

Toward a Model of Academic Integrity Institutionalization: Informing Practice in Postsecondary Education

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ABSTRACT

The strategic choices facing higher education in confronting problems of academic misconduct need to be rethought. Using institutional theory, a model of academic integrity institutionalization is proposed that delineates four stages and a pendulum metaphor. A case study is provided to illustrate how the model can be used by postsecondary institutions as a stimulus for specifying points of change resistance and developing a common understanding of institutionalization challenges. This article bridges theory and practice in the academic integrity movement, questions assumptions about leadership of the process, and anticipates fresher approaches to examining the relationship between the teaching and research missions.

RÉSUMÉ

Les établissements d'enseignement supérieur doivent reconsidérer leurs choix stratégiques en matière de manques à la probité intellectuelle. Cet article utilise la théorie institutionnelle pour proposer un modèle

d'institutionnalisation de la probité intellectuelle, identifiant quatre phases et utilisant une métaphore du pendule. Une étude de cas permet d'illustrer comment le modèle peut être mis en œuvre dans les institutions d'enseignement supérieur. Les résultats observés encouragent la préparation de nouvelles études de cas qui identifieront les sources de résistance au changement et faciliteront l'émergence d'une compréhension commune des difficultés à surmonter. L'article comble ainsi une lacune entre la théorie et la pratique au sein du mouvement pour la probité intellectuelle, interroge les présuppositions relatives au leadership de la démarche et anticipe de nouvelles approches quant à la relation entre les missions d'enseignement et de recherche.

News items and scholarly reports on integrity deficiencies on campuses cover a range of topics including research fraud, sports corruption, financial aid misconduct, sexual harassment, and cheating (e.g., Bennett, 2007; Hallak & Poisson, 2007). Despite its range, "academic integrity" as a term has come to connote a more limited attention to the teaching mission of colleges and universities in regard to reducing the incidence of student cheating and plagiarism. Attention to the teaching mission has focused on undergraduate populations even though lapses of integrity in other student populations or other portions of the campus are arguably as important (Bruhn, Zajac, Al-Kazemi, & Prescott, 2002). Along with a focus on undergraduates, there are five logically related propositions advanced by the mainstream literature on academic integrity and by the international Center for Academic Integrity (CAI):

1. the incidence of student cheating and plagiarism is consistently high on our campuses and is deeply worrisome;
2. student-run honour code systems have a measurably lower incidence of self-reported cheating than administratively or faculty-driven systems;
3. it is difficult to create and sustain a student-run honour code system, and there is little experience with them in most parts of the United States and virtually none in Canada;
4. it is feasible and desirable to provide for diffusion of best practices in deterring and managing student cheating and plagiarism; and,
5. a culture of integrity can be formed which minimizes cheating and has advantages for the whole of the academy (e.g., Alschuler & Blimling, 1995; Buchanan & Beckham, 2006; CAI, 1999; Dalton, 1998; Hendershott, Drinan, & Cross, 2000; McCabe & Trevino, 1996; McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 2001, 2002; Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2001).

With the majority of research having been conducted in the United States, the propositions guiding the Canadian academic integrity movement may not be as easily delineated. In an examination of the websites of the 25 Canadian institutions which are CAI members, it is apparent that the honour code proposition has not gained a foothold in the Canadian version of the movement.

Regardless of any differences between the two countries, there is a lack of literature explicating the process of methodically organizing change and institutionalizing academic integrity. Neither has the literature examined critically the assumptions of undergraduate student leadership of organizational change.

Our purpose here is to advance a theoretical model that can be used to generate case studies, stimulate discourse, prompt strategic and collective action on our campuses, and provide metrics for progress in both Canada and the United States. Our four-stage model enables the consideration of culture along with other critical organizational aspects such as structures, procedures, and leadership variety. We modify this stage model with a pendulum metaphor that captures the possibilities, and perhaps even likelihood, of reverses in the process of institutionalization. Such a theoretically based model will be of utility to leaders in postsecondary education who are concerned with integrity deficiencies and want to act strategically on robust remedies, especially since it provides a lens that may be amenable to strategic planning and intentional organizational change.

