UMBC Academic Integrity Surveys
(Spring 2003)

Executive Summary

Following through on a recommendation of the *Report of the Honors University Task Force* (May 2000), UMBC Provost Arthur Johnson created a committee structure to help insure an environment of academic integrity on campus. A steering committee and three sub-committees (involving administrators, faculty and students) were established in November 2001 to address communications, information technology and assessment in relationship to campus academic integrity efforts. This report represents the work of the Academic Integrity Assessment Subcommittee which was charged to work with the Center for Academic Integrity (CAI) and to "develop a process for surveying our students and faculty about their experiences with academic dishonesty."

In response to this charge, the Assessment Subcommittee conducted a web-based survey of UMBC students, faculty, and teaching assistants (TAs) in spring 2003. As participants in this national survey effort (sponsored by the Center for Academic Integrity), UMBC launched the surveys to evaluate the campus' academic environment by asking students and faculty about their knowledge of campus academic integrity policies, effectiveness of these policies, as well as the seriousness and incidence of various cheating behaviors. Faculty members also were asked about their responses to suspected cheating and the techniques they use to reduce or prevent cheating in their courses.

Survey response rates, although low, especially for graduate students, were comparable to response rates for the other participating institutions:

	Response Rate	N of Respondents
Graduate Students	14%	220
Undergraduates	23%	1,824
Faculty	28%	205
TAs	45%	91

Main Findings

1. All groups tended to feel **well-informed** about academic integrity policies

Undergraduates	95%
Graduate students	89%
Faculty	93%
TAs	93%

2. **Faculty** members were the most likely **source for information** about campus policies on cheating, especially for undergraduates and TAs (Chart 1).

3. Undergraduates tended to rate the **cheating behaviors** as substantially less **serious** than faculty, with gaps for some items as much as 20-45 percentage points (Charts 2A & 2B).

4. Undergraduates were much more likely than graduate students to report that they **engaged in cheating behaviors** at least once over the past year (Chart 3).

5. 80% of the faculty said they **observed** at least one incident of **plagiarism** in their courses over the past 3 years, 52% **observed test cheating** (Chart 4).

6. **Effectiveness of policies** seemed to be a concern of all groups, especially the faculty (only 10% of faculty rated effectiveness as "high" or "very high") (Chart 5).

7. 37% of faculty and 24% of TAs said they **ignored at least one incident of cheating** (Chart 6), with the most prevalent reason being lack of evidence/proof (37%)
   -46% referred at least one suspected case of cheating
   -under half were satisfied with the way the case was handled

8. **Most likely action** taken for first offense---- reprimand or warning (59%), followed closely by giving a failing grade for exam/assignment (58%)(Chart 7).
   -**Most preferred action** ---- failing grade for test/assignment (60%) (Chart 7).

9. Most faculty use some sort of **safeguard to reduce/prevent cheating** (Chart 8).
   -Only 4% said they do not use any safeguards
   -Most prevalent safeguard was close monitoring of test/exam (80%)
   -78% of faculty provided information regarding cheating/plagiarism on course outline or assignment sheet
   -76% changed exams regularly
   -74% discussed their views on the importance of honesty and academic integrity with their students.

Subgroup Differences

Undergraduates
   Gender
   - Although Female undergraduates considered cheating behaviors, almost without exception, as more serious than male undergraduates did, few gender differences were found in self-reported actual engagement.

   Transfers
   - Seriousness of cheating behaviors tends to be viewed similarly by transfers and non-transfers, however transfers and non-transfers differed substantially on reported engagement in cheating behaviors.
     -Non-transfers were more likely to report they engaged in them at least once. (Age/maturity may be important in explaining these differences.)

		Non-transf	Transfer
-	Test cheating	52%	vs. 36%
-	Plagiarism:	44%	vs. 41%
-	Getting unpermitted help:	40%	vs. 32%
-	Fabricating:	33%	vs. 27%
-	Helping others cheat:	15%	vs. 12%

Internationals
- International undergrads (small grp: n=38)
    - Less likely to view cheating behaviors as serious as citizens, especially: "Turning in papers obtained from paper mill or website" (62% vs. 89%, "when no fee is charged;" 71% vs. 89%, "when a fee is charged")
    - Self-reported actual engagement in behaviors tended to be similar to citizens:

	Internat'l	Citizen
Test Cheating:	50% vs.	46%
Plagiarism:	47% vs.	43%
Getting unpermitted help:	34% vs.	37%
Fabricating:	18% vs.	31%
Helping others cheat:	21% vs.	14%

Class Level
- For about half of the items, upperclassmen rated them as more serious than lower classmen did.
- Actual engagement in most cheating behaviors does not seem to be related to class level.

