of students, but a serious reconsideration of the structures and cultures that co-created the situation. I suggest that

the silencing of voices can corrupt the integrity of the institution and therefore should be as much of concern as the academic dishonesty itself.

*The Issue is Trivialized*

One of the major consequences of over-simplifying a complex organizational problem is that it is relegated to a concern of management rather than a concern of leadership. In the case of unauthorized academic conduct, framing the problem as a lack of student integrity composes a solution that is focused on managing student conduct through prevention (education and promotion), policing, and punishment. This focus on student conduct management further reinforces the simplified framing of the problem which in turn reinforces the importance of conduct management. This is demonstrated most clearly at Lasallian College during its first year of policy operation. In the fall semester, the Council members seemed to be effectively struggling with the tension between holding individuals accountable for their choices and ensuring institutional structures that support and reinforce integrity:

What we have to do is we have to provide in the system and then provide through the individual contacts (teacher to student, student with student) a framework in which it is clear what the right thing is to do. If it is clear what the right thing is to do, then the majority of people will do it. And if we support doing the right thing, then even more people will do it. (LC administrator Council member)

However, after adjudicating twenty-five cases, the Council members seem less focused on organizational change and much more oriented to ensuring that individual students are reformed:

I've been really pleased with the reactions in that a lot of [students] have seen it as, kind of, an aspect in their life where they have made a poor choice and they are accepting of them and have kind of realized that. (LC undergraduate Council member)

Argyris and Schön (1974) refer to this reinforcement as single-loop learning; when a problem is framed, only information that fits into that framing is processed. Thus, there exists a pattern of continuous framing-composition reinforcement; the way in which the problem is framed reinforces the solution composed, which in turn reinforces the problem framing. In this sense, the issue is trivialized because additional information is not taken in and the complexity of the problem is not seen. Alternative ways of framing the problem, for example as a teaching and learning issue, are ignored. The following quote by an EU undergraduate Council member highlights the importance of addressing the complexity of the issue:

So if you promote a culture of academic integrity, the way that they have to go about doing that is making stronger courses, asking tougher questions, and being more, sort of, appropriate in how much work they assign and how much work they expect out of their students. That leads to a better classroom dynamic and a better intellectual climate. Increase their standards, raise the level of discussion, ask students to think independent thoughts, innovative thoughts and not reinvent the wheel, and then what that leads to is just a drastic reduction in the amount of academic integrity work that needs to be done.

The above quote illustrated that when the problem is framed differently, then the composed solution will also be different. To say, then, that the issue of unauthorized academic conduct is trivialized to academic dishonesty does not imply that the three case institutions are not taking the issue seriously but rather that they are not seeing it as a complex organizational problem that is rooted in fundamental university functions such as teaching and learning.

The reinforcing process that trivializes the issue to one of student conduct management also over-emphasizes the use of external authorization to resolve the problem. Defining academic dishonesty as “unauthorized” academic work allows the institutions to manage the ambiguity created by the complexity of the problem and

reinforce the issue as trivial. This dependence on the instructor to declare integrous and disintegrous academic behavior makes it difficult for the community to mobilize around a more complex framing of the problem. This also hinders coherency and consistency in attention to the issue:

I've gone to talk to faculty who don't care if their students cheat on this campus and they're just, 'yeah, but you know. It's a large lecture, it really doesn't bother me,' or, 'okay, well I'll add a proctor,' you know its just....it seems like you can't even make headway. (HU undergraduate Council member)

The research participants not only express difficulty in mobilizing faculty to address the issue in their individual classrooms, but mobilizing faculty to participate in the Council as part of their institutional service requirement. All three Councils seem to experience difficulty in filling the faculty seats on the Councils. Because tenured faculty members see the issue as too trivial for their involvement (compared with issues addressed by Senate, for example), untenured faculty cannot afford to serve if it will not be valued in the tenure process. One faculty Council member at HU expressed this tension and his decision to serve regardless:

My colleagues don't necessarily see this as a valuable service component. They would rather see me serving on faculty senate or standing committees in the college. I claim it as service when I fill out the paperwork for my annual review but my department chair looks at it and says, 'yeah, yeah. You're doing a great job there but you need to do more of this.' And so what I do is I continue to do this and I try to do the other things as well.

As a result, the Councils are mainly comprised of students and untenured faculty who hold little power and authority to exercise leadership toward organizational change.

### *Organizational Incongruencies Are Left Unaddressed*

When a problem is over-simplified, dissonant voices are silenced and the issue is relegated to student conduct management, incongruencies within the organization are left unaddressed. Organizational incongruencies are directly related to the conflicting notions

and competing interests that co-exist in the academy; notions and interests manifest in structures (i.e., policies, practices) that are incongruent with each other, or incongruent with the dominant rhetoric. Many of the research participants express frustration with structures and cultures that they see as incongruent with the message of integrity and honesty. For example, one HU administrator Council member spoke of the incongruency between what the university promises students and what it actually delivers:

Its different to say, 'come to HU, you're going to have a good time. We've got good instructors and blah, blah, blah.' So what happens then to the student that comes, is put into a 500 person class....who doesn't know the campus because its so large. Who doesn't know where to get help and granted, students should probably know where to ask where to get help BUT, where's the integrity in that? You know, not allowing students to have the success you've promised them in the first beautiful literature.

The organizational incongruency described in the above quote is just one example of the many that exist when the tension created by conflicting notions and competing interests is left unaddressed. Although all incongruencies cannot be eliminated, leadership toward organizational change and the resolution of complex problems must be able to draw attention to these issues and mobilize people to face them.

More to the point, academic dishonesty is not simply about the integrity of the individual student agent but about the integrity of the institution as a whole. The importance of focusing on organizational culture is argued by this EU faculty Council member:

I continue to get this strong impression that the major administrative concern is locating cases of plagiarism and cheating, and punishing them appropriately, which is connected to, but I think in significant ways, different than...establishing a culture of honesty.

The actions of those at the highest level of organizational authority (i.e., administration) are critical in addressing organizational incongruencies. A concern with the integrity of

students' academic work, then, should be coupled with a concern with the integrity of faculty work, departmental actions, and institutional decisions. As an HU faculty Council member said to me, "why do we hold students accountable in situations where they did the best they could do under the circumstances? They worked within the structures that were provided." Leading organizational change requires attention to the way in which institutional structures and cultures support institutional integrity rhetoric, not just attention to student compliance with external authorization. For example, if Elite University desires intellectually engaged students, they need to not only attend to student integrity but to pedagogical and curricular integrity for the intellectual engagement of students. The challenges associated with this change initiative are highlighted by the comments of an EU faculty non-Council member:

What I'd like to see happen more broadly is faculty to think more intelligently how our ways of assessing students can be....supportive of better learning and hopefully supportive also of integral learning. But I think that its hard once you get into the faculty dimension of it. We are a research I university. The incentive structure for the faculty is not to spend a whole lot of time thinking about your teaching.

The attention to developing intellectually empowered moral citizens needs to be contextualized within a congruent approach to student, faculty and administrative agency, as well as the structures and cultures that support that agency. Without congruency, the value of academic integrity will not be infused into the core fabric of the institution (Huntington, 1968; Selznick, 1992).

Lasallian College is perhaps the institution most clearly attempting to address organizational incongruencies. Although they, like the other two Councils, centralize the student agent, they are also quite aware of the messages that organizational structures and dominant culture convey about what is valued on the campus. For example, they are



reviewing their general education requirements to ensure congruency with their message of developing engaged and empowered learners. Elite University also is attempting to align all of its student policies to support the message of the integrity policy. However, at both of these institutions, addressing the incongruencies is largely confined to addressing those directly related to the student body, rather than to those at a faculty, administrative or organizational level.

*Council Change Agency is Constrained*

The simplifying of the problem, silencing of dissonant voices, trivializing the issue, and ignoring organizational incongruencies all constrain Council agency to the management of student conduct rather than leadership for organizational change. The constraining of change agency is strongly connected to the protective function of the underlying ideology mentioned in Chapter Five. The protection theme became prominent in the participants' justifications for joining the Council. Student Council members express the desire to protect the value of their undergraduate degree from the threat of unfair and unjust distribution of rewards to students who engage in unauthorized academic work. Faculty Council members express their desire to protect the integrity of scholarship and to protect the privileged position of independent work. Administrator Council members seem most generally concerned with protecting educational quality from the damage caused by persistent academic dishonesty. In other words, the dominant ideology mediates Council agency toward protection of the system<sup>25</sup>. While this protection is understandable, it is also problematic because organizational reform can be

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<sup>25</sup> And by the "system" I mean the structures, cultures, and agents in place to support academic capitalism and meritocracy. This does not mean that the Councils were not attempting to improve their institutions because indeed I perceived this to be the case. Rather, this institutional improvement was conducted within the established system which continues to support dominant notions of knowledge as independent and information as property.

paralyzed when Council members function less as change agents and more as stewards of the integrity policy.

The consequences of this tension between change agency and stewardship became clear to me on the EU campus in the fall semester. I attended a workshop given by the honor council to a freshmen class and observed an inability on the parts of both the honor council students and the classroom faculty to engage in a dialogue about the complexity of the academic dishonesty problem. As stewards of the policy, the Council members were focused on overcoming organizational “resistance” to the academic integrity policy and its related values. As change agents, they might have been able to engage in dialogue about this resistance. Although clearly observed at EU, this tension does not exist only there. The focus for many of the Council members at each of the three case institutions seems to be on breaking down any points of contention and disagreement in order to convince “resistors” to comply with the integrity policy. As time and energies are spent promoting the value of the integrity policy and adjudicating and mediating cases, Council members have less time to address the underlying tensions and the problem remains unresolved. One non-Council undergraduate student at EU offered this analogy of the integrity policy approach:

[Its like] repainting the walls of your wet basement with really expensive paint. It seems like we're working on, to a large degree, on sort of a finishing of a product when you know that you haven't really dealt with the issues that made it crack in the first place. I mean, yeah, we can create these ebbs and flows of integrity and if we can publicize, you know, people who have been caught, maybe we'll dissuade people for a short period of time. If we reevaluate the Student Body Standard from time to time, we might bring to the forefront of students' minds, but we haven't really institutionalized it yet. Um....so yeah, you can continue to repaint the walls of your basement but the bottom line is....if your wet basement, if you haven't finished it, the walls are still going to crack.

In protecting the institution of higher education (i.e., by acting as stewards of the integrity policy), Council members may not be able to see the conflicting notions that will eventually create cracks in the very thing they are trying to protect. This inability to see “the cracks” is implied by an EU undergraduate Council member:

I think we need to figure out...just systemically figure out, what’s wrong. What’s not working and how we can make that work, instead of just doing blanket, you know, ‘let’s promote honor. Here’s a t-shirt. There you go. Now don’t cheat.’

The Council for Integrity in Academics at Elite University actually comes closest to having a representative body that could operate as a change agent since it is separate from the educative and adjudication bodies (although with membership overlap). Meeting minutes analyzed demonstrate that the CIA is dialoguing about the framing of the problem and the construction of solutions. However, even EU Council members struggle to challenge the dominant framing and to change structures and cultures that are contributing to the problem. As a result, energies at EU tend to be also spent on convincing students and faculty to “buy in” to the integrity policy. According to the participants, the problem with this approach is its focus. Rather than focusing on the learning implications of authorized and unauthorized academic work, the Councils focus on ensuring that students are doing their academic work “correctly.” The shortcoming of this focus is exclaimed by an undergraduate Council member who argues: “this is not just show up and take a scantron. This is show up, learn something and then go home at the end of the day and think about it.’ And that’s what we’re not doing. That’s what we are not doing.” In other words, because the Councils are focused on ensuring “correct” work to protect core institutional values (e.g., meritocracy and academic capital), the Councils

are not facilitating organizational change to prioritize learning and the development of intellectually empowered moral citizens.