ASSUMPTIONS AND CONTEXT

A review of the literature suggests that academic misconduct may have a lengthy history in postsecondary education (e.g., Drake, 1941; Hechinger, 1965; Matthews, 1932; Roark, 1981). Such academic misconduct becomes problematic when it is pervasive, normative and systemic; that is, when it approaches a level of institutional corruption. The institution of postsecondary education can become corrupted if behaviours that undermine the purpose and function of the institution are allowed to fester and particularly when institutional structures, procedures, and cultures support such behaviors (Bertram Gallant & Drinan, 2006b; Hallak & Poisson, 2007). Although the academic integrity movement has focused on reforming student conduct (e.g., Jendrek, 1992; Matthews, 1932; McCabe & Trevino, 2002; Park, 2004), recent reports suggest that an expanded view to include faculty and administrative behaviours may also be warranted (e.g., Anderson, Louis & Earle, 1994; Anglen, 2006; Braxton & Bayer, 1999).

Pervasive student academic misconduct (e.g., cheating on examinations, plagiarism, falsification, and fabrication) can challenge the value of the university degree and cast public doubt on the validity of teaching and assessment methods. At the faculty level, unchecked teacher or researcher misconduct (e.g., lecture unpreparedness, results manipulation) can corrupt the integrity of the institution and stimulate public doubt regarding postsecondary education accountability (Braxton & Bayer, 2004). Given the multifaceted and integral role played by postsecondary education in Canada and around the world, the integrity of the work performed by its members is critical.

The lexicon of academic integrity has been dominated by attention to academic honesty, yet integrity also denotes coherence, wholeness, and deep discernment (Carter, 1996). Coherence in postsecondary education is typically discussed in terms of the management of the tensions between research and

teaching missions, the connections between liberal arts and professional education, or the relationships between academy and society (Besvinick, 1983). We believe that a model of academic integrity institutionalization should be informed by the substantial research and experience with undergraduate populations on academic honesty and dishonesty along with the larger discourse on institutional coherence. Such a model can then have utility for further efforts at the undergraduate level, the extension of the academic integrity movement to graduate education, and for finding connections to developments in research ethics. The expectation is that the conversations surrounding coherence and honesty will themselves converge, and institutional integrity, rather than simply individual integrity, will become centre stage.

The academic integrity movement and research ethics concerns are two of the more visible preoccupations with institutional integrity. While both concerns arose from perceived and real deficiencies, or even crises, each provides evidence of a focus on integrity which can be more than a discourse and, indeed, can guide key operational adaptations in the academy. It appears inevitable that the focus in the academic integrity movement on the undergraduate student population will dissipate and the teaching and research missions will align as the movement matures and begins to participate in the ethics discourse regarding research and scholarship. As this occurs, the profile of faculty and graduate education will be drawn into a more central role in an academic integrity movement that, in the United States, has been led in recent decades most predominantly by student affairs professionals and undergraduate students.

Our previous research suggests that other actors, such as faculty, are at least as important as students to the successful institutionalization of academic integrity (Bertram Gallant & Drinan, 2006a). And, faculty have been heavily involved within particular institutions such as the University of California, San Diego in the United States and, in Canada, at McGill University, the University of Guelph, and the University of Waterloo. In addition, Canadian faculty such as Julia Christensen Hughes at the University of Guelph added academic integrity to the Canadian agenda during her role as president of the national Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. Christensen Hughes and McCabe (2006) strongly argue that the relationship between the teaching and research missions must be explored to renew a “focus on the quality of the educational experience” (p. 58). Suggestions have been offered for how to address the integrity of student and faculty work (see, for example, Bertram Gallant & Drinan, 2006b; Braxton & Bayer, 2004; McCabe & Pavela, 1997; Park, 2004; Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2001), yet few authors have offered theoretical perspectives on the organizational reforms necessary to infuse integrity as a normative value within postsecondary education (see Kibler, 1993 and Bertram Gallant & Drinan, 2006b for two exceptions). Further refinement of theory is desirable in order to provide usable models for practitioners and leaders in postsecondary education who need to be alert to the pace and pattern of change as they attempt to institutionalize academic integrity on their campuses.

Institutionalization Stages and the Pendulum Metaphor

Institutional theory suggests that an organization can mobilize around a change initiative or innovation, implement that innovation, and then see the innovation become stabilized or institutionalized within the organization (Ackerman, 1973; Antal, 1985; Clark, 1968; Curry, 1992; Frost & Egri, 1991; Goodman, Bazerman, & Conlon, 1980; Hage & Aiken, 1970; Kanter, 1988; Kezar, 2001; Levine, 1980). This view of organizational change takes us beyond the rational actor theory of behavioural change and into a more robust approach that considers those organizational factors that influence behaviours and inhibit or stimulate institutionalization. Specifically, theoretically informed models can systematize empirical knowledge and inform the translation of theory to practice.