Major
- Undergraduate major area seems to make a difference both in attitudes towards the seriousness of certain cheating behaviors and in terms of actual engagement in them.
    - Humanities majors tended to rate most of the behaviors as more serious than other discipline groups did.
    - Over half of Engineering, Math/Science, and Health Related majors said they engaged in at least one of the test cheating behaviors in past year
    - 46% of CompSci/Info majors got unpermitted help on an assignment (cf to 37% of all undergrads)
    - 43% of Health Related majors engaged in at least one fabricating/falsifying behavior, compared to 31% of all undergrads.

Graduate Students
Gender
- Male and female graduate students differed substantially on the rating of seriousness of four behaviors:

	Females	Males
-Accessing test banks:	55% vs.	36%
-Working on an assignment with others when asked for individual work:	59% vs.	71%
-Fabricating research data:	85% vs.	96%
-In a course requiring computer work, copying another student's program:	86% vs.	96%

- Actual engagement, however, did not reveal substantial gender differences

Internationals
- International students were more likely than non-internationals to feel informed about campus academic integrity policies (94% vs. 88%), but less likely to say they learned a lot about these policies from faculty (44% vs. 51%).
- Internationals tended to regard almost every cheating behavior as less serious than their non-international counterparts and were more likely (often much more likely) to report having engaged at least once in each category of the behaviors.

- The largest difference in actual cheating for internationals and non-internationals was the set of plagiarism behaviors (46% vs. 19%). Part of the challenge in addressing academic integrity issues with international students is to recognize differences in cultural standards and then target efforts to clarify expectations in the U.S.

Program
- Numbers too small to have confidence in differences by program.

Faculty
- Core (ranked) and non-core faculty were very similar in terms of how they view the seriousness of various cheating behaviors.
- Core faculty were more likely than non-core to say they observed at least one of the following behaviors in their courses over the past 3 years:
  -Plagiarism (83% vs. 77%)
  -Getting unpermitted help (52% vs. 39%)

- Non-core faculty were somewhat less likely than core faculty to discuss policies on various cheating behaviors on syllabus, course outline, and individual assignments.

Chart 1: Faculty Role As Source of Information About Academic Integrity

% Who Say Other Faculty Are Primary Source for Learning About AI Policies

Faculty	51%
TA's	78%

% Who Learned A Lot About AI Policies From Faculty

Undergrad	73%
Grad	49%
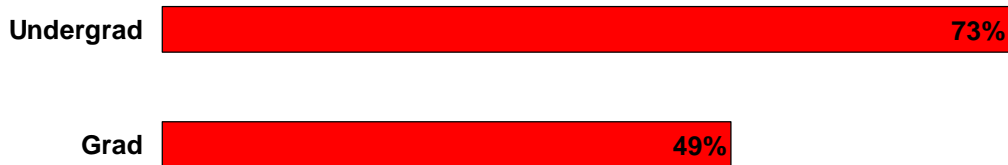
Chart 2A: Top 7 Undergraduate-Faculty Gaps in % Viewing Cheating Behaviors as "Moderate" or "Serious"

Fabricating/Falsifying

	Faculty	Undergrad
Fabricating or falsifying a bibliography	93%	69%
Fabricating or falsifying lab data	99%	74%

Plagiarism

	Faculty	Undergrad
Paraphrasing/ copying a few sentences from electronic source (Internet) w/out footnoting/ referencing	79%	56%
Paraphrasing/ copying a few sentences from written source w/out footnoting/ referencing	80%	54%
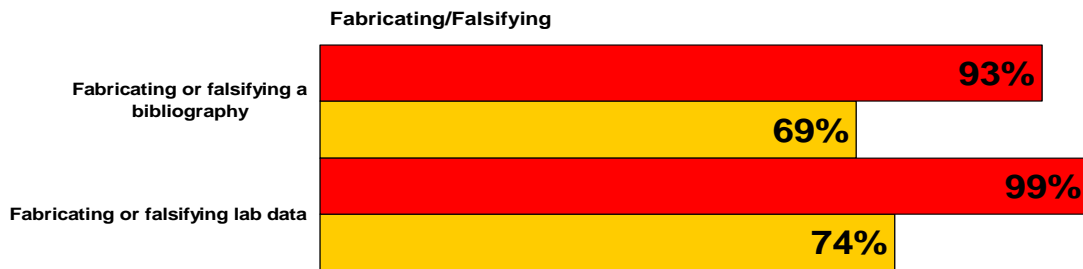
Legend: ☐ Undergrad ■ Faculty