This lack of attention paid to teaching and learning is reinforced by an EU faculty member:

[We have some] core pedagogical issues. So, its definitely a challenge with the faculty as much as it is a challenge with the students. Because I can certainly see students getting very turned off by work that they see as busy work. And being sort of smart enough to say, 'this is garbage. So why does this matter?'

By not examining the "garbage" of higher education, Council members are unable to engage in leading organizational change. I could see the struggle for some of the Council members as they attempt to blend Integrous Individualism with the reality of the educational organization. This struggle is best illustrated in the following quote by an HU undergraduate Council member:

[The students are] kind of missing the whole idea that they're coming here to learn things. But the classes that require them to take...to cover those electives are really dreadful classes. Like...you'd rather have your eyes poked out sometimes than go to those classes.

Council members, as stewards of the policy, have to hold students responsible and accountable for engaging in unauthorized acts regardless of how "dreadful" the classes are. However, charged as change agents, Council members desire to address institutional weaknesses or faculty agency but feel powerless to do so. This feeling may reflect a real lack of power because the Council is constituted mostly of students, non-tenured faculty, and staff. When reflecting on his inability to address the lack of integrity being exhibited by some of his faculty colleagues, an HU faculty Council member asks:

The question is how do I hold someone who has tenure, who is an associate professor. How do I hold them accountable for [fulfilling their responsibilities]? How do I as a junior faculty member, assistant professor, how am I even going to

approach that? I can't. I can't. I can't because that person has a vote on my tenure decision, you know?

In all three case institutions, Council members express frustration with the tension created by their ability to hold students accountable for their actions and their inability to hold faculty or the institution accountable for theirs. Many of the research participants who see student agency as only part of the problem view this lack of power as limiting their ability to create cultures of integrity. Thus, although the dominantly adopted Integrous Individualism framing constructs a simplified solution, many Council members perceive student body reformation to be a limited approach. This perception is effectively expressed by an undergraduate Council member at LC who is trying to find a resolution for the conflict between collaborative and independent knowledge:

I think its definitely positive to work with other students. It becomes a problem if the professor is unclear as to what their expectations are. I think that's where its really important for the professor to set aside a good portion of the first class to go over...what their expectations are on issues like that...just to try to head off any confusion that might become apparent later on. Because we even have things like blackboard so, as far as the students' perspective, the school is in support of group work and that type of thing. I think with...when even the school is providing technology like that that is even geared toward group conversation at the very least. I think that does become more important for faculty members to be clear on what they're expecting in their particular class.

The quote above suggests that to resolve the problem of academic dishonesty, Council members need the power to be able to do much more than reform the student body. They need to be able to create change in institutional structures and cultures that shape both student and faculty agency.

### *Summary*

The over-simplification of the academic dishonesty problem has four major consequences: dissonant voices are silenced, the issue is trivialized, organizational incongruencies are left unaddressed, and Council agency is constrained. In this sense, the

simplified framing, Integrous Individualism, produces a form of disciplinary power (Deetz, 1992) in which authority is used to relegate and punish student behavior, regardless of the culture and structures that mediate student actions and co-construct the problem. This disciplinary power is enacted by the Council members who are then so filled up with the prevention, policing, and punishing of academically dishonest behaviors that they have little energy or time for leading organizational change. When the over-simplification silences dissonant voices, it also creates a false consensus that reflexively reinforces the simplified framing and the perceived need for disciplinary power. People, then, are caught up in ridding the institution of “cheaters” in order to protect the institution. In other words, the student body acts as a scapegoat for the entire institution (i.e., if only we can rid ourselves of the cheaters, everything would be fine). Council members who speak to alternate possibilities are forced to choose between silencing their voice in order to remain a part of the Council or withdraw from actively trying to understand and resolve the problem.

The consequences of over-simplification also create a gap between Council members and the larger faculty and student bodies. Council members have a difficult time understanding and hearing those faculty and students who do not “buy in” to the “common sense” integrity policy approach. Those faculty and students are then labeled by Council members as resistant to integrity, lazy, or apathetic. This division between Council members and the larger membership further serves to reinforce the interests the ideology is protecting and marginalize the voices that may speak to a different interpretation of the “dishonest” behavior.

### Chapter Summary

In this chapter I reviewed the limitations of the dominant framing. **Integrous Individualism** ignores the complexity of the problem by emphasizing student agent dysfunctionality and downplaying structural and cultural influences of the problem. As a result, conflicting notions and competing interests created from the complex interplay are ignored. The simplified framing does not facilitate the exploration and understanding of notions of independent versus collaborative knowledge, nor the notions of information as personal versus communal property. The simplified framing also does not facilitate the exploration and understanding of the competing market and citizen interests of higher education. The interests for students to act as market agents versus citizens are significant mediators of student conduct and affect the way in which people conceive of integrous and disintegrous behaviors.

Overall, by not addressing the conflicting notions and competing interests, the over-simplified framing creates a situation full of ambiguity and misunderstandings. The three case institutions reconciled this ambiguity through the application of authority. By equating authorized work with integrous work, the institutions are free to authorize ways of “getting around” certain requirements (such as general education credits) or boundaries (such as a maximum GPA score) and de-authorize other ways of “getting around” institutionally established expectations (such as using test files to study). Moreover, these authorizations constantly shift, further contributing to misunderstandings and confusion among faculty and students. So, the question of what counts and what does not count as legitimate academic work remains unanswered.

There are several consequences to the over-simplification of the problem. Dissonant voices that might speak to other interpretations of the issue are silenced. The

issue is trivialized to an issue of authority and student conduct management.

Organizational incongruencies are left unaddressed, further complicating the issue. And, most critically, Council agency is constrained largely to the management of student conduct. All of these consequences of over-simplification inhibit leadership toward organizational change. So, although the simplified framing suggests that the resolution of the problem is “common sense,” the issue is much too complex to be resolved through the authorization and deauthorization of student conduct. Resolving the tensions inherent in such a complex organizational problem requires a substantially different approach, one that attends to the dynamic interactant interplay among the three interactants.



## CHAPTER 7

## CONCLUSIONS: RECONSIDERING ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

The focus of this study is on understanding the way in which three case institutions frame and respond to the problem of academic dishonesty. I do this to offer a reconsideration of a problem traditionally conceived of as student dysfunctional conduct. The findings from this study suggest that the problem of academic dishonesty is actually quite complex, co-constructed out of the conflicting notions and competing interests that result from a dynamic interplay among agency, structural, and cultural interactants. This study also suggests that over-simplifying a complex organizational problem serves to protect institutionalized features of higher education but with the consequence of inhibiting organizational change. Organizational change is inhibited because the simplification silences dissonant voices, trivializes the issue, leaves organizational incongruencies unaddressed, and constrains Council agency. Those responsible for the institution of higher education must protect it from deleterious effects that might result from persistent unauthorized academic behaviors, but centralizing the student as the responsible agent is a misdiagnosis of a complex organizational problem. And, this misdiagnosis leads to organizational responses that are reactive rather than adaptive (Heifetz, 1994) or generative (Senge, 1990). The reactive response is akin to what one faculty and one student Council member refer to as a “band-aid approach” to the problem of academic dishonesty. Such a reactive or “band-aid” approach, I argue, creates the space and opportunity for further corruption of the integrity of higher education.

The findings from this study suggest that Systemic Interactionism is a much more robust framing to use to reconsider problems, such as academic dishonesty, as complex

and organizational (rather than individual). Systemic Interactionism centralizes the mediational system of the interactants and opens up the space for considering conflicting notions and competing interests that co-construct the problem. Systemic Interactionism takes into account the agency of students as their actions relate to integrity but does not centralize student agency as the sole source of the problem or the solution. That is, treating academic dishonesty as a complex organizational problem does not negate the more simple explanation of student integrity but rather puts it in perspective, situating it within the context of a mediational system of interactants that continually exert force and influence on each other.

### Chapter Overview

In this chapter I summarize the study by reviewing the main conclusions that can be constructed from the research findings. The conclusions are offered in light of the goal to reconsider academic dishonesty as a complex problem and make suggestions for leadership toward organizational change. In that light, I first conclude that the way in which a problem is framed significantly affects organizational responses to the problem. The findings of this study indicate that the predominant framing over-simplified the problem of academic dishonesty and leads Councils to focus on reforming the student body through an integrity policy approach. Second, I conclude that the application of power and authority to resolve the problem actually inhibits its resolution. The findings of this study indicate that equating integrous behavior with authorized behavior downplays the conflicting notions and competing interests underlying the problem. This leads to the third major conclusion of this study. In order to resolve complex organizational problems, conflicting notions and competing interests must be addressed. The findings of this study indicate that when conflicting notions and competing interests

are ignored, there are significant consequences that inhibit organizational change. Thus, the final conclusion of the study is that Systemic Interactionism is a more robust framing through which to understand and analyze complex organizational problems and facilitate leadership toward organizational change.

### Problem Framing

In the twenty-first century, higher education organizations are facing a tremendous number of forces: “technology, new teaching and learning approaches such as community-service learning or collaborative learning, cost constraints, changing demographics, international competition, assessment, accountability, diversity/multiculturalism, and other challenges create a complex climate” (Kezar, 2001, p. 1). As the climate becomes more complex, so too will the organizational problems that must be resolved. Problem framing becomes particularly influential in resolving complex problems as noted by Gillette (1995):

As groups are enormously complex, uncertain, highly ambiguous, and relatively unstable, the framing process becomes extraordinarily important. Framing precedes the identification of problems, so that which might be a problem in one framework is relatively unimportant in another. Too often reflection assumes a frame and moves quickly to identifying problems. (p. 21)

Gillette’s (1995) point suggests that framing is a critical component of exercising leadership, which is ultimately about mobilizing people to learn new ways of doing and being so they can resolve complex organizational challenges and facilitate organizational change. If frames are assumed, complex problems are treated too simply and organizational members, convinced of the problem definition and solution, move too quickly to resolve the problem. The danger of this is that complex problems treated too simply may be managed or controlled but ultimately not resolved. Resolution of complex problems requires learning and, in order to learn, one must be able to reflect, analyze, and

use a variety of frames to “alter how we think about a new situation” (Gillette, 1995, p. 22).

Framing is the action of asking the question “what is it that’s going on here?” (Goffman, 1974, p. 8). Unfortunately, when organizations and problems are complex, determining what is going on in a particular situation is difficult. In addition, answering the question (that is, framing the problem) is mediated by one’s role, interests, understandings, and position within an organization (Goffman, 1974). Thus, there are usually multiple interpretations of the same issue co-existing within a single organization (Deetz & Kersten, 1983; Humphreys & Brown, 2002; Putnam, 1983). In order to provide guidelines for organizational responses, one predominant framing is usually adopted. I found in this study that the problem of academic dishonesty is predominantly framed as a problem of student agency. This framing suggests that students engage in behaviors the institution defines as academically dishonest because of dysfunctionality on their part; that is, they are either socially deviant or ignorant scholars. The social deviant is seen as one who intentionally skirts the system and shuns the rules in order to gain unfair advantage over his classmates, acquiring the degree without completing the expected work. The ignorant scholar is seen as one who engages in unauthorized academic behaviors unintentionally because she is unaware of the rules governing legitimate academic work. In both of these cases, the student is the unit of analysis and so the reasonable solution is the implementation of a policy to punish the social deviant and educate the ignorant scholar. Policy implementation in and of itself, however, is limited in its effectiveness because the over-emphasis on student agency mediation downplays the underlying tensions that co-construct the complex and ambiguous problem. While the

three case institutions do acknowledge some organizational responsibility along the lines of rules and expectations clarification, organizational responses are largely limited to changes thought to facilitate the reformation of the student body by preventing, policing and punishing unauthorized academic behaviors.