In this section we propose a four-stage model of institutionalization that allows for a strategic planning heuristic as well as fluidity and movement within and between stages, as captured by a pendulum metaphor. Theories of stages have been prominent in the social sciences at least since Karl Marx (Hadden & Davies, 2002; Organski, 1965; Rostow, 1990). Stage implies a perception of the level of viability of a system that can be sustained over a period of time and which can be transcended by accumulated pressures of demographic or technological change, revolutionary leaps, or organizational reforms. Stages serve as a heuristic and are thus designed to give direction to both observers of, and participants in, processes of change. Stages capture the strategic sense of planning for change that the notion of organizational culture does not capture as well.

The number of stages is limited by the requirements of a heuristic to be comprehensible, elegant, and parsimonious (Waltz, 1979). Stages cluster between three (e.g., Lewin, 1951) and eight in most models (e.g., Kotter, 1996). Even if reality is conceived of as a stream of experience, Oakeshott (1966) argues that it must be “arrested” in order to make sense of it. Our four-stage model attempts to establish points of viability and resistance to change informed by our empirical research (Bertram Gallant & Drinan, 2006a) and a review of the literature on institutionalization (Ackerman, 1973; Clark, 1968; Curry, 1992; Hage & Aiken, 1970; Kanter, 1988; Kotter, 1996; Levine, 1980). See Table 1. We do not suggest that the stages of institutionalization are intrinsic, linear, or static, but rather that leaders can construct a phase model to guide institutionalization in the “cultural and historical frameworks in which they are embedded” (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991, p. 10). Thus, this construct of stages is used as a frame for understanding the process and creating a sense of movement for organizational members.

A stage theory provides a roadmap of sorts with signs to guide progress; the signs alone neither ensure a smooth, linear path nor guarantee that change will occur. Indeed, stages suggest the difficulty of moving toward institutionalization as they indicate points of organizational resistance or stasis. Institutional leadership can use this roadmap to better understand issues of resistance and ultimately help lead the organization through what can be chaotic processes of change; “in this sense, the leader is an agent of institutionalization, offering a guiding hand to a process that would otherwise occur more haphazardly, more

Table 1. Comparison of Theories of Institutionalization by Stage

Theorists	Stages			
	Recognition & Commitment	Response Generation	Implementation	Institutionalization
Ackerman (1973)	Establishment of a commitment to respond to an issue	Acquisition of specialized knowledge and skills	Implementation of the response and its evaluation	Integration into standard operating procedures
Clark (1968)	Cumulative development of knowledge and deviation from established norms	Formulation & evaluation of potential innovations	Restricted Trial	Adoption of the innovation
Curry (1992)		Mobilization	Implementation	Institutionalization
Hage & Aiken (1970)	Evaluation	Initiation	Implementation	Routinization
Kanter (1988)	Idea generation	Coalition building	Implementation of innovation	Diffusion & adoption
Kotter (1996)	Establish a sense of urgency	Create a guiding coalition Develop a vision and strategy	Communicate the change vision; Empower for broad-based action; Generate short-term wins; Consolidate gains/pro-duce more change	Anchor new approaches in the culture
Levine (1980)	Recognition of need	Formulation of plan	Implementation of plan	Institutionalization

readily subject to the accidents of circumstance and history” (Selznick, 1957, p. 27). Such a road map can be particularly helpful in the case of academic integrity, which, as a social innovation, involves an amalgam of political, socio-cognitive, and cultural factors and conflicts (Frost & Egri, 1991; Kanter, 1988).

Stage 1: Recognition and Commitment

In the first stage, organizations or individuals must first *recognize* that there is a pressing issue (an unmet need, a gap between discourse and action, a conflict in values) that requires attention and then *commit* to addressing that issue through organizational change (Antal, 1985; Clark, 1968; Goodman et al., 1980; Hage & Aiken, 1970; Levine, 1980). In this recognition and commitment phase, there will be discontent with the current state, a cumulative development of knowledge, dialogue about the issue, and the expressed commitment to respond to the issue.