Chart 2B: Top 7 Undergraduate-Faculty Gaps in % Viewing Cheating Behaviors as "Moderate" or "Serious"

Test Cheating

Getting questions or answers from someone who has already taken a test
- Faculty: 93%
- Undergrad: 70%

Getting Unpermitted Help

Receiving unpermitted help on an assignment
- Faculty: 87%
- Undergrad: 45%

Working on an assignment with others when asked for individual work
- Faculty: 86%
- Undergrad: 41%

Legend: ☐ Undergrad ☐ Faculty
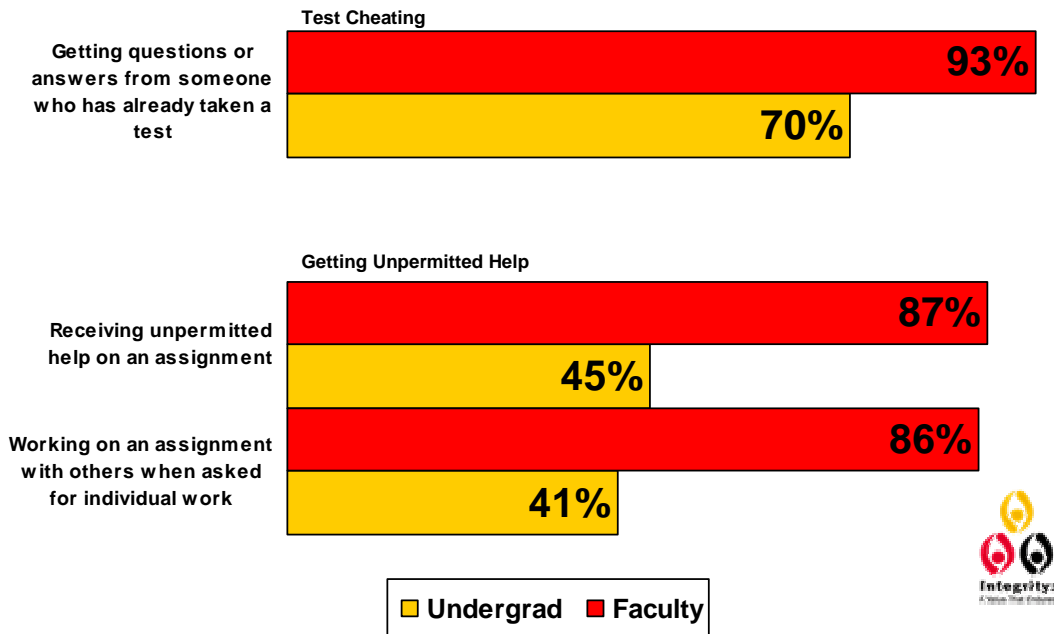
Chart 3: % Responding They Engaged in Behavior at Least Once in Last Year

