Chapter 3
Student Integrity Violations in the Academy: More Than a Decade of Growing Complexity and Concern

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Abstract Academic misconduct in Canada is a growing and complex concern, worthy of increased attention and concerted action. Yet, the press appears to be more actively engaged (at least more vocal) in raising concerns about integrity violations than many in our post-secondary institutions. This chapter presents a synopsis of the seminal work by Christensen Hughes and McCabe (in the Canadian Journal of Higher Education 36: 1–21, 2006), followed by an exploration of its treatment by the press—in particular *MacLean's* magazine—following its release. We also present select stories of student misconduct as reported by the Canadian press from 2010 to 2020. From a review of these contributions, we suggest that misconduct in the academy appears to be growing in complexity, severity and by the variety of third-party stakeholders involved. Types of cheating identified in this review include: the use of wearable, wireless high-tech devices for communicating with accomplices; paying (bribing) TAs for answers and inflated grades; exam impersonation; plagiarism; and contract cheating (customized essay buying from freelance writers and essay sweatshops). Explanations provided in the press for these behaviours, include increasing numbers of international students, the proliferation of contract cheating services, and increased use of on-line assessment, resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic. The chapter concludes with a call to action, for all post-secondary institutions, to a greater commitment to academic integrity, including stepping up efforts to educate faculty and students as well as to embrace innovation in assessment design and invigilation practice. We also suggest advocacy for introducing laws that will help to deter contract cheating services.

Keywords Academic integrity · Student misconduct · Contract cheating · Media · Canadian · Assessment

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S. E. Eaton and J. Christensen Hughes (eds.), *Academic Integrity in Canada*,
Ethics and Integrity in Educational Contexts 1,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-83255-1_3

Introduction

As chapters throughout this volume suggest, academic misconduct in Canada is a growing and complex concern, worthy of increased attention and concerted action. As many institutions prefer not to publicize incidents of misconduct, we are fortunate to have a press that routinely draws attention to integrity violations in Canada's colleges and universities, that can provide insight into the types of incidents that are occurring, and help inform institutional response. We begin with a brief synopsis of the first comprehensive study of student misconduct in Canada (Christensen Hughes and McCabe, 2006a, b) and highlight some of the attention this research received by the Canadian press. Next, extending the work of Eaton (2020a, b, 2021), we briefly describe select stories of student integrity violations within higher education in Canada as reported by the press over the past decade (2010–2020). In comparing reported incidents to research on the types and frequency of misconduct self-reported by students in Canadian higher education and elsewhere, the point is made that misconduct in the academy appears to be growing, in complexity, severity and by the involvement of third party, exam impersonation and contract cheating services. The chapter concludes with a call to action, for all Canadian post-secondary institutions, to make a greater commitment to academic integrity, including championing academic integrity education, assessment design and invigilation practice, as originally advised by Christensen Hughes and McCabe (2006a, b). We also suggest that it is more than time to advocate for introducing laws which will serve to dissuade contract cheating firms from offering their services in Canada.

Academic Misconduct in Our Midst: A Canadian Contribution

In Chapter 1 of this book (see Eaton & Christensen Hughes, 2022), we provided highlights of research conducted by Christensen Hughes & McCabe (2006a, b) and here we elaborate further. In 2006, the *Canadian Journal of Higher Education* published two articles on student academic misconduct, by Julia Christensen Hughes and the late Don McCabe (2006a, b), the second of which was awarded with the Canadian Society for Studies in Higher Education's Sheffield Award (2007), as "best paper" for the previous year. These papers were the result of an investigation first launched at the University of Guelph, led by Julia Christensen Hughes, following senior administrative concern about an increasing number of student academic misconduct charges and appeals. At the time, I [Julia] was Director of Teaching Support Services, a multi-faceted support department that was responsible for enhancing the quality of teaching and learning at the University, through educational development programs as well as classroom design and learning technologies innovation.

The first publication (Christensen Hughes and McCabe, 2006a) provided an overview of predominantly US-based research that demonstrated academic misconduct was a prevalent and growing concern, explored its causes, and suggested steps that could be taken to aid with its resolution. These included:

> Revisiting the goals and values of higher education, recommitting to quality in teaching and assessment practice, establishing effective policies and invigilation practices, providing educational opportunities and support for all members of the university community, and using (modified) academic honour codes. (Christensen Hughes & McCabe, 2006a, p. 49)

We also reported that, "the majority of undergraduate students [surveyed] have engaged in some type of misconduct in the completion of their academic work" despite agreeing that "such behaviour is morally wrong" (Christensen Hughes & McCabe, 2006a, p. 52). Institutional factors that were thought to contribute to the reduction of student academic misconduct were also identified, including those that increase student risk-reward perception ("risk of being caught and the severity of possible punishments"), such as:

> Smaller institutional size, existence of an honour code, student understanding and acceptance of academic misconduct policies, severity of penalties for students found responsible for cheating, peer disapproval of cheating, certainty of being reported by a peer and peer's cheating behaviours. (p. 54)

We concluded by underscoring how essential academic integrity is to higher education institutions and society, and called for a recommitment to its achievement. We suggested that "higher education plays an essential role in democratic society" and that faculty and administrators need to recommit "to provid[ing] our students with a high quality education, to develop moral and engaged citizens, and to uphold the highest standards of integrity" (Christensen Hughes & McCabe, 2006a, p. 59).