During this first stage, a “sense of urgency” (Kotter, 1996) needs to be created whereby organizational members recognize the costs of academic misconduct and feel an urge to commit to institutionalizing academic integrity. This sense of urgency can be created by a catalytic event (such as a cheating scandal) or by a champion who demonstrates a firm commitment to academic integrity and is able to connect with people at all levels of the organization (Curry, 1992; Frost & Egri, 1991; Goodman et al., 1980; Kanter, 1988). Both Curry (1992) and Kanter (1988) caution that this role of champion should not necessarily be rooted within those with power and authority, but rather involve organizational members at all levels in facilitating recognition and commitment to the innovation. Although the academic integrity literature has tended to emphasize the role of students as champions, others have found that it may be faculty, followed by key institutional figures such as the president, who can be powerful champions to advance academic integrity institutionalization (e.g., Bertram Gallant & Drinan, 2006a; Christensen Hughes & McCabe, 2006; Hall & Kuh, 1998; Kibler, 1994; Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2001).

Stage 2: Response Generation

Second, once recognition and commitment have been established, the organization or individual should generate a response to the issue (Curry, 1992; Goodman et al., 1980; Hage & Aiken, 1970; Levine, 1980). Generate is used very purposefully in this context. In an unintentional, non-systemic approach to organizational change, administrators will react and respond to issues (Senge, 1990), applying routine solutions to generative problems (Selznick, 1957). Alternatively, in a generative response, the administrator pays attention to the “systemic, structural explanations” (Senge, 1990, p. 12) for the issue and then engages in an intentional, systemic approach to change. This response generation phase might include deviation from established norms (Clark, 1968) and the surfacing of conflicts in interests and values (Clark, 1968; Hage & Aiken,

1970). Therefore, an important task at this phase is creating the opportunity for dissident voices to be heard and developing a coherent vision or strategy (Kanter, 1988; Kotter, 1996).

Typically this stage is represented by the suggestion that universities and colleges renew and reinvigorate academic integrity policies and procedures and even consider adopting an honour code or modified honour code (McCabe & Pavela, 2005). While renewed policies and procedures are necessary to communicate university expectations and guide student, faculty, and staff responses, it is not sufficient (Bertram Gallant & Drinan, 2006b). By itself, it may simply represent a tactic or formality that will fall short of pulling the university toward the institutionalization of academic integrity. Rather, the guiding coalition of faculty, students, and staff should thoroughly and systematically investigate context, issues, and explanations for the problem of academic misconduct in their specific institution. Colleges and universities can decide to use the McCabe surveys to understand faculty and student perceptions and attitudes towards academic misconduct (see www.sfu.ca/integritytaskforce/results.htm for one example). Or they can construct their own methodological approach to uncovering underlying assumptions, values, and behaviours. Regardless, the response generated should not only address student behaviour, but the organizational structures and cultures that contribute to an environment that profits academic misconduct over academic integrity or simply makes academic integrity too difficult and challenging for faculty and students to adopt as normative.

Stage 3: Response Implementation

Once responses have been generated, they can be implemented (Antal, 1985; Clark, 1968; Curry, 1992; Goodman et al., 1980; Hage & Aiken, 1970; Kanter, 1988; Levine, 1980). This implementation phase can be engaged on a restricted trial basis with built-in evaluation (Clark, 1968; Levine, 1980), but it must be integrated into existing standard operating procedures, the technical core of the organization, in order for individuals to see academic integrity as an innovation integral to the institution (Antal, 1985; Kanter, 1988). Changes to organizational structures, procedures, and cultures must be made to protect the institutionalization of academic integrity. Specifically, there must be clear support from administration, and significant resources including adequate physical space (Goodman et al., 1980; Kanter, 1988). This support should not simply be directed at stopping academic misconduct but at supporting academically integrous behaviours. For example, faculty should be supported by administration to spend more time on their teaching and in their relationships with students. In addition, the institution should ensure that there are sufficient staff to help faculty with education and prevention as well as with the handling of academic misconduct cases. Student integrity in learning could be supported with smaller, more intimate, classes, and costs for academic misconduct (such as suspension or failing grades) increased through consistent enforcement.