When the problem is framed primarily as a result of student misconduct it conveys a belief that the student is an independent agent powerful enough to be unaffected by systemic forces. It is expected, then, that as people of integrity or honor, students “will do the right thing, no matter what” (HU undergraduate Council member). The expectation of agentive power is a strong and prevailing excuse for the institution to not examine its own part (or the part of the larger society in which education is embedded) in the successes or failures of its students (McLaren, 1989). Thus, for example, the Integrous Individualism ideology supports claims such as: students would not flunk out of college if they only worked harder; athletes would not be put on academic suspension if only they struck a better balance between their sport and their academics; and, we would have a better community on campus if only the students were not so rude or disrespectful to each other.

A critique of the simplified framing, then, is a critique of the way in which the three case institutions attempt to contribute to the development of intellectually empowered moral citizens, not a critique of their responsibility to do so. The work the Councils do to ensure clear rules and guidelines for academic conduct is necessary and appropriate within the educational organization. Policies are one way to explicitly state expected behavioral norms and the desired culture of such a diverse and ambiguous organization as that of a college or university. In addition, policies are a natural extension

of the responsibility of higher education to teach students about the standards and expectations common in the professions of which they become members upon graduation. Finally, the use of policies to develop the intellectually empowered moral citizen is connected to the public good or social function of higher education. As one of the faculty members said:

Education has to be a two part operation. One is, learning the liberal arts skills that go along with it. But two has got to be integrity. We just aren't fulfilling any mission in my mind if we put people out with wonderful knowledge and no guidelines on how to use it. What a god awful condemnation is that of education? I mean in fact, you've armed them to be crooks. (EU faculty non-Council member)

Certainly knowledge without integrity is a dangerous combination, especially given the power and authority conferred on many of university graduates in organizations and governments. This danger has been made particularly evident in recent years by politicians and business executives who abuse their power and authority for personal gain at the expense of their colleagues, employees, and the American public. The findings of this study, however, lead me to conclude that ethical guideline policies will not facilitate the significant organizational change that is necessary to resolve the complex organizational problem of unauthorized academic conduct. The over-reliance on reforming the student agent neglects the reformation that is needed in institutional and systemic structures and cultures. Framing individual student behavior as a symptom of a larger problem, rather than as the problem itself, may facilitate different organizational responses and the eventual resolution of the complex problem.

#### Power and Authority

This leads to the second major conclusion drawn from this study. Power and authority are central issues in the reconsideration of academic dishonesty as a complex

organizational problem. In each of the three case institutions, there is disagreement over what constitutes academic dishonesty. In response, all three case institutions rely on the authorization of faculty to define integrous and disintegrous academic conduct. In other words, integrous work is synonymous with authorized work, and disintegrous work is synonymous with unauthorized work. This conflation downplays the importance of integrous work to ensuring learning. It also causes ambiguity because rules and expectations differ between assignments and faculty. The application of authority, then, creates a false dichotomy between different kinds of academic behaviors in an attempt to resolve the struggle over conflicting notions of legitimate academic work (on the part of the student, faculty, and institution) and over “whose voice gets to be heard” (Delpit, 1988, p. 296) in the determination of what is legitimate.

The key point is that the distinction being made in the three case institutions between integrous and disintegrous work lies not in how intellectually empowered the student is or whether or not she learns, but whether he completes the work in the way authorized by the instructor. In Chapter Six, I outlined several forms of “aid” that are considered to be academically integrous because they are authorized by the university or the larger educational system (e.g., writing centers, Sylvan Learning Centers, SAT prep classes). The function of most authorized aid is to compensate for inadequate educational training or personal weaknesses in specific areas. This clearly indicates that collaboration or aid are not “immoral” but only become so if they are not authorized by someone or something in power.

Thus, the Integrous Individualism ideology serves the interests of those in power and authority, specifically the institution of higher education and those who work within

the academic capitalist regime (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). The academic capitalist regime depends on the ability of people to own intellectual work and ownership is predicated on the ability to certify ownership. Thus, using another's words or ideas without attribution is labeled as plagiarism or theft and considered dishonest in the academy. Using sources of aid to help one complete academic work is labeled as cheating and considered dishonest in the academy. Working with other students on an assignment, project or test is labeled as unauthorized collaboration and is considered academically dishonest in the academy. The framing of all of these behaviors as disintegrated protects the capital that academic work has in today's society and the privilege that meritocracy has in explaining the ability of people to become successful in a capitalist society. None of these behaviors have been proven to be detrimental to learning or the development of intellectually empowered moral citizens, but they are definitely detrimental to our ability to assess one's individual merit and ability and to claim ownership over ideas.

The application of power and authority may actually inhibit organizational change because it focuses on managing the problem to protect institutional interests rather than allowing conflicting notions and competing interests to surface and inform new ways of teaching and learning. The application of authority may also, ironically, inhibit the development of intellectually empowered moral citizens if students become dependent on authority for approving ways to work and think. The problem at hand may then be reconsidered not as a problem of integrity but an issue of power and authority. Whose notions of knowledge and information are privileged? Whose interests are supported by institutionalized structures and what cultural norms and values do they convey? Who gets



to authorize methods of learning and who has the authority to determine what should be learned and assessed?

### Conflicts and Competitions

The above point brings us to the third conclusion of this study. The findings from this study suggest that in order to resolve complex organizational problems, such as academic dishonesty, attention must be paid to the conflicting notions and competing interests that co-exist within the organization. If attention is not paid to the complexity of the problem, organizational change is inhibited because dissonant voices are silenced, the issue is trivialized, organizational incongruencies remain unaddressed, and change agency is constrained.

This study found that academic dishonesty is embedded in conflicting notions about knowledge and information. Specifically, the notion that knowledge is created collaboratively conflicts with the notion that knowledge is created independently, with the latter notion supported by institutionalized beliefs in academic capitalism and meritocracy. The dominant, prevailing notion in the academy is that knowledge can be, and is, created independently. This notion of independent knowledge enables authorship to be determined and rewarded. However, authorship may not be as easily determined in the technology and information age as it was when only white middle and upper class men were allowed to author published work (Halbert, 1999). The legitimacy of the competing notion of collaborative knowledge is diminished by those in power and authority who stand to profit from the notion of knowledge as independent. We see academe's suspicion of collaboration in the tenure process where individual authorship is often valued more highly than joint authorship. So, although the devaluing of collaborative knowledge may dampen some of the "unauthorized collaboration" I suspect

that this competing notion will not dissipate as it is embedded in multiple structures and cultures. Thus, the issues underlying academic dishonesty will continue despite the simplified framing of the problem.

This study also uncovered the existence of conflicting notions of information as personal versus communal property (and therefore free). In particular, the sophistication and proliferation of technology appears to be altering how people view and use information. Our traditional-age university students, who grew up with the internet and use of computers, tend to see information more like water, a public good to be shared, while older generations tend to see information as capital. The notion that information is capital is directly tied to the notion that knowledge is independent because for information to be owned, it is necessary to be able to determine who owns or authors the information. The integrity policy approach to academic dishonesty rests on this notion of information as property, but a tie between integrity and attribution may not fit a generation that sees information as communal and free.

Finally, it seems that the **Integrous Individualism** framing ignores interests that co-exist but compete within the institution of higher education. Specifically, there exists alongside interests in higher education as a social institution to develop citizens the interests in higher education as an industry to produce capital. These are competing interests because they confound the underlying purposes of universities and colleges in the twenty-first century. Do universities and colleges exist to construct new knowledge to advance the public good and serve society, or do they exist to generate capital? Some would argue that the public good is advanced by the economic gains made from the construction of new knowledge, but as Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) argue, the

difference lies in whether academic capital becomes the *raison d'être*, rather than the knowledge construction itself.

In the issue of academic dishonesty, all three case institutions criticize the students in one way or another for treating their undergraduate degrees as a ticket for social mobility or success, yet themselves seem preoccupied by their status in the hierarchy of higher education institutions. The argument assumes that only those students interested in constructing new knowledge (i.e., intellectuals) are integrous, forcing Councils to resort to increase student interests in constructing new knowledge as a stop cheating mechanism. The argument also assumes that students interested in higher education as capital also are not interested in learning, ignoring the influence of structures and cultures on student engagement in learning and knowledge construction. Students who have rightly analyzed the value that an undergraduate degree holds in today's contemporary American society might be interested in learning while earning if the structures and cultures of higher education support that learning. I demonstrated in Chapter Six that conflicting interests in the institution of higher education communicate the message that learning is not as important as producing a product that can be evaluated for contribution toward degree attainment. I have also argued that authorized methods of getting around requirements (e.g., Concurrent Enrollment) communicate to students that earning the degree is more important than learning or independently constructing knowledge.

The complexity of the problem might be partially explained by what Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) in Academic Capitalism and the New Economy call a knowledge/learning regime shift within the American institution of higher education. The

idea that knowledge and learning should support the public good has been displaced by the idea that knowledge and learning should support academic capitalism. This displacement has not come at the expense of universities and colleges, but as a result of the “active, sometimes leading role that the academy plays in marketizing higher education” (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004, p. 305). In other words, according to Slaughter and Rhoades, the university is an agent of the marketplace rather than a victim of the market behaviors of its student population. The point that universities are themselves modeling the very behavior they protest of students is also made by Benson, Harkavy, and Hartley (2005) in Higher Education for the Public Good:

When universities openly and increasingly pursue commercialization, it powerfully legitimizes and reinforces the pursuit of economic self-interest by students and contributes to the widespread sense among them that they are in college solely to gain career skills and credentials. It would only belabor the argument to comment further on how student idealism is even more sharply diminished, student disengagement is even more sharply increased, when students see their universities abandon academic values and scholarly pursuits to openly, enthusiastically function as entrepreneurial, ferociously competitive, profit-making corporations. (p. 198)

What this quote exemplifies is that the commercial interests of higher education institutions conflict with, and challenge, a policy oriented toward producing intellectually empowered moral citizens. A policy cannot alter behavior and underlying norms and assumptions when there are more powerful, systemic, structural and cultural forces that conflict with the policy message.

Thus, I conclude that ignoring the complexity of the problem inhibits organizational change. As discussed in Chapter Six, organizational change is inhibited because the simplification of the problem silences voices who might speak to the complexity, trivializes the issue as one to be handled by front-line personnel rather than

high-level authorities, ignores organizational incongruencies that cause further tensions, and constrains Councils to the management of student conduct rather than the leadership of organizational change. In order to resolve a complex organizational problem, the values and beliefs that underlie the problem must be examined and in some cases, altered (Heifetz, 1994; Senge, 1990). This examination is inhibited when values and beliefs that conflict or compete with those that have weight in the dominant hegemony are unable to be spoken. A lack of awareness of the complexity of the problem will create further tension in the system as one group of agents (e.g., the students) are centralized as the cause of the organizational problem. As these agents continue to express diversity in values and beliefs, as well as question the privileging of some beliefs over others and the incongruencies between rhetoric and practices or between practices themselves, it is likely that the problem will be exacerbated rather than resolved. In the end, the goal of developing intellectually empowered moral citizens is perhaps hampered by the very approach adopted to reach that goal. In order to resolve complex organizational problems, then, a more robust framing is required.

### Systemic Interactionism

This brings us to the final conclusion of this study. The theory of Systemic Interactionism appears to be a more robust way to frame complex organizational problems. Systemic Interactionism suggests that to resolve complex organizational problems, attention must be paid not to individual interactants (e.g., agency, structure, or culture) but to the mediational system, the complex interplay among the three. The focus, then, should be on the integrity of the mediational system rather than the integrity of the individual interactant. We may need to ask what is being produced (or re-produced) by the mediational system and how it aligns with our rhetoric and goals for the institution of

higher education. If the goal is to produce intellectually empowered moral citizens, and I argue that this is a noble goal, then the way in which the entire mediational system enables or inhibits the reaching of that goal must be examined. Does the interaction of various institutional structures and cultures offer students the opportunity and space to develop intellectual capacity? Is the integrity policy, which is a structure to ensure students do work in authorized ways, aligned with faculty agency and pedagogical supports to ensure that work completed in authorized ways is also work that will develop the intellectually empowered moral citizen?

