

September 15, 2021

To: Teaching and Learning Committee
From: Academic Integrity (AI) Working Group
Re: Request to Make the AI Working Group a Permanent Subcommittee of TLC

A year of [remote learning](#) has spurred an eruption of cheating among students, from grade school to college. With many students isolated at home over the past year—and with a mass of online services at their disposal—academic dishonesty has never been so easy.

Websites that allow students to submit questions for expert answers have gained millions of new users over the past year. A newer breed of site allows students to put up their own classwork for auction.

“Consider hiring me to do your assignment,” reads a bid from one auction site. “I work fast, pay close attention to the instructions, and deliver a plagiarism-free paper.”

Some educators fear the new generation of cheaters will be loath to stop even after the pandemic recedes.

“Students have found a way to cheat and they know it works,” said Thomas Lancaster, senior teaching fellow in computing at Imperial College in London, who has studied academic integrity issues for more than two decades.

(Wall Street Journal, May 12, 2021)

Academic Integrity (AI) may be the central tenet of higher education, yet it is under assault. Students who want to cheat have always found ways to try. While the days of answers written on palms, sticky notes stuck to the inside of sleeves, and hollowed out erasers continue, such techniques have mostly given way to high-tech cheating, facilitated by things like wireless headphones, text messaging calculators, and auto-coding software. The biggest contributor by far, however, is the growth of contract cheating under the guise of online “study” sites, such as Stuvia, Nexus Notes, Studysoup, Sparknotes, Chegg, Quizlet, Studymode, AllFreePapers, JustDoMyHomework, Papercamp, and dozens if not hundreds more. These sites have been problematic for years but never more so than over the past year-and-a-half as the global pandemic pushed learning primarily online rather than face-to-face.

When compared with data from 2019, over the past year AI violations have soared. Examples are easy to find; e.g., academic misconduct reports more than doubled at [Kansas State](#), tripled at [George Washington University](#) School of Business, increased 35% at the [University of Toronto](#), “skyrocketed” at the [University of Calgary](#), rose 230% at [UC Berkeley](#), increased 115% at [USC](#), almost doubled at UW system campuses at [Green Bay, La Crosse, Madison, Oshkosh, River Falls and Whitewater](#), tripled at [Virginia Commonwealth University](#), doubled at the [University of Georgia](#), rose more than 50% at [The Ohio State University](#), and more than doubled at the [University of Houston](#). At UMD our AI violation reports increased 26% over the 2019-2020 reporting period.

Proposal:

Given that Academic Integrity is integral to the core mission of higher education, and in order to be responsive to the ever-changing landscape of teaching and learning, the Academic Integrity Working Group should be reconstituted as the Academic Integrity Subcommittee, thereby making it a permanent subcommittee of the Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC). This will require an amendment to the UMD Constitution Bylaws.

Draft Charge:

Academic Integrity Subcommittee

The Academic Integrity (AI) Subcommittee is charged with fostering a community of UMD students, faculty, and staff that upholds AI through a shared knowledge of defined principles and expectations and a clear, supportive process. The subcommittee will research and make recommendations to TLC regarding best practices concerning AI awareness, prevention, and reporting.

Proposed Membership and Terms (10 members):**1 ex-officio non-voting member:**

1 Associate Vice-Chancellor of Academic Affairs (ongoing)

9 ex-officio voting members:

1 Director or designee from the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (ongoing)

1 faculty member from TLC who will also serve as liaisons (1-year term, renewable twice)

2 undergraduate students representing the Student Association (1-year term, renewable three times)

1 graduate student representing the Graduate Student Association (1-year term, renewable one time)

1 member from ITSS (2-year term, renewable twice)

2 faculty (2-year term, renewable twice)

1 academic staff (2-year term, renewable twice)