In the end, for the innovation to be adopted and embedded within the social fabric of the institution, it must be aligned with organizational strategy and direction (Antal, 1985; Clark, 1968; Goodman et al., 1980; Levine, 1980). While it may seem obvious that academic integrity *should* be aligned with strategic interests, it is usually not conceptualized in this manner. Considering the immediate rewards of academic misconduct (i.e., higher grades) and the low likelihood of being caught, academic integrity is not necessarily profitable for students (Hutton, 2006). This is even further exacerbated by the focus of higher education and the larger society on grades and other metrics of “success” that are now more commonly emphasized in this era of higher education commercialization (Bok, 2003). Indeed, in the current higher education environment, it may not be entirely profitable for the organization to adopt academic integrity if it means faculty will spend more time on teaching and mentoring and less time on the production of intellectual capital that can bring prestige and dollars to the organization. Reductions in cheating and plagiarism rates are rarely seen as an institutional success and may not be until accreditation agencies begin to expect and demand it.

Stage 4: Institutionalization

Academic integrity can be considered institutionalized when it is integrated into organizational routines, processes, and structures, but also when it emerges as a stable norm that guides teaching and research conduct and acts as a value that binds the community (Goodman, et al., 1980; Levine, 1980; Selznick, 1992). The adoption and diffusion of the behaviour, attitude or value are critical for institutionalization to occur (Kanter, 1988). Institutionalization can be recognized when academic integrity has taken “on a distinctive character or function, become a receptacle of vested interests, or is charged with meaning as a vehicle of personal satisfaction or aspiration” (Selznick, 1992, p. 233). In other words, faculty, students, and staff *profit* from the adoption of academic integrity in ways that are not achievable should academic misconduct prevail. Avoiding costs, such as “dings” by accreditation agencies, may not yet be seen as sufficiently profitable; rather a thorough sense of “citizenship,” professionalism, mentorship, and service in the culture of the university is more positive, particularly if demonstrable by higher campus morale and authentic linkages across campus constituencies (Bruhn, et al., 2002).

The Pendulum Metaphor

Institutional theorists such as Huntington and Levine remind us that there are specific degrees to which an innovation can be institutionalized, as measured on a continuum from low to high, and that significant setbacks and reversals can occur in the processes of institutionalization (Curry, 1992; Goodman et al., 1980; Huntington, 1968; Jepperson, 1991; Levine, 1980; Selznick, 1992). For example, the innovation may be tenuously institutionalized within organizational

structures and procedures, but setbacks and reversals will still be experienced because “anchoring” the innovation within the organizational culture (i.e., within underlying assumptions and values) is substantially more difficult (Kotter, 1996; Schein, 1992). It is likely that the substantial difficulties of achieving and sustaining the fourth stage may even instigate a regression to an earlier stage. Anticipating these crises and thinking cyclically and dialectically can ameliorate organizational disarray. We argue that a structural understanding, expressed as a pendulum metaphor, can be of utility in realistic appraisals of the pace and pattern of change, including the difficulty of attaining the last stage yet the low probability that full regression to the earliest stage will occur.

Adam Watson’s pendulum metaphor (1992) suggests that the highest points of a pendulum reflect the ends of a spectrum as continuum. In Watson’s analysis of international society, for example, isolated and independent states are at one end and world empire at the other with balance of power and hegemony at intermediate points. The pendulum cannot easily rest on either end so there is a tendency toward the points closer to the middle, that is, balance of power or hegemony. Applied to a model of academic integrity institutionalization, the difficulty of successfully achieving and sustaining the fourth stage is evident yet regression to the first stage may also be unlikely. Renewal at second and third stages must be expected.

The pendulum metaphor as a structural explanation of the often confounding pursuit of the fourth stage of institutionalization has an advantage over explanations that focus on the resistance of individual actors. Assessing blame on individuals or groups of individuals can paralyze an organization or even cause it to abandon the quest for academic integrity and honesty as an institutional priority. In survey research we previously conducted, we found many potential structural and procedural obstacles to academic integrity institutionalization including the following: a difficult policy to understand and implement; high turnover in academic integrity committees; a lack of central office to support the institutionalization; and a lack of support from upper-level administration (Bertram Gallant and Drinan, 2006a). Understanding these structures and procedures as representing swings of the pendulum rather than insurmountable obstacles can soften the recriminatory politics of a campus and blunt the sense of fatalism that can arise around cheating as one of the more deep-rooted and persistent challenges in the academy. And if there are degrees and levels of institutionalization within the fourth stage, a movement from moderate to low institutionalization does not mean the collapse of the academic integrity system and retreat to an entirely different stage. The pendulum can be seen as *within* a stage as well as *between* stages without losing the advantage of the four-stage model.