Resolving complex organizational problems requires including, but looking beyond, the role and responsibility of the individual agent. So, yes, the problem of academic dishonesty is partly an issue of agency and institutions of higher education must participate in the development of intellectually empowered moral citizens. However, with a socio-political problem like academic dishonesty, which is partly socially constructed to privilege or protect some interests over others, we need to consider the effect of the complex interplay among agency, structures and cultures. That is, agency affects culture affects structure, not necessarily in a linear way but dialectically and interactively. So, agency reformation without the simultaneous culture and structure reformation inappropriately holds students primarily responsible for the changing nature of higher education in the contemporary American society.

The protection of values and beliefs is certainly not reprehensible but rather, I argue, central to protecting the integrity of an institution (Selznick, 1957). If colleges and universities promise society that they will produce independently capable thinkers and doers, students who acquire their degrees mainly through the use of external aid are

misrepresenting themselves and this type of behavior should be curtailed. However, the pernicious labeling of all acts of “unauthorized” academic work as “disintegrated” masks issues of power and authority serving ultimately to deauthorize students as independent thinkers and doers. Thus, in resolving the problem, it may be important to reconsider what values and beliefs should be protected and which values and beliefs may actually be interfering with the goals and purposes of higher education.

This study raised some possibilities for reconsidering the problem of academic dishonesty. I argue in this study that the academic behaviors of students can be reconsidered as symptoms or manifestations of underlying tensions. This does not mean, of course, that we should not hold students accountable for their actions. I believe that we should. But a reliance on this approach to the detriment of understanding the complexity of the problem may only exacerbate an issue shaped by more than student agency. The institution of higher education as a whole may need to embolden a difficult conversation regarding the reason for being concerned about unauthorized academic conduct. There are many reasons to be concerned and only a few surfaced in this study (e.g., devaluing of intellectual property, interfering with the assessment of individual merit, declining integrity). Another reason to be concerned is that without resolution, the problem may grow past any level of acceptable corruption to the disintegration of the mission and core function higher education to “serve the growth of knowledge, personal development, social and cultural values, and professional training all at once” (Gould, 2003, p. 3).

However, framing the problem dichotomously as dishonesty versus integrity inhibits the difficult conversation that needs to occur about the problem. The institution of higher education as a whole needs to consider how student behaviors may be

connected to changing views of knowledge, information, and higher education that are being stimulated by technology and the market economy (as well as, perhaps, by other issues that did not surface in this study such as globalization or internationalization). Although it will surface complexity and cause ambiguity, a distinction may need to be made between those acts that are entirely devoid of intellectual effort on the part of the student being assessed (e.g., paying someone to take a test) and those acts that constitute a different kind of intellectual effort than traditionally expected (e.g., collaboration). The framing of the problem, in other words, needs to be explicitly delineated and constantly reassessed as more information is taken in.

The framing needs to be constantly reassessed because as the problem is framed and actions are taken in response, the information is altered. Systemic Interactionism suggests that complex organizational problems are continually produced or reproduced by the complex interplay among agency, structure, and culture. The values and beliefs that are privileged in an institution are context and time dependent. The valuing of academic capitalism and meritocracy, for example, are being challenged by the increasing sophistication and proliferation of technology. Traditionally, institutions of higher education (including faculty agents and structures such as libraries) were the central repositories of information and students attended these institutions to acquire that information. Advances in technology are changing that purpose of higher education, the need for “experts” (those individuals who hold all of the information needed to be known about a particular subject), and the process of learning (Bok, 1986; Duderstadt et al., 2002). The purpose of higher education may be more to develop in people the capacity to critically use information, make connections between ideas and information points,



construct knowledge, and think through conflicts and conflicting notions for the resolution of complex problems. As Duderstadt et al. (2002) argue:

Tomorrow's faculty members may have to discard the present style of solitary learning experiences, in which students tend to learn primarily on their own through reading, writing, and problem solving. Instead, they may be asked to develop collective learning experiences in which students work together and learn together, with the faculty member becoming more of a consultant or a coach than a teacher. (p. 65)

In other words, systemic forces are changing the way people learn and what they need to learn. So too then, we should be changing the way in which we teach. Thus, perhaps the problem is not so much that students are collaborating or using external resources more frequently but that the instructors are not creating appropriate assignments and classroom experiences given contemporary changes in learning processes. Of course, because it is a complex issue, the answer is found in neither the former nor the latter suggestion; it is both/and as well as a host of other underlying issues. For example, do faculty members have the time and support necessary to change their teaching practices? Clearly the answer is that they do not. But a focus on preventing "dishonesty" will not facilitate this nor ensure that students develop the skills and capacities most needed in the twenty-first century. And, if institutions of higher education neglect to fulfill their social role in preparing citizens and workers, they may face more grave concerns than stopping students from engaging in unauthorized academic behaviors. The point, in the end, is that to enable the organization to effectively respond to the complex problem, the problem framing must be as robust as possible.

Reconsidering the problem of unauthorized academic conduct within the core of a complex and ambiguous relationship rather than within the individual agent is an important step to resolving the problem (recall Figure 3). The theory of Systemic

Interactionism suggests that the problem is not only located within various agents, structures, and cultures, but within the complex relationship among them. There are, therefore, multiple ways of framing the problem. For example, the unauthorized academic conduct of students can be framed as dishonesty or it can be framed as ingenuity whereby they are producing new forms of academic engagement and learning. This alternate framing is supported by taking in the additional data found in structures (such as technology) and cultures (such as K-12). Student unauthorized academic behavior can also be framed as functioning to reproduce the organizational realities that support the market economy. The theory of Systemic Interactionism enables the reader to consider that “academic dishonesty” is a notion constructed by the institution of higher education to resolve the tension created from unresolved conflicts and competitions. Turning attention to those tensions may do more to facilitate the resolution of the problem than will a focus on the agency of the individual student.

### Chapter Summary

The purpose of this study is to offer a critical interpretation of the framing of the academic dishonesty problem (a perspective downplayed in previous research) and to suggest a reconsideration of the problem that might facilitate organizational change. This study contributes to the research on academic dishonesty but also to our understanding of complex organizational problems. The findings of this study demonstrate that academic dishonesty is a complex organizational problem that may not be effectively resolved through the application of policies or the characterization of the problem as one of student dishonesty. The way in which a problem is framed seems to be critical to understanding and analysis and significantly influences leadership toward organizational

change. By predominantly framing the problem of academic dishonesty in terms of student dysfunctionality, the three case institutions inhibit their ability to see the complexity of the problem and engage the organization in significant transformation.

Of course, the argument presented here is nuanced; the problem is certainly not a result of either student dysfunctionality or not. Rather, the argument rests on the complexity of the problem, suggesting that student conduct must be considered along with the underlying issues that shape student conduct and co-construct the problem. One of the research participants from EU adamantly argues that they are not reforming the students in order to protect EU, but rather they are doing so “to improve EU.” The nuanced argument lies in what is being protected; it is not the individual institution but rather the values fundamental to the institution of higher education---that of academic capital and meritocracy. The framing of Systemic Interactionism does not suggest that those values should not be protected, but rather it suggests that the protection of those values has to be explicitly understood as a guiding factor in the construction of the problem. Systemic Interactionism, then, challenges the Integrous Individualism framing that dominates both research and practice to encourage a more robust discussion of the problem of academic dishonesty within the system of higher education.

## CHAPTER 8

## IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

The people that are putting the most effort into creating a community that has honor and integrity, really seem to believe it and they're into it. And that is good. There are, sort of in some ways though, some blind spots to what they're going up against. Its sort of like window dressing in a way, you know? We're just sort of putting something up that looks good and **we're not really getting to the heart of the matter.** (EU faculty Council member)

What is the "heart of the matter" when it comes to the problem of academic dishonesty? This is fundamentally the question this study sought to answer. Previous research and many of the participants in this study suggests that personal integrity is the heart of the matter; if students act with integrity the problem will be resolved and the institution will be largely occupied by intellectually empowered moral citizens. However, this study demonstrates that the problem of academic dishonesty is much more complex than a problem of individual integrity, that the heart of the matter lies outside the individual and within the complex interplay among agency, structure, and culture.

The integrity of the undergraduate student should not be ignored. Trust, honesty, and integrity are important characteristics of organizational members and they should be highly regarded, reinforced, and valued, especially in the educational organizational responsible for the development of the American citizenry. We have seen the need for the development of personal integrity up front in the last few years as corruption scandals have erupted throughout the United States (and continue to erupt as I write this). But the proliferation and extent of the corruption may indicate that the problem is beyond that which can be resolved through personal integrity short of creating an entire populace of integrous individuals who are incapable of being corrupted by mediating structures and cultures. A creation, I suspect, that is not likely to be achieved. So, although the Integrous

Individualism framing is not incorrect, it is, I suggest, incomplete. Through this study I explain that this partiality compromises or constrains the adequate resolution of the problem and increases the likelihood that there will be an unrecoverable corruption of traditional educational organizations. The problem is that we cannot know for certain that technical fixes (e.g., integrity policies) do or do not work; we have only self-reports to reply upon for data. But, we can know, and I think that I have demonstrated, that integrity policies only address one component of the problem and leave much of the complexity unaddressed. The lack of reporting by faculty and students, the continued disparities in the definitions of cheating, and the increasing divide in the value of intellectual property, for example, all indicate that declaring authorized behaviors as integrous and unauthorized behaviors as disintegrous will not be a sufficient response to the problem. In reconsidering unauthorized academic conduct in the framing of Systemic Interactionism, this study contributes to the discussion in novel ways and creates ideas for research and practice that have previously not been considered.

### Chapter Overview

This chapter discusses the contributions of this study, the implications for research, and the implications for practice. The contributions of the study are considered to be related both to the understanding of academic dishonesty, as well as understanding of complex organizational problems. The implications for research are tied to an understanding of academic dishonesty as a complex organizational problem, and point to the need for further research of the type employed in this study as well to as studies that investigate the usefulness of Systemic Interactionism for leadership toward organizational change. The implications for practice offered are directly related to the resolution of complex problems and so they are less about how to stop students from

engaging in unauthorized behaviors and more about the leadership necessary to tackle the problem and create organizational change.

### Contributions of the Study

The major contribution of this study is found in its suggestion that academic dishonesty is a much more complex organizational problem than previously considered in the research. Reconsidering academic dishonesty as a complex organizational problem is a significant contribution because the way in which a problem is framed shapes organizational response to the problem. Framing the problem as one of student dysfunctionality has guided organizations to respond to academic dishonesty in ways that seek to reform the student from a deviant citizen to a moral citizen or from an ignorant scholar to a scholarly citizen. This study suggests that this framing is problematic because it ignores conflicting notions and competing interests that co-exist in the academy to co-construct a problem that is not clearly definable at all but rather ambiguous. Responding to a complex (or ambiguous) problem too technically as if it is a simple problem, for example by implementing an integrity policy to manage student conduct, inhibits organizational change because a false sense of problem resolution is created. If indeed cultures of integrity need to be created in order to resolve the problem of academic dishonesty as previous literature has suggested (e.g., Alschuler & Blimling, 1995; Dalton, 1998; Hendershott et al., 2000; Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2002), then a major contribution of this study is that it advances progress toward that goal by explaining the complexity of the problem and the subsequent implications for practice.

The other significant contribution of this study is its presentation of a framework for understanding and analyzing complex organizational problems such as academic

dishonesty. Systemic Interactionism is a robust way to frame complex organizational problems. Systemic Interactionism suggests as a result of the complex interplay among agency, structure, and culture, conflicting notions and competing interests are created and manifested in organizational realities, but those notions and interests reinforced through a dominant ideology will rise to a position of organizational privilege. If the dominant ideology and authority relationships can be understood, then it is possible to frame the problem differently in order to better understand the full complexity of the organizational problem.