Test Cheating
- Grad: 19%
- Undergrad: 46%

Plagiarism
- Grad: 26%
- Undergrad: 43%

Getting Unpermitted Help
- Grad: 13%
- Undergrad: 37%

Fabricating/Falsifying
- Grad: 14%
- Undergrad: 31%

Helping Others Cheat
- Grad: 8%
- Undergrad: 14%

Legend: ☐ Undergrad ☐ Grad
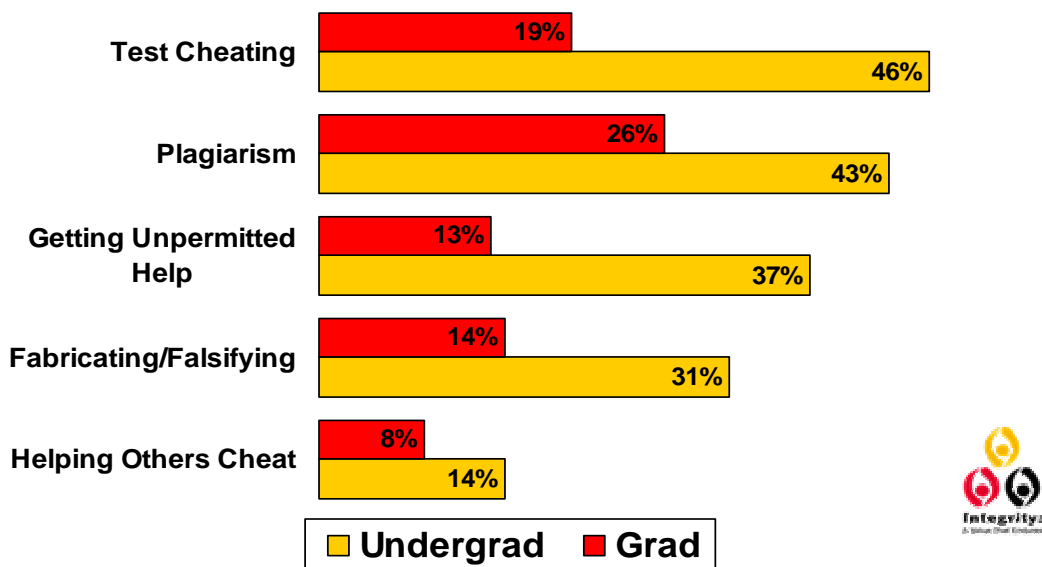
Chart 4: % Responding They Observed Behavior at Least Once in Last Three Years

Behavior	TA's	Faculty
Test Cheating	38%	52%
Plagiarism	63%	80%
Getting Unpermitted Help	38%	47%
Fabricating/Falsifying	35%	48%
Helping Others Cheat	26%	37%

Legend: ■ Faculty ■ TA's
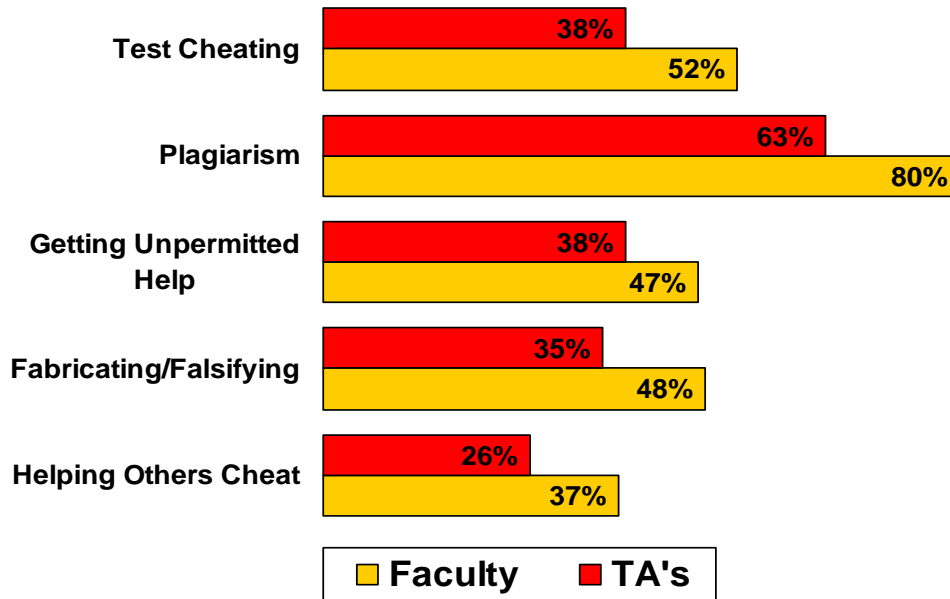
Chart 5: % Rating Effectiveness of Policies as "High" or "Very High"

Undergrad	43%
Graduate	34%
Fac	10%
TA's	39%
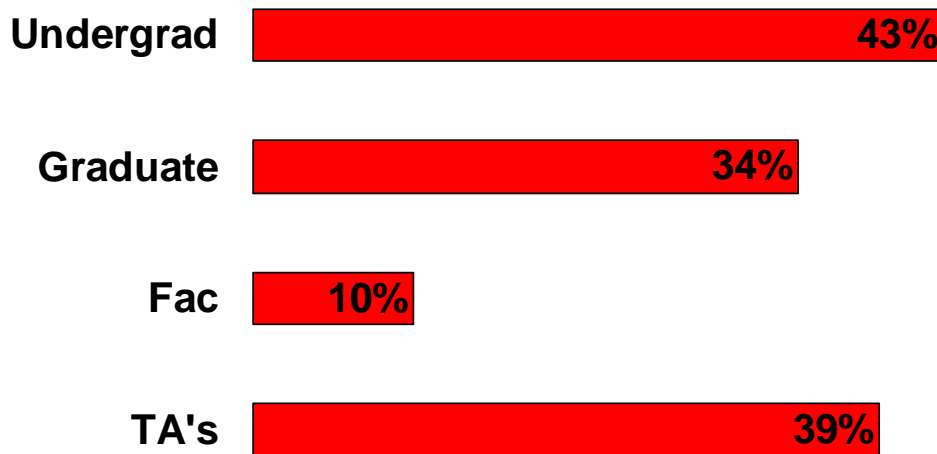
Chart 6: Faculty Responses to Cheating Behaviors by Students

