

Common Myths About Academic Dishonesty

1. Everyone cheats, so it can't be wrong.

- While lots of people do cheat, not everyone does.
- Having integrity is not about what other people do or don't do – it's about what *you should* do.
- There is no “safety in numbers” when it comes to academic dishonesty. No matter how many people cheat, it is always wrong because it is dishonest and unfair to those who do not cheat.

2. In the real world, cheaters prosper and honest people lose.

- Unfortunately, many people do get away with cheating and reap short-term benefits as a result. However, the long-term impacts of academic dishonesty can extend beyond the particular class or even beyond UCSB. If a student is caught cheating or plagiarizing, s/he can be suspended or dismissed from the University, and it can potentially impact that student's ability to get a job or attend graduate school.
- Academic dishonesty demeans your character, destroys your reputation and creates a reputation that you will do whatever you have to in order to win. This will prevent others from trusting you.

3. If my teacher grades on a curve, I have to cheat to protect myself since it is certain that other students will cheat.

- Again, there is some truth in the underlying premise that if others cheat, non-cheaters are at a disadvantage. That is one of the main reasons why academic integrity is so important.
- This myth attempts to use short-term self-interest as an acceptable justification for cheating. If this were so, we would have no basis for objecting to people who lie on their resumes to get a job, or to executives who lie or cheat in their job to keep it or get a promotion, or to politicians who lie to get elected, or to people who steal because they don't have enough money to buy what they want.
- People of character do the right thing, even when it costs more than they want to pay.
- In addition, grades are not the ultimate goal of education. Better to have a B or C earned honestly than an A earned through deceit.
- If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem.

4. I need to get good grades to please my parents and get into graduate school or get a good job.

- Do you think your parents really want you to get good grades at the cost of your integrity? Do you think your parents would approve of this strategy? If your parents find out you cheated, they will be greatly disappointed, and if others find out as well they may be embarrassed or ashamed. If you are caught cheating, the costs far outweigh any benefit you can hope to accomplish.
- It's true that graduate schools look at your GPA, but they also rely on complex performance exams, personal statements, and interviews. If you do not concentrate on learning and building your intellectual skills through honest study and test-taking, you probably will not succeed on a graduate school entrance exam or interview.
- Even if you succeed in getting into an elite graduate program or acquire a competitive job, you may not have the skills or knowledge you need to do well if you have cheated your way through UCSB.

5. My class is so large; I probably won't get caught cheating.

- All Professors and TAs are trained in preventing and recognizing cheating, even in large classes.
- On test days, most professors will have additional proctors for security against cheating, and will use other prevention strategies.
- Even if you don't get caught, YOU will know that you did not do the work honestly.

6. UCSB is a laid-back school – no one really gets in trouble for cheating or plagiarizing here.

- Academic Integrity is an important value at UCSB. In 2004-2005, **112 students** were referred to the Office of Judicial Affairs for academic dishonesty (cheating or plagiarism). Of those 112 students, 33 were **suspended** from UCSB for one or more quarters. Many others received academic sanctions, such as an F in their course or on the assignment.

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