This study is certainly not the first attempt to reconsider academic dishonesty outside of the dominant framework. Kibler (1993a, 1993b) successfully reframes the problem from one of social deviance to one of student development. Kibler's work added to the literature by highlighting the power of framing for understanding a problem and shaping solutions, but at the same time, it retained the centralization of the student agent. This study builds on Kibler's work to re-frame academic dishonesty from a problem of agency (Integrous Individualism) to a complex organizational problem (Systemic Interactionism). This is a significant contribution to the existing field of research on academic dishonesty. Reconsidering academic dishonesty as a complex organizational problem that can be more robustly understood in the framing of Systemic Interactionism alters the way in which it can be studied and the way in which organizations can approach the problem in practice. Hopefully this reconsideration will expand research beyond the individual student or faculty agent to investigations into the interplay between the dishonesty problem and co-existing issues within the institution of higher education.

The final contribution of this study is to suggest that language is critically influential in problem framing. By using words like “dishonesty” and “integrity,” the original problem framers have made it difficult to consider this problem beyond one of student agency. Thus, I suggest that to fully reconsider academic dishonesty as a complex organizational problem, we must alter the language we use in both research and practice. According to the definitions provided in the research and in the three institutions of this study, academic dishonesty comprises all those academic behaviors that are “unauthorized” by the instructor and/or the college, and academic integrity comprises all those academic behaviors that are “authorized.” Thus, I suggest that the problem may be better characterized as students engaging in unauthorized academic work. This centralizes the role of power and authority in the construction of the problem and opens the space for consideration of the complexity of the problem.

#### Implications for Future Research

A reconsideration of academic dishonesty as a complex organizational problem has significant implications for future research. The shift in framing from the student agent to the mediational system of the agency, structure, and culture interactants shifts the unit of analysis for research. The suggestion that the problem is socially constructed to privilege some interests over others also has implications for research. At this time, I offer three specific research implications that arise from this study, focusing on possibilities for the methods, samples, and foci of future research. I also suggest that this study has implications for researching Systemic Interactionism as a useful way to frame and understand complex organizational problems and enable leadership toward organizational change.



### *Academic Dishonesty Research Implications*

The first research implication of this study is that more in-depth qualitative research is necessary to increase our understanding of problem framing and organizational responses to unauthorized academic behaviors. The existing literature is replete with large scale survey research that provides us with important information, but there is little research that has taken us deep into the problem and its resolution. This study, which includes interviews, observations, and document analysis, offers a much more in-depth look into the way in which three case institutions frame and respond to the problem. This study is, however, limited to three, four year United States institutions and a relatively short time frame of only eight months. Future research should build on this study to include additional higher education institutions and a more diverse selection of institutions (e.g., community colleges and proprietary colleges). The traditional-age student population at each of the three case institutions may shape the problem differently than the more diverse populations of the community and proprietary colleges, for example. Future research should also consider longitudinal studies to investigate organizational responses to academic dishonesty over time, perhaps investigating how problem framing remains fixed or changes as organizations engage in the problem and more diverse voices become involved in the conversation.

Related to the above research implication is the need to understand how the problem of academic dishonesty has been framed over time and how the framing might have been different at various points in history. The paucity of research before the 1990s indicates that interest in this topic has increased over the last sixteen years, which is most likely, I have suggested, a result of systemic forces that are affecting learning and teaching. However, the concern about academic dishonesty is certainly not new nor is

there enough empirical evidence to convincingly argue that the amount of academic dishonesty has significantly increased over time. Grounding an understanding of academic dishonesty in the history of higher education in the United States may provide some insight into the current problem and enable the confirmation or dissuasion of hypotheses that otherwise risk becoming urban legends, such as the claim that students cheat today because they do not value learning for learning sake as in previous years. An understanding of the historical framing and the surrounding higher education context can be ascertained through the reading of secondary texts, both history books and pieces written in the decades being considered. After a cursory reading in this area, the potential for this type of research to bear some fruit appears strong. For example, the argument that students are cheating because they are less interested in learning now than previously is probably fallacious. In a 1957 book entitled Changing Values in College, the author argued that:

A major reason for the failure of some students to respond favorably to a program of general or liberal education has been their obsession with 'doing' rather than 'being.' They are so intent on accomplishing the set, practical goal of earning a living that they have no value for learning as such, but only for training which will advance them as quickly as possible to their end. (Jacob, 1957, p. 117).

Understanding that which has been relatively consistent over time with respect to students' attitudes toward college, then, may help to shed light on that which has changed and is changing the nature of higher education.

Second, future research on academic dishonesty must be conducted across institutional divides. Particularly, future research should take a P-16 approach to understanding the problem because this study has shown that the complex interplay among agency, structure, and culture does not just occur within the boundaries of the

specific organization, but within and between the organizations that are part of a larger system. It is critical that we enhance our understanding of how the problem is constructed and can be resolved within the larger educational system. We also need to increase our understanding of how the problem in higher education is specifically influenced by K-12 education. I suggest in this study that the practices in K-12 are more closely aligned with collaborative versus independent work, but with the increase focus on testing individual ability and merit in K-12, a greater understanding of this complex relationship and its contribution to the problem of unauthorized behaviors in higher education needs to be developed. The tension between collaborative and independent effort will remain thick as long as the underlying effects of technology and the marketization of education continue to be unexplored in relation to academic dishonesty.

Third, academic dishonesty research must be linked to other challenges facing higher education. If the problem is indeed complex as suggested in this study, then it cannot continue to be researched in isolation from other issues facing the institution of higher education. For example, future research should be conducted to enhance our understanding of the shifting expectations for higher education brought on by information and technology. In *The Anarchist in the Library*, Vaidhyanathan (2004) argues that:

Global electronic technologies have allowed people seeking to satisfy simple, everyday desires to hook themselves into a dynamic system that dissolves their sense of limits. The act of saying, ‘why can’t we share music with millions of people around the world?’ or ‘why can’t we coordinate mass demonstrations with thousands of people we have never met?’ or ‘why can’t we generate a free and open and customizable collection of software?’ has had profound consequences. These shifting expectations have allowed everyday people (albeit technologically proficient and financially privileged) to consider new ways of relating and communicating with one another. (p. 14).

The “information anarchy” shift described by Vaidhyanathan (2004) will undoubtedly have a profound effect on the way in which current and future student generations engage in education. Research conducted in this area may facilitate thinking on how some fundamental values of higher education can be protected while responding to the changing nature of information and knowledge as mediated by technology. This research is critical as we cannot continue to operate from a moral point of view that demonizes the student who wants to share information, collaborate openly, and use available resources. Future research should be conducted to consider also how this “information anarchy” alters the specific learning outcomes and skills on which higher education institutions should be focused. Our ideas of learning and assessment may need to change if we want to resolve the complex problem of academic dishonesty. In other words, perhaps it is not simply that student behavior has to change but rather our conceptions of their behaviors.

Future research should also consider the problem of academic dishonesty in conjunction with increasing interests in accountability and assessment (see, for example, American Council on Education, 2004; Miller, 2003; State Higher Education Executive Officers, 2005; The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2004). Societal and governmental concerns about not leaving any student “behind” have increased concerns over higher education access, retention and graduation. The concerns about accountability, assessment, and degree attainment are not new, but every few decades, the focus shifts up the proverbial educational ladder. When this country moved from an agriculturally based society to an industrial society, it became expected that children would go to school at least through grade eight. As the industrial age continued and expanded into a service and information society, completion of high school became

the necessary ticket to social mobility and success. Now, in the knowledge age, an undergraduate degree is perceived as mandatory for success. Thus, students and parents feel an intense pressure to not so much ensure learning while completing the undergraduate degree, but to ensure completion and the acquisition of the degree. These interests are compounded by interests in assessment and accreditation and so research must further investigate the interrelatedness of these higher education challenges and how they contribute to the construction of the academic dishonesty problem.

Finally, future research should be conducted to increase our understanding of how higher education (and perhaps the larger educational system) can develop and engage intellectually empowered moral citizens. The goal of the three case institutions in this study is admirable, but it is unknown at this time whether the goal can be facilitated through the implementation of student conduct policies or whether it can only be achieved through significant institutional transformation in such areas as pedagogy and reward practices. As Ward (2005) notes, faculty and administrators often assume that students will become intellectually empowered moral citizens simply through becoming more educated but, “unfortunately, this is typically not the case” (p. 219). If the problem of academic dishonesty is reframed as a problem of students not learning or not engaging in the educative experience, then future research could be conducted on the relationship of academic dishonesty (or engagement in unauthorized academic behaviors) to the way in which higher education institutions are, or are not, engaging the students. Research needs to be conducted to determine how academic integrity (defined as compliance with authority) is related to the development of intellectually empowered moral citizens, and whether or not this can be assessed.

### *Systemic Interactionism Research Implications*

The results of this study suggest that future research is also needed to understand the usefulness of Systemic Interactionism for understanding complex organizational problems and enabling leadership toward organizational change. Datnow et al. (2002) originally utilized a version of Systemic Interactionism to understand educational reform but I am suggesting that its usefulness must be assessed more broadly. Studies of successful organizational reforms could be conducted in which organizational agents are asked about their framing and use of knowledge of agency, structure and culture. Research could also be conducted on failed organizational reform efforts to determine possible linkages to problem over-simplification and the existence of the consequences found in this study (e.g., silencing of dissonant voices, trivializing of the issue, ignoring of organizational incongruencies, and constraining of change agency). Finally, future research could be conducted on creating an assessment or analysis tool out of the Systemic Interactionism framing to ascertain it's useful for helping people frame the complex problems facing their organizations and constructing the appropriate leadership responses.

### **Implications for Practice**

This study, in its reconsideration of academic dishonesty as a complex organizational problem, has tremendous implications for the way in which higher education institutions should frame and respond to the problem of academic dishonesty. More broadly, I suggest that the implications are directed toward the leadership necessary for resolving any type of complex organizational problem. Specifically, I suggest five leadership practice implications: (1) elevate the issue to the institutional level; (2) emphasize organizational interests rather than individual character; (3) engage underlying

tensions; (4) link the problem to other institutional challenges; and, (5) empower the change agents.

*Elevate the Issue*

Society needs greater skills and knowledge in a larger share of its population. To improve learning, institutions need to start by taking responsibility for how much students are learning. (Newman, Couturier, & Scurry, 2004, p. 54).

To enable organizational change, the issue must be elevated from the place it currently occupies in the hierarchy of organizational issues. Leadership toward organizational change cannot be enacted if the problem is seen as a student conduct problem to be resolved by a handful of students and front-line personnel (such as faculty and student affairs professionals). As a complex organizational problem, academic dishonesty should be the concern of all members of the organization, particularly those who have the authority to steer the organization in one direction or another:

I think that's where you need the administration. Because the students are going to come and go and our council's going to change and we really adjust the dynamic of the school, but somebody who introduced the policy, might not be there four years down the line to answer the questions about it. And what we really need is for the administration to say, 'we're going to make this our own pet project,' because they're going to be here for a lot longer than we're going to be here. And they really can invoke the most amount of change. (EU undergraduate Council member)

The actions of those in positions of authority are particularly important because they are so visible and thus so influential in shaping structures and organizational cultures.

Participatory or collegial leadership is great in the form of involving all three major constituents in the Council, but the lack of involvement of institutional leaders conveys the message that this is a "student problem" rather than an institutional issue.