% Who Ignored at Least One Incident	37%
% Who Referred Suspected Case to Chair, Dean, Acad. Conduct Comm., etc.	46%
% Satisfied with the Way the Case was Handled	49%

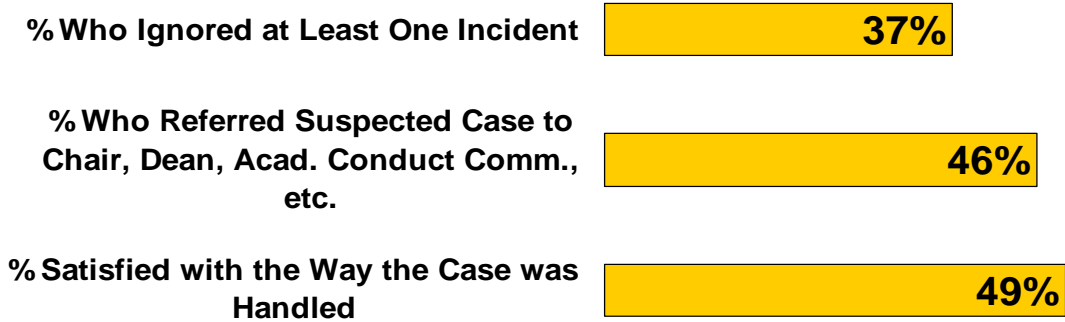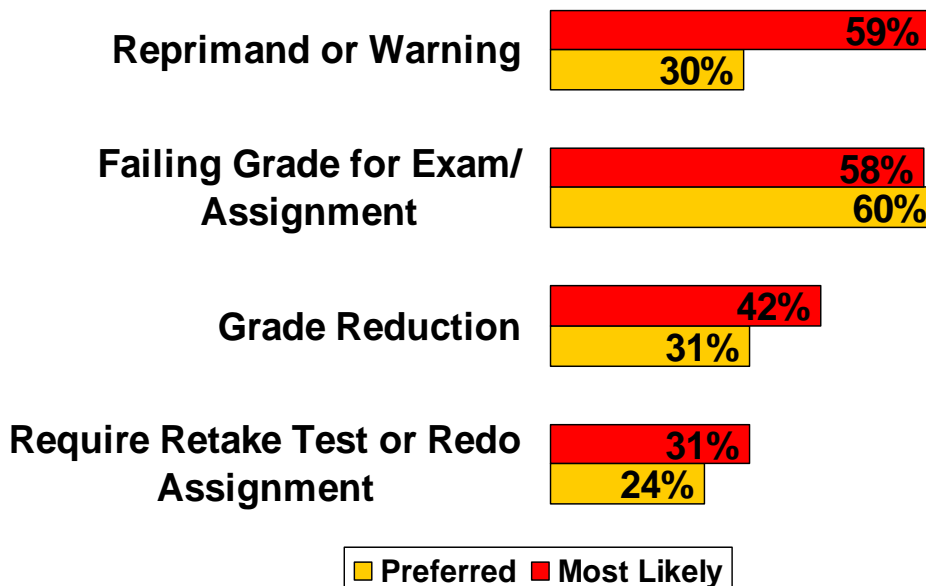# Chart 7: Faculty Responses to Student's First Offense of Cheating on Major Test or Assignment

	Most Likely	Preferred
Reprimand or Warning	59%	30%
Failing Grade for Exam/ Assignment	58%	60%
Grade Reduction	42%	31%
Require Retake Test or Redo Assignment	31%	24%

☐ Preferred ■ Most Likely

Chart 8: Top Four Safeguards Used by Faculty to Reduce Cheating

Closely Monitor Students Taking a Test/Exam	**80%**
Provide Info About Cheating/ Plagiarism on Course Outline or Assignment Sheet	**78%**
Change Exams Regularly	**76%**
Discuss Views on Importance of Honesty & AI w/ Students	**74%**
None	**4%**