

Item: Recommendation regarding academic integrity exercise for students

Recommendation: An academic integrity exercise be made available on Moodle, with all undergraduate students automatically enrolled to complete. The exercise would explain the various aspects of academic integrity, emphasize why it is important, and provide examples of unacceptable practices.

Rationale: Concerns about academic integrity have come to the fore since the switch to the online model in the Spring; however, this has always been an issue in academia. An educational approach may serve to emphasize the importance of academic integrity and help students understand what is and is not problematic behavior. The approach will help students understand that working with integrity will help them achieve their academic and professional goals.

Context: Academic integrity issues are a persistent problem in the university environment, and St FX has placed an emphasis on dealing with it. We have both proactive approaches, for example, academic integrity is mentioned in syllabi and students are encouraged to become familiar with the Policy on Academic Integrity, and reactive approaches whereby breaches of the Policy are investigated and addressed. The fact that there are academic integrity infractions suggests that students do not recognize the importance of academic integrity, do not understand how to work within its principles, or both. For example, some students might feel that making a lab report or assignment available to other students for guidance is acceptable, although most faculty would say that it is not. There are scenarios that students might see as okay, or at least as gray areas, not understanding what constitutes a breach of academic integrity. Given these issues with academic integrity, anticipated to be compounded with courses delivered predominately online, education on the subject may help to address these issues.

Going Forward: It is recommended that the SSC, through consultation with the TLC, revise its Moodle exercise describing the concept of academic integrity. This revised Moodle exercise will focus on educating students about the concept of academic integrity and its position at the core of all academic activity. The exercise will demonstrate the connection between working with integrity and achieving academic goals. Such a course would be made available to all students by mass enrolling them to appear on their Moodle home page along with their other courses, thus ensuring that this exercise is easy to find. Faculty should encourage students to complete this exercise. A communication from the university to its students should be produced, to forestall any impression of accusatory intent on the part of StFX. In future years, it might be the case that only incoming students would be enrolled and asked to complete this exercise.