As an institutional issue, the problem must be considered in light of institutional congruency. That is, if faculty and students see administration concerned mostly about

the commodification of education and the commercialization of research, then messages of unauthorized and authorized work become confusing. On one hand, the rhetoric communicates a message that all authorized academic work develops intellectually empowered moral citizens. On the other hand, the actions of administrators indicate that methods of academic work are authorized if they support and lead to increased revenue for the institution. It is no wonder in this type of environment, then, that faculty members take less time for teaching and students feel encouraged to view courses, grades, and degrees as tickets to financial success. The influence of modeling cannot be ignored if, as the three Councils have argued, the students are “reformable.” As one graduate student at HU argues:

Before you tackle the students, you need to address the people that are leading them. And we’ve forgotten that we are leaders. And.....and we need to start with the administrators and we need to go down to the faculty and have some sort of ‘this is how you behave.’ (HU graduate Council member)

In other words, administrator and faculty agency matters as much as student agency because their actions model the actions expected of others and they help to co-construct the problem. Thus, the issue needs to be elevated beyond that of concerns for student conduct. Councils need to work on mobilizing this issue as an institutional issue, a matter of concern not because students are doing work in unauthorized ways, but because there are underlying issues feeding into the problem that, if continued to be ignored, really do threaten the integrity of higher education.

Specifically, I argue that the issue needs to be elevated to one not of student integrity but institutional integrity. This requires an assessment of the congruency between institutional practices and its espousements and standing true to fundamental principles. Integrity is not a reproduction and reinforcement of beliefs of those who hold



power to benefit by those beliefs being protected, but a willingness to put oneself out there regardless of what one may stand to lose. The institution of higher education must balance the protection of its status in the academic marketplace with the distillation of the core values to which integrity should speak (rather than to the current emphasis on rules and authority). The congruency between structures (policies and classroom and assessment) should reinforce those values. If those values are academic capital and meritocracy, then let us rejoice in them and reveal them. If those values are something else (e.g., learning) then let us go there. But integrity must speak to that congruency, not to compliance with authority regardless of mediating forces.

*Emphasize Organizational Interests*

From time immemorial, institutions have put the lion's share of the responsibility for learning on the student; if the student has not learned it, it is because he or she has not studied hard enough, has not thought hard enough, has not wanted to learn, or is not prepared well enough. The tendency is to assume that any problems or disappointments are the fault of the student. (Newman et al., 2004, p. 143)

Framing the problem in terms of individual student agency limits solution construction to increasing student integrity, perhaps through intellectualizing the student body, empowering students to experience the struggle of independent learning, or developing their moral reasoning skills. Framing the problem as a lack of integrity also excuses any organizational, institutional or societal responsibility for the problem because, the reasoning goes, if students had integrity, the surrounding structure and mediating culture would not matter—they would do their own work in their own words. As long as academic dishonesty is seen as a student agency issue, it will always be relegated to the realm of student development or student management. However, if a

major interest of the organization is emphasized, such as facilitating learning, leadership toward organizational change may be enabled.

Emphasizing the organizational interest in learning may help shift the focus from the student actor to include the structures and cultures that co-construct the problem. If the goal is to stop students from engaging in unauthorized academic behaviors, then perhaps the prevention, policing, and punishing approach is enough. However, if the goal is to enhance the opportunities for learning, then it becomes critical that we not just look at student agency, but faculty and institutional agency and the way in which structures and cultures do, or do not, put learning at the “center” of the institution. That is, the amount a student learns is somewhat dependent on factors that are largely beyond the student’s control. The student’s choice, then, in how to complete an academic assignment is the only way in which he/she can regulate learning. This raises an important point best expressed in the words of May (1998): “external influences do not *cause* action, but rather provide information (facts) which the agent, as “helmsman,” then steers according to” (p. 57). Students are the “helmsmen” of their education to a large extent, but their choices are mediated by the structures and cultures that create the environments in which they have to navigate. In that case, the question becomes how can we best facilitate learning given today’s technology, today’s information, and today’s needs for higher education?

The question of what we want students to learn is also critically important to resolving the problem of unauthorized work. There are learnings that are part of the overt curriculum of higher education (e.g., the basics of biology or the fundamentals of literary criticism), but there are also the learnings that are part of the “hidden curriculum”

(Giroux, 1983; Jackson, 1983; McLaren, 1989) of education. The “hidden curriculum” comprises those features of academic life that are normally undiscussed but quite influential in the education of America’s youth. Within higher education, the “hidden curriculum” includes learning to live under evaluation and learning about authority (Jackson, 1983), as well as learning to complete work independently and learning about the value of intellectual property. So, the requirement to complete an assignment independently is related to learning within the hidden curriculum but may not be related to the overt curriculum at all. Learning, therefore, is complex as noted by Ramaley (2005) in her discussion of scholarship for the public good:

Learning is becoming a more complex concept that includes all aspects of scholarly work (discovery, integration, interpretation, and application) conducted by different groups of people in a variety of settings. It is no longer simply the effective absorption and faithful application of knowledge transmitted by an expert. (p. 179)

The difficulty arises because the complexity of learning is “hidden” from students in the Integrous Individualism framing. Thus, the majority of time spent improving higher education is spent on how students should engage in academic work “rather than *how* they can learn more effectively or *whether* they are learning as much as they should” (Bok, 1986, p. 58).

#### *Engage Underlying Tension*

When an unresolved tension is experienced, so is a sense of disequilibrium. This sense of disequilibrium communicates the need to quickly resolve the tension (Senge, 1990) through, for example, the application of authority. The theory of Systemic Interactionism, however, suggests that applying policy to manage student behavior will not sufficiently resolve the problem of academic dishonesty. The institution of higher education will continue to experience tension because the tension is embedded in an

underlying assumption that universities will generate both capital and public goods (Giroux, 1998; Gould, 2003; Slaughter & Rhodes, 2004). The tension is manifested in structures that support higher education as a market player (e.g., commercialization) and those that support higher education as a public good (e.g., small classes). This tension is also inherent in the culture, in the co-existence of diverse values and conflicting notions of what constitutes learning and the purpose of the undergraduate degree.

Rather than bury the tension with the language of integrity and honor, I suggest that institutions of higher education engage the tension as a way to better understand the complexity of the problem. Institutions need to uncover the underlying tensions, why they exist, and how they are constructed by the interaction between evolving structures and cultures. In Chapter Six I reviewed the tensions that emerged from the study.

Research participants suggest that information technology is surfacing conflicting notions of knowledge and information, disturbing the dominant cultural norm of independent work and intellectual ownership. A tension is also created by co-existing structures (e.g., concurrent enrollment, general education requirements) symptomatic of the conflict between the market and citizen interests of higher education. As Bok noted in 1986, the technologicalization and professionalization of American higher education will continue to alter the way people teach and learn. Faculty, students, and administrators need to consider what the fundamental values of higher education, such as fairness, trust, and academic capital, might look like in different structures and cultures and a different generation of student agents.

Higher education writers and researchers have noted that the current generation of students, the “digital generation,” is significantly different than the “boomer generation”

who is teaching them (Duderstadt et al, 2002; Tapscott, 1998). First of all, they learn differently. The “digital generation” multitasks, learn nonsequentially rather than linearly, and “combine knowledge navigation, discovery, and judgment in a high sophisticated way” (Duderstadt et al., 2002, p. 62). So “although their attention span appears short, as they jump from one activity to another, they appear to learn just as effectively as earlier generations” (Duderstadt et al., 2002, p. 61). Secondly, because of the speed and constancy of information and knowledge evolution, the digital generation views education not as a place to acquire or stock-pile knowledge but as a place to learn how to think and have “highly customized learning experiences” (Tapscott, 1998, p. 146). Thus, today’s students may be less likely to comply with external authorization if they do not see the work as facilitating their learning or providing them with the knowledge and learning they feel they need. That is, the digital generation act as smart consumers who expect to “have far more options and control over what, how, when, where, and with whom they learn” (Duderstadt, 2002, p. 68). In other words, the behaviors currently being characterized as academic dishonesty, such as collaboration or “using one’s resources,” may have to be reexamined. Do they threaten the learning and educative value of higher education, or do they threaten institutional or faculty power and authority?

The point is that information technology and market forces are changing the expectations that students and society have for the type of engagement that occurs in the undergraduate experience. Rather than fight these changes by labeling them as “disintegrated,” faculty and institutions should attempt to engage the resulting tension by analyzing student behaviors for hints about the changes and the way in which this will shape the function and purpose higher education in the twenty-first century (Bok, 1986;

Duderstadt et al., 2002; Tapscott, 1998). Engaging the tension also means analyzing faculty and student “resistance” to integrity policy compliance for information about the problem. Faculty, for example, may not be lazy or disinterested in enforcing academic integrity but rather in fundamental disagreement with the notion of work as independent or simply too encumbered by other structures (e.g., tenure process) or cultures (e.g., research productivity) to give much attention to the students in his/her classroom. Faculty may not know how to teach or assess differently or teach proper citation rules to the students. The policy may also require a reconsideration as pieces of it, specifically those governing intellectual property, may be resisted because they have “become antiquated in the digital age” (Duderstadt, 2002, p. 13)

Engaging the underlying tensions serves to “disturb” the system into engaging in organizational change because it creates a sense of disequilibrium and sense of urgency or chaos (Fullan, 2001; Heifetz, 1994; Kotter & Cohen, 2002). Dialogue as one way to engage the tension has been advocated by many leadership authors including Jaworski (1998) and Wheatley (2002). Dialogue, which is “allowing the whole that exists to become manifest” (Jaworski, 1998, p. 116), is one way to hear the dissonant voices that may speak to the tensions underlying the complex organizational problem. It is through dialogue that organizational members are able to see the whole of the picture, the complex interplay among agency, structure, and culture and the conflicts and competitions that inhibit the organization from resolving the problem. It is dialogue that both engages the tension and enlivens it; dialoguing on difficult questions will surface the ambiguity, the “grey area,” which applications of authority attempt to downplay. But, as Wheatley (2002) notes, this tension and ambiguity is necessary because “we can’t be

creative if we refuse to be confused. Change always starts with confusion; cherished interpretations must dissolve to make way for the new” (p. 37).

In constructing organizational responses to the problem of unauthorized academic conduct, for example, I suggest engaging the community in dialogue about the underlying tensions. There should be a forum for a dialogue around the values and assumptions underlying the framing of the academic dishonesty problem. After all, it is not inherently disintegrated to work with others on a homework assignment or to use words off of the internet without attribution, and it serves no educational value in transmitting the notion that it is so. Rather, the values and assumptions that “integrated” work is protecting should be brought to light, be made transparent and viewed in relation to not just student agency, but faculty agency, institutional agency, and mediating structures and cultures. Some of the questions that can be asked include, “what student academic behaviors do we consider disintegrated (or dishonest)?” and “Why do we consider these behaviors to be a problem?” and “What does the existence of these behaviors threaten?” and, “What might be lost if these behaviors continue and become normative?” Asking these questions may seem mundane or perhaps redundant because, after all, we have often already labeled these behaviors as disintegrated or dishonest so the logical next step would be to eliminate them. Heifetz (1994), Senge (1990) and other leadership and organization theorists write about the importance of understanding the difference between technical problems and those that are much more adaptive or generative in nature. Oftentimes in organizations, we treat generative problems as technical because we have not taken the time to explore their nature and assume that they can be resolved through known solutions. Dialogue will

also, of course, help organizational members to link the problem to other institutional challenges.

### *Link to Institutional Challenges*

Systemic Interactionism suggests that it is not just the agent, structure, and culture intimately involved with academic dishonesty that co-construct the problem, but the multiple agents, structures, and cultures in the institution and within the system of which the institution is a part. A consideration of challenges other than academic dishonesty facing higher education can be a useful strategy for enhancing understanding of the complexity of the problem. The three case institutions in this study dominantly accept the integrity policy as the solution to the academic dishonesty problem, largely neglecting its relation to other challenges facing the institution. Lasallian College most clearly attempts to create linkages among organizational challenges as it situates the honor code within a larger organizational transformation initiative. They have restructured new student orientation and are currently reconsidering the general education requirements. These efforts represent a good start but generally the integrity policy approach seems to be an isolated, close-looped, system that does not allow for the linking of the problem to other intra- and inter- institutional challenges. In this way, the integrity policy approach functions as a container for the academic integrity movement on campus, simplifying the issue but constraining organizational change as systemic information is unable to be considered.