A Hypothetical Case

To imagine how our four-stage model can help describe, explain, and plan at a given university, we have created a short case study applying the model to illustrate how the model can be used.

Background

University X is a state university with no Ph.D. programs but large professional schools of business and education. The faculty seldom reported student academic misconduct to deans, as required by policy, and students believed cheating was rampant. Administrators had an ineffectual system for dealing with the few reports of academic misconduct sent to them since faculty handled these incidents by themselves individually or ignored the incidents because of the time commitments and stress associated with the confrontation of academic misconduct. However, a fraternity cheating scandal and a flurry of plagiarism problems in the social sciences led a group of faculty to demand that the Faculty Senate do something about academic integrity at University X.

Recognition and Commitment Phase

A significant group of faculty saw the cheating scandal and plagiarism cases as symptoms of an organizational crisis shaped by deeper problems that could threaten the integrity of the University and jeopardize public support. The Senate took on the issue by appointing a blue ribbon committee with key senators and other distinguished senior faculty. The campus community saw this as an important development, particularly since the Faculty Senate was in the process of successfully rebuilding its own reputation on campus. Conversations and dialogue on campus centred on the seriousness of the problem, and a self-study with data collection and analysis was begun. Simultaneously, the teaching problems that surfaced in the cheating scandal ignited a debate among faculty about the relationship between the teaching and research missions.

Response Generation Phase

The self-study revealed the deep conflict between rhetoric and reality about academic integrity in the teaching mission. It also found that the procedural systems for dealing with academic misconduct were broken. The Senate quickly moved to streamline procedures and asked the Provost to hire an academic integrity officer. The University showcased the initiative in its promotional public relations activities. Faculty Senate recognized further responses were needed, but chose to focus on procedural and structural supports for faculty in handling academic misconduct cases.

Implementation Phase

The new academic integrity officer launched a segment on academic integrity for new student and new faculty orientations. Student government established an Honours Council as a standing committee. The academic integrity officer soon became overstretched trying to visit academic departments to discuss new reporting mechanisms. Many faculty, especially adjunct, had little interest in the new procedures. The number of reported academic integrity cases did increase

and were handled more efficiently, but confidentiality kept successes from being widely discussed on campus. Dialogues on practices and structures that may contribute to the shaping of academic dishonesty (e.g., the use of old exams by students and faculty) were hampered by an unwillingness of students to voice their opinions and hesitancy by Faculty Senate to confront the teaching methods of their colleagues. The upcoming retirements of the president and academic vice president were also factors contributing to wait-and-see attitudes.

Institutionalization Phase

Not achieved.

Case Discussion

Although progress occurred, the momentum in this case is slowed. Some reverses occur as scepticism among faculty and students continue and other issues command Senate attention. Institutionalization is yet to be achieved, but the pendulum does not swing all the way back to the recognition and commitment stage. A renewed effort may occur later, but the university seems to be stalled at the implementation stage. The campus awaits a new academic vice president to acknowledge stasis and demand that the institution revitalize its efforts to implement a more sophisticated plan of greater reach to faculty and students. The hypothetical case indicates a change was recognized on campus, even with the frustrations of implementation that fell short of institutionalization. Perhaps even more important in this case was the juxtaposition of the integrity initiative with the rekindled debate over research and teaching missions. This juxtaposition deepened faculty interest on the matter of academic integrity and provided a new platform for the discourse on the balance of teaching and research.

Discussion of this case cannot be complete without attention to counterfactual thinking and synthetic imagination. What would it have taken to move from implementation to institutionalization? Or, what vision of institutionalization could have pulled the university forward? Counterfactual thinking is required to tease out other possibilities than those which are described in the case study (Lebow, 2000). What, for example, could have happened if the new academic integrity officer had been a catalyst to continued faculty dialogue on relationships of teaching and research? It is possible that this dialogue could have stimulated a broader coalition of faculty who could see a common interest in inhibiting both cheating and research fraud. Bridging the divide between the teaching and research missions requires more than revisiting older manifestations of issues, but rather crafting strategies, policies, and procedures that are synergistic. Boyer attempted this in the 1990s when he propounded the notion of teaching as scholarship (Boyer, 1990). But the assessment movement channelled the teaching part of the equation toward measurable learning outcomes, deflected it from connections to scholarship, and emphasized administrative leadership (Hadden & Davis, 2002).