I suspect that this closed-loop approach (or single-loop in Argyris & Schön language) to the problem is a result of the paucity of higher education scholars studying academic dishonesty. The business, communication, and psychology experts who have been conducting the majority of the research understandably approach it from their



disciplinary lenses or perspectives or perhaps their personal experiences as faculty members in higher education. Knowledge of the organization and system in which the problem is occurring is critical, however, to better understanding the problem. Beyond those already mentioned in this study, what are some of the challenges facing higher education and how might these be related to the problem of academic dishonesty?

There have been several treatises written on the state of higher education in the United States in the twenty-first century and the challenges facing it (Altbach, Berdahl, & Gumport, 1999; Aronowitz, 2000; Bellah, 1999; Bok, 2003; Duderstadt et al., 2002; Engell & Dangerfield, 2005; Gould, 2003; Kezar et al., 2005; Newman et. al., 2004; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). Generally the concerns surround issues of access and retention, assessment and accountability, academic freedom and tenure, commercialization and commodification of higher education, and the institution-society relationship. A full investigation into these challenges and the connections to academic dishonesty cannot be made at this time, but a query into the possibilities may prove fruitful for prescribing a way to link institutional challenges and to enhance the analysis of complex organizational problems. One query might investigate how responses to these challenges co-construct the problem of academic dishonesty. The issue of providing external aid to underrepresented students to support their access and retention, for example, is intimately connected to the tension between authorized and unauthorized aid that complicates the problem under study. This is not to say that external aid should not be provided, but the increasing acceptance of aid and collaboration in tandem with increasing reliance on external authorization to define integrous work causes confusion and constrains the ability of the “digital generation” student to direct his/her own

learning. What are the various interests co-existing in the academy in relation to these challenges and how might they be conflicting to create complexity and ambiguity out of which academic dishonesty is constructed? Asking this question is a Systemic Interactionist approach to the problem and enables the Councils to move out of the dominance of Integrous Individualism. In essence, asking this question asks how the institution operates to co-construct the problem.

The questions asked must also be directed outside the institution to the interdependence of higher education and K-12 education (Zusman, 1999). The K-12 sector is currently undergoing tremendous reform (Kronley & Handley, 2003; Newman & Sconzert, 2000; Rowan, 2002; Townsend, 1999). Although this reform will undoubtedly affect higher education, colleges and universities have been “slow to recognize the implications” (Zusman, 1999, p. 124). Zusman (1999) theorizes that the promotion of “interdisciplinary curriculum, activity-based in instruction, and collaborative learning” and new forms of assessment in K-12 “may conflict with higher education’s traditional admissions requirements, undergraduate content, instructional approaches, and assessment practices” (p. 124). These reforms, of course, are all layered on the current challenge facing K-12 education referred to as “no child left behind.”

The “no child left behind” culture of testing, assessment and evidence co-exists in direct tension with a culture of collaboration and shared inquiry. Teachers and administrators concerned with the increasing pressure on students are approving an increasing number of methods for completing academic assignments. If collaboration or assistance from parents makes the difference between a child being “left behind” and a child graduating from high school, then collaboration and parental assistance become

acceptable in the American culture. K-12 teachers encumbered by the demands of the educational reform culture and testing culture also have little time to devote to what may seem like more tedious tasks of teaching academic citation rules and examining student papers for evidence of plagiarism. Several participants in this study spoke to the encouragement of collaboration and the lack of attention paid to plagiarism in high school:

[In high school there was] a lot of in class work together, you know, take your take home test home, call your friend, get help on it, and...and I don't think cheating was ever really discussed in high school. There might have been a big exam and if you're looking off your neighbor's paper, that was cheating, but as far as collaborating and plagiarizing, I don't think...that was never discussed in my high school. (HU undergraduate Council member)

Thus, the challenge of addressing the complex problem of academic dishonesty requires linking it to other challenges facing the higher education institution, including its relationship to the larger educational system. The dominant approach in the three case institutions to the high school-college gap, however, is to overcome or eliminate the challenge by socializing students to the "college way" and punishing them should they continue to act in ways previously considered acceptable. A different approach is to consider how higher education may need to change in order to engage the new generation of students and remain competitive in what has become an education marketplace. Zusman (1999) makes this point when he asks the question, "What lessons do K-12 initiatives provide for higher education's own efforts to reconceive undergraduate education?" (p. 124). If higher education institutions continue to work only to control or outlaw student behaviors without considering the connection to other institutional challenges, it is unlikely that this problem will be resolved. In other words, the carte blanc application of an integrity policy to attempt to control student behaviors ignores

systemic tensions and ultimately will function to bury and exacerbate the issue and complicate it further by widening the gap between students and the institution.

*Empower the Change Agents*

Attention to the previously discussed tasks (elevating the issue, emphasizing organizational issues, engaging the tension, and linking institutional challenges) requires that change agents have more power and authority than currently conferred. I explained in Chapter Six that the dominant framing of **Integrous Individualism** constrains the ability of the Council members to exercise leadership toward organizational change. Council members in the three case institutions are not conferred authority by institutional members because they are seen as a “student committee” whose jurisdiction is restricted to the reformation of the student body. The implications of this finding are clear. Those who are responsible for “creating cultures of integrity” must be empowered to act beyond the reformation of the student body. I suspect that these change agents should be different from those who are responsible for adjudicating and deciding on reported cases of integrity policy violations. The Council for Integrity in Academics at EU, a distinct body responsible for addressing the problem, seems much more capable of delving into the complexity of the issue than the councils at LC or HU who become encumbered by judicial and reformation responsibilities.

Ensuring representative membership on the Councils, a strategy adopted by the three case institutions, is a good start to empowerment. The predominance of students on the council as advocated in the academic dishonesty literature, however, may not function to empower the body as change agents. Diversity and representation is good, but a predominance of student members communicates the message that the Council only has purview over student change. I suggest that there has been a conflation of the constitution

of the body that should be adjudicating academic dishonesty cases and that of the body that should be leading organizational change. Students and faculty should comprise a management body that adjudicates cases, but a more equal balance of students, faculty, staff, and administrators are needed on a change agent body to empower them to exercise leadership beyond student reformation. There should, then, most likely be different bodies; one to manage the technical component of the problem (i.e., upholding of the policy) and one to exercise leadership toward the generative or adaptive part of the problem (Heifetz, 1994; Selznick, 1957; Senge, 1990)

The management body should have the authority and power necessary to not only sanction students for their violation of the integrity policy, but to sanction faculty as well. The power and authority of the integrity Council to sanction faculty is a particularly thorny issue mentioned by two of the three case institutions. Most institutions have a separate body for dealing with plagiarism and research fraud on the part of faculty, but because of the dominance of the Integrous Individualism framing, there is currently no capacity to hold the faculty accountable for their part in integrity violations in the classroom. This lack of accountability of faculty in the classroom is likely related to the values of academic freedom and tenure, and the traditionally private nature of one's classroom territory, but the institution of higher education may not be able to ignore faculty responsibility much longer. As Duderstadt et al. (2002) suggest, students and parents are content for now to allow the lecture and traditional examinations to dominate the classroom, but they will begin to demand a more integrated and discovery-based pedagogy, as well as collaborative learning, which focus less on memorization and more on thinking, analyzing, and integrating. Councils responsible for sanctioning students

should have the authority to sanction faculty also for behaviors such as using a test constructed thirty years prior or not clearly explaining expectations.

The leadership task force should be created to work on the complexity of the problem. This task force needs to have consistency over time; a complex organizational problem cannot be resolved by a council dominated by students who turn-over every two to four years. This model is in practice at EU where the CIA falls under the direct responsibility of the Associate Provost and there is a fairly equal balance of faculty, students, and administrators. This enhances the council's capacity to be a "cohesive force strong enough to drive the difficult, nonincremental change that [is] needed" (Kotter & Cohen, 2002, p. 40). EU and LC may be best able to do this in the long run since at both, the task of increasing student integrity is intimately connected to the larger organizational transformation process. But the Councils, to really be empowered, need to have the "right" people on board (Kotter & Cohen, 2002). The individuals on the Council need to have "the appropriate skills, the leadership capacity, the organizational credibility, and the connections to handle a specific kind of organizational change" (Kotter & Cohen, 2002, p. 43). Councils will be empowered to act as change agents when they are capable of addressing the complexity of the issue and have the authority (informal or formal) to draw attention to the issue.

To empower this body of change agents, I also suggest that the body be directly connected to the President or Chancellor of the college or university, that it is a task force operating at the institutional level. Each of the councils in the three case institutions report to the office of the Provost which is immanently better than being situated organizationally under Student Affairs. The connection to the academic governance side

of the university can help to elevate the issue to one of teaching and learning rather than student conduct. However, a direct connection to the President indicates that this is an institutional concern that is as complex and critical as funding and public relations. This does not mean that the President should chair the task force, but that he/she is responsible for facilitating the work of the council, and is kept apprised of their challenges and successes to enable her to communicate their work to the institution as a whole.

Language and organizational structures symbolize the underlying norms and values (i.e., culture) of the institution and so the name of the council should also be considered for the message it conveys about jurisdiction. A task force for institutional integrity might convey a more complex and integrated approach than a council for academic integrity.

#### Chapter Summary

*If I'm in this business because I care about the subject and I care about learning and I care about intellectual engagement and about understanding things and about sharing that with other people, [academic dishonesty] subverts the main point of what I see education being. And so I guess it just seems like missing the real value of what all of this is all about. I guess its just wanting...people...to value some of the same things you're trying to share. (EU Faculty Council member)*

The values of learning, intellectual engagement, understanding and sharing things with other people, are fundamental values to the institution of higher education. Wanting all institutional actors to share those values is understandable but unlikely given the complexity of the higher education organization. The “main point” of education is ambiguous in a society that demands the institution to deliver both private and public goods. Therefore it is unlikely that we can build shared understandings of the “main point” among all institutional agents in all of the structures and cultures of the educational system. One way to manage the tension is to create standards for the student population that align their behaviors with the values of those in power. This might be

somewhat effective in curbing behaviors but I argue that it will not resolve the underlying tension inherent in the conflict and competition brought on by the complex interplay among agency, structure and culture.

Despite my critical inquiry into the approach taken at the three case institutions, I agree with their concern over the way in which students are engaging in their academic work. I believe that, generally, students will learn more if they write their own paper rather than buy one online. I believe that faculty should be authorized to demand their academic assignments be completed one way over another. And I believe that we cannot continue to allow the problem of unauthorized academic work to continue because it will eventually erode the faculty-student relationship and the trust conferred by society on our institutions of higher education. However, I also believe that we live in complex times in which individuals, groups, and organizations are strongly mediated by the system of which they are a part and together, produce or reproduce certain organizational realities. Thus, I maintain that most organizational problems cannot be easily resolved through the application of a policy to control and manage individual agency. So while attention must be increasingly paid to ensuring the integrity of higher education, this attention must be expanded to go beyond that of the student body.

In order to resolve the problem, further research is needed on the complex relationship among the major issues confronting higher education. The increasing competition in the marketplace, decreasing public funding, increasing public accountability, technological effects, increasing mandatory nature of higher education, and unauthorized academic behaviors of undergraduates, for example, need to be considered together. In practice, the institution of higher education must be willing to



examine the changing nature of higher education and the way in which that will affect teaching and learning without threatening the integrity of higher education. Changing approaches to teaching and learning should actually be reconsidered as a way to protect integrity. I heard a number of times in this study that a discovery of cheating led professors to significantly alter the way in which they teach their class that greatly enhanced the learning experience of the students.

Based on the findings of this study, I suggest that we consider academic dishonesty beyond a problem caused by the morality of the individual student and more as a symptom of some underlying issues currently facing higher education organizations, the institution of higher education, and our society. This will do more to resolve the problem and to develop intellectually empowered moral citizens who are engaged in their education, their communities, and a democratic society. But, in the end, the institution of higher education has to make some decisions on its purpose and role in society. How does this idea of developing intellectually empowered moral citizens fit in with the interests of the market versus the interests of the public good? Although not always incompatible, these interests are often times conflicting and this tension is being felt and played out by organizational members. The theory of Systemic Interactionism may be a useful way to frame the complex problems being faced in higher education and point us toward some resolution that does not simply focus on the reformation of the student body but on leadership for organizational change in the service of the integrity of the institution of higher education.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**LETTER OF INTRODUCTION**

February 26, 2004

Contact Name  
Name of Institution  
Address

Dear [contact]:

My name is Tricia Bertram Gallant and I am a doctoral student at the University of San Diego. My dissertation advisor is Dr. Paula Cordeiro, Dean, School of Education. I am contacting you because I would like to invite your institution to participate in my dissertation study which is exploring the creation of cultures of academic integrity. I have been working with Dr. Donald McCabe of Rutgers University to determine which universities would be best suited for my research project and your institution was identified as a possible site.

For the purposes of this dissertation, I will be studying three universities which have completed the CAI Assessment Survey and formed an academic integrity team of students, administrators and faculty to strengthen the culture of integrity. If your university meets this criteria and is interested and available to participate, the study would take place over the 2004-2005 academic year. The data collection will include non-participant observation (for one week in each of the Fall 2004 and Spring 2005 semesters) as well as institutional document analysis and one-on-one interviews with the academic integrity team and randomly selected university members.

My goal for this research is to identify the organizational factors that may be blocking us from reducing academic dishonesty and increasing academic integrity in our educational institutions. It is my hope that the results of this study will assist all universities in resolving the issue of academic dishonesty at the level of underlying assumptions and values (i.e., culture) and thus, renewing the integrity of learning. The participation of your institution in this research project would greatly enhance our understanding of integrity culture creation.

I will be contacting you via phone in the next few days so that we may speak further about my dissertation. If you have any questions for my dissertation advisor, you may contact Dr. Paula Cordeiro at 619-260-4550 or at [cordeiro@sandiego.edu](mailto:cordeiro@sandiego.edu)

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Tricia Bertram Gallant  
Doctoral Student  
Leadership Studies, School of Education  
University of San Diego  
619-260-2907

**APPENDIX B****CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY**

**University of San Diego  
Informed Consent Form**

Tricia Bertram Gallant, a doctoral student in the Leadership Studies Program in the School of Education at the University of San Diego, is conducting a study of the creation of cultures of integrity within three, four-year, universities. The title of the study is, "Moving Mountains and Climbing Walls: A Critical Interpretive Exploration of the Creation of Cultures of Integrity".

Below are the conditions under which participants in the study will work:

1. Participants will be asked to share their experiences and stories about their work on the [name of the change group].
2. Participation in the study is completely voluntary. Participants can withdraw from the study at any time; data collected prior to withdrawal will not be used unless the participant agrees to let it be used.
3. Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality of individual participants and the institutions (i.e. pseudonyms will be used; data will be stored in locked cabinets in the researcher's home; and consent forms will be stored separately from the transcript data). However, because of the nature of the study and proposed write-up, it is possible that readers may be able to attribute stories to particular institutions. Anonymity, in other words cannot be guaranteed.
4. Interviews will be conducted at a place and time convenient to participants.
5. Interviews with the participants will be recorded and the recordings will be transcribed; tapes and transcriptions will be destroyed after five years.
6. Participants will be able to review and, if need be, alter interview transcripts before the data are used in written documents resulting from the study.
7. The data collected will be used in Tricia Bertram Gallant's dissertation and any additional publications emerging from the dissertation.
8. There is no agreement, written or verbal, beyond that which is expressed on this consent form.
9. If participants have any questions or concerns at any point, they are free to contact Tricia Bertram Gallant (619-260-2907 or

[triciab@sandiego.edu](mailto:triciab@sandiego.edu)) or her advisor, Dr. Paula Cordeiro (619-260-4540 or [cordeiro@sandiego.edu](mailto:cordeiro@sandiego.edu)). Alternatively, participants can contact [name, phone and email of the CAI Assessment contact at the school] or [their school's IRB representative].

**I, the undersigned, understand the above conditions and give consent to my voluntary participation in the research that has been described.**

Signature of Interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Note: two copies of this form will be provided, one for the researcher and one for the participant.**

**APPENDIX C**  
**FALL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

## **Section I      Definition of the Problem**

1.      How did you get involved in the [name of] Council?
2.      Why did you get involved?
3.      What is the problem the Council is addressing?
4.      Where do you think the problem rests? What are the sources of this problem? Of what is it largely a result?
5.      How do you see the problem demonstrated on this campus? Can you give examples?
6.      What is the extent of the problem? How severe?
7.      What is the impact of this problem on you as a student, faculty or staff of [name of school]?

## **Section II      Description of the Work**

8.      What is the purpose of the Council as you understand it?
9.      What is your work on the honor council? Can you describe to me what you do?
10.     How does your work fit into the overall purpose or tasks of the Council?
11.     In your opinion, what is the university doing in addressing the problem? What actions are being taken to address the problem?
12.     Are these actions working? Are there additional steps that should be taken? If so, what are they? In your opinion, why isn't the Council taking them?
13.     What metaphor would you use to describe the university's approach to the problem?
14.     Why do you think this work is important?
15.     Can you tell me a story of a time when you felt successful in your work?
16.     Can you tell me a story of a time when you were frustrated with the work? What have been some challenges to the process?

## **Section III      Illumination of Factors**

17.     Generally speaking, who are the integrity offenders? What are the individual reasons they give for engaging in dishonesty?
18.     Do you think there are some institutional factors? If so, what are they?
19.     I am wondering about the impact of "community" on the problem. To what extent do you think that this university feels like a community?
20.     What evidence do you see that students feel a part of a community/or not?
21.     Please tell me a story about your interactions with other community members in regard to academic integrity.
22.     Imagine that your work with the honor council has been successful. How would you describe this "success"? What would the school be/look like? How is this different from the current reality?

**APPENDIX D**  
**SPRING INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**



1. What has happened since the last time we spoke?
2. Have you seen any signs of progress? What evidence do you have for that? What are the implications of that?

How would you characterize any resistance/opposition to the honor code?

3. What were some of the challenges during the last five months?
4. What are your perceptions of the effect that the Honor Council is having? Do you have a specific story?
5. What is your personal definition of integrity?
6. What is your personal definition of academic integrity?
7. What does the word honor mean to you?
8. Where has the leadership come from in the work that the Honor Council is doing? What has that looked like? Do you have a story to illustrate this?
9. What role, if any, has the president played in this from your perspective? If he hasn't played a role, why do you think that is?
10. From my first round of interviews, I interpreted that there is a gap between the default thinking of faculty and that of students. Faculty assume independent work unless they otherwise give permission for collaboration, and the students assume collaborative work unless told otherwise. What do you think of this? Is it an accurate assessment? Do you have any stories to illustrate this or counter this?
11. I often heard from my interviewees that students "feel they need to cheat to make the system." Does that resonate with you? How so? What is this "system?" What are its characteristics?
12. I heard at one school that cheating or plagiarizing might come from a pressure (real or perceived) for "effortless perfection." What is your reaction to this? What do you think it means?

My interpretation suggests that students should get good grades and be all around good students, but not show that effort or let it interfere with social life. Faculty should be excellent teachers but not demonstrate any effort in being a good teacher, and not letting it detract from researching. Does this resonate with you at this school? Do you have any stories which might illustrate this?

If not, what do you think might be going on, or is going on, here?

13. During my first round of interviews, parents seemed to come out as a very influential force in student behavior and university decisions when it comes to academic dishonesty. What is your perspective on the role parents play in this? Do you have any stories?\
14. From my last interviews, I heard a different dominant ideology discourse underlying each school's approach to the problem. I called these three discourses: Engaging, Reforming and Protecting. What do those terms mean to you and what one do you think matches the dominant approach at this university?
15. If you could have done something differently this past year, what would it be? With respect to the honor council? With respect to the university?

## APPENDIX E

### LIST OF DOCUMENTS ANALYZED

1. Student Newspapers
2. Undergraduate Academic Handbooks
3. University Websites
4. Integrity policies
5. Academic dishonesty surveys
6. Council meeting minutes
7. Admissions/Recruiting publications
8. Alumni publications
9. University magazines
10. Accreditation reports
11. Integrity policy handbooks
12. Council bylaws and constitutions

**APPENDIX F**  
**RANDOM STUDENT SURVEY**

## STUDENT PERCEPTIONS SURVEY

*I am conducting this survey for my dissertation on "Creating Cultures of Integrity at Three American Universities." I will not share your name, identifying information or specific survey answers with anyone. All survey responses will be aggregated together for use in my dissertation and possible shared with people at this school.*

1. I am aware that this university has a [name of the integrity policy].  
☐ I don't even know what an [integrity policy] is      ☐ I am not aware that we have one  
☐ I am somewhat aware that we have one      ☐ I am fully aware that we have one
2. I have seen or heard the [name of the integrity policy] mentioned (check all that apply):  
☐ in the University Course Catalog      ☐ on the university website  
☐ in university admissions material      ☐ in the Student Handbook  
☐ in classes by faculty members      ☐ by fellow students  
☐ other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ I have never heard or seen the honor code
3. I am familiar with what the [name of the integrity policy] says:  
☐ not at all      ☐ somewhat      ☐ very
4. The presence of an [integrity policy] impacts my academic behavior, standards, and values:  
☐ not at all      ☐ somewhat      ☐ very
5. I have heard the phrase "academic integrity" on my campus:  
☐ don't know      ☐ no      ☐ yes
6. The idea of academic integrity is:  
☐ not applicable to my day-to-day life      ☐ somewhat applicable to day-to-day life  
☐ applicable to my day-to-day life      ☐ very applicable to day-to-day life
7. I am aware that there is a [name of] Council on this campus:  
☐ don't know      ☐ no      ☐ yes
8. I am aware of what the [name of] Council does and its purpose:  
☐ not at all      ☐ somewhat      ☐ very
9. I think that at this university, student cheating and plagiarism:  
☐ doesn't occur at all      ☐ occurs occasionally      ☐ occurs all the time
10. I think that the amount of student cheating and plagiarism at this school is:  
☐ not a problem at all      ☐ somewhat a problem      ☐ definitely a problem
11. I care if other students cheat or plagiarize:  
☐ not at all      ☐ somewhat      ☐ very much
12. I perceive my classes and academic assignments here to be:  
☐ not at all engaging      ☐ somewhat engaging      ☐ very engaging

13. As a student, my top three concerns are:

#1 \_\_\_\_\_  
 #2 \_\_\_\_\_  
 #3 \_\_\_\_\_

14. I would say that my parents are:

- ☐ not involved in my education      ☐ somewhat involved      ☐ very involved

15. I would say that this university is:

- ☐ not doing enough about cheating and plagiarism      ☐ doing just enough  
☐ overreacting to cheating and plagiarism      ☐ I don't know what they're doing

16. Based on my experiences, I think 'integrity' is a core value of this university:

- ☐ not at all      ☐ somewhat      ☐ very much

17. I feel supported at this university for maintaining my own integrity in the face of challenges:

- ☐ not at all      ☐ somewhat      ☐ very much

18. Please check the appropriate box to provide some demographic information:

a. Year at School

b. Gender

c. Identified Groups (check all that apply):

- ☐ freshmen.  
☐ sophomore  
☐ junior  
☐ senior  
☐ graduate student

- ☐ female  
☐ male

- ☐ a first generation college student  
☐ a student of color  
☐ an athlete  
☐ a sorority or fraternity member  
☐ an international student

19. Please indicate your major or if you are undeclared:

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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND PARTICIPATION.**