While counterfactual thinking can isolate choices untaken, synthetic imagination can pull an institutionalization process toward an animating vision. By synthetic imagination we mean the intentional linkage of two or more themes in a goal-oriented alignment which is dynamic and compelling. Whereas counterfactual thinking illuminates tactical and short-term processes, synthetic imagination displays the coherence of themes and their combined robustness. Imagine if faculty saw teaching and research as not only mutually stimulating but as normatively connected. Learning becomes a process of discovery, reflection, and testing just as research does. The norms of effective teaching and research require similar attention to candour, transparency, and rules of disclosure. The connections between teaching and research may be even more expansive than those explored by Boyer (1990), and it is this very expansiveness that invites synthesis.

Implications for Practice and Strategic Choice

A model of academic integrity institutionalization informed by stage theory sharpens the discussion of strategic choice and moves it beyond the preoccupation with tactics. Tactics without strategy cannot move a campus to a different stage nor inhibit anticipated reversals associated with the pull of the pendulum. Too often the academic integrity movement seems to be caught between minor reforms, such as plagiarism detection, and a too-often amorphous attention to culture (Bertram Gallant & Drinan, 2006b). Strategy requires the leverage of themes and coherence. We believe that a strategy that combines attention to both essential missions, teaching and research, has a status and utility beyond that which has been typically explored in the academic integrity movement. This revisiting of strategic choice is stimulated by our model of institutionalization and particularly by the counterfactual thinking and synthetic imagination expected in the construction of case studies. We conclude that there are two closely linked strategic choices: 1) what architecture of support for academic integrity can be contrived among the triad of academic administrators, student affairs professionals, and faculty? and, 2) how empowered can and should students be in the process of promoting academic integrity?

Academic administrators and faculty are best positioned to deal with the juxtaposition of teaching and research missions while student affairs professionals tend to concentrate on life issues of undergraduates. How the alignment of these three groups occurs on a given campus usually defines the pace and pattern of academic integrity institutionalization. A key distraction can be a debate about which of the three should lead the process. While the energy and urgency for change may appear in most instances to come from undergraduate students and student affairs administrators, leadership needs to be seen as coming from faculty and academic administrators if the effort is to be sustained. Academic integrity is too close to the central missions of higher education for leadership to come from other directions.

The confronting of the first strategic choice is tightly linked to the second. Faculty and academic administrator leadership confers legitimacy on institutionalization. This provides space for student empowerment and is manifest on two levels: 1) local quality in the faculty-student direct relationship; and 2) the permission for students to exercise voice in the design and execution of academic integrity policies and procedures. Local quality may be as important as institutional quality because without attention to “pedagogical and assessment practice” (Christensen Hughes & McCabe, 2006, p. 58), institutional structures and procedures to discourage academic misconduct and encourage academic integrity will likely fail. The advantages of student voice in the design and execution of academic integrity policies are well documented (Dannells, 1997; Hoekema, 1994), even as we argue that students need not be the strategic leaders in any of the stages of institutionalization.

CONCLUSION

It is important that strategies for management of change be theoretically grounded and that appropriate models of change inform strategy and practice. A four-stage model for institutionalization of academic integrity, modified by the pendulum metaphor, advances the effort. Diffusion of best practices for strengthening academic integrity requires more than application of techniques and inspirational rhetoric; it requires lessons from strategic planning and the accumulated experience and wisdom from moving from stage-to-stage (see Drinan & Bertram Gallant, 2008, for an institutionalization self-assessment survey). Case studies of those movements should be accomplished and widely disseminated. Case studies, informed by the articulation of a model, are relatively easy for students, faculty, and administrators to accomplish and convey for several reasons: 1) the intimate familiarity with a given campus; 2) the requirements for self-studies as part of re-accreditation; 3) the regular rhythms of strategic planning and assessment regimes; and 4) outlets for presentation at academic and other postsecondary education conferences, particularly as academic integrity has increased its international profile.

Our proposed model provides a discipline and common discourse beyond the “story” of a given campus by methodically deconstructing it. It is a way to transcend the idiosyncratic elements of a campus while acknowledging them. The relevance of a model is that it combines theoretical reflection and insight with an impetus for empirical work and planning. Our model provides frames to move beyond stasis and tactics by displaying the possibilities of change and a way to think coherently and strategically about them. Proliferation of case studies can lead to more nuanced conversations about academic integrity and, we suggest, a new probing of the relationships between teaching and research missions on our campuses.

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