We also called for a comprehensive Canadian study, one that would help to identify "the unique characteristics of the Canadian higher education system" in order to tailor "institutional strategies appropriate for promoting academic integrity" as well as "to identify how Canadian colleges and universities are responding to academic misconduct when it does occur and what strategies have proven most successful" (Christensen Hughes & McCabe, 2006a, p. 59).

Our second article responded to this call, presenting the results of a "grassroots" study involving 11 Canadian higher education institutions, from five provinces, conducted between January 2002 and March 2003. Undergraduate and graduate students, TAs and faculty, were surveyed about their perceptions and behaviours using a modified version of the survey developed by McCabe and colleagues via the then-named "Center of Academic Integrity's Assessment Project" (Christensen Hughes & McCabe, 2006b).

Of 25 questionable behaviours, we found that the highest rate of self-reported assignment cheating was for "working on an assignment with others when the instructor asked for individual work", reported by 45 and 29% of undergraduate and graduate students respectively (p. 13). The highest rate for examination cheating was "getting questions and answers from someone who has already taken the test",

reported by 38 and 16% of undergraduate and graduate students respectively (p. 13). The three lowest rates of all behaviours were: "Turning in a paper obtained in large part from a term paper "mill"/web site that did not charge", reported by 2 and 1% of undergraduate and graduate students respectively, "Damaging library or course materials", reported by 2 and 2% respectively, and "Turning in a paper obtained in large part from a term paper "mill"/web site that did charge", reported by 1 and 0% respectively (p. 13). It is important to note that given the methodological limitations of the study, the authors clearly advised, "the findings of this study should not be used to make definitive claims about the state of academic misconduct within Canada, but rather as indicators of potential areas of concern and action" (Christensen Hughes & McCabe, 2006b, p. 7).

The study concluded that "large numbers of Canadian high school, undergraduate and graduate students report they have engaged in a variety of questionable behaviours in the completion of their academic work" (Christensen Hughes & McCabe, 2006b, p. 17) and that "consistent with the view of over 40% of faculty and TAs: cheating may be a serious problem in Canadian higher education" (p. 18). The study also identified substantial differences between student and faculty "beliefs about what constitutes academic misconduct". We suggested that the reason many students reported having engaged in "unauthorized collaboration and falsification and fabrication behaviours" may be "simply because they don't believe they are wrong" (p. 18).

We (Christensen Hughes & McCabe, 2006b) recommended that Canadian institutions take a number of actions, including "recommit[ting] to academic integrity" and investigating "where existing policies are failing" (Christensen Hughes & McCabe, 2006b, p. 17). More specifically we observed, "New policies and procedures (including meaningful penalties) that have the confidence of the community are clearly needed…supported by system-wide educational efforts directed at administrators, faculty, TAs and students" (p. 17). We also explicitly called for increasing the quality of the educational experience, including assessment procedures. With respect to the potential effectiveness of honour codes, we noted that few Canadian students appear to be willing to report incidents of cheating.

Reaction from the Press

Following the release of these two publications (Christensen Hughes & McCabe, 2006a, b), there was considerable interest by the Canadian press (print, radio and TV), including interviews with the authors on CBC TV's the National, CTV's Canada AM and CBC radio's The Sunday Edition, with Michael Enright, as well as a feature article in *MacLean's* (a national Canadian magazine) which provocatively proclaimed on its front cover: "Fraud U. With more than half of Canadian university students cheating, all degrees are tainted. It's a national scandal. Why aren't schools doing more about it?" (*MacLean's*, 2007a).

This issue (February 12, 2007) featured a full-length article, in which the importance of upholding academic integrity was emphasized, including by citing research that linked academic misconduct to ethical violations in the workforce, in business, dentistry and medicine (Gulli et al., 2007, p. 33). This same article profiled Dalhousie for hosting an "Academic Integrity Week" (p. 34) and McGill for its novel invigilation practices, including "mandatory, assigned seating" and software that checks for unlikely similarities in incorrect responses on multiple choice exams (p. 34). The article concluded by questioning the integrity of Canada's higher education institutions: "Universities—home to our healers, our bridge-builders and the CEO's who generate our wealth—are failing to demonstrate that responsibility by permitting widespread cheating among students. And we will all pay" (p. 36).

The magazine's editors focused their comments on the topic as well. Under the heading "Universities simply have to do better", they chastised administrators for certifying graduates who had not fully earned their degrees:

> We need to be able to trust our universities…but the fact is that few of them are moving swiftly to correct their cheating problems. Offences are observed and ignored. Processes developed to deal with culprits are bypassed. Punishments, on the infrequent occasions they are imposed, tend to be light. Simple methods of examination proven to prohibit cheating are inexplicably out of use. Universities have to do better, for their own sake, and for the sake of all who rely upon their certificates… There's a lot at stake. (*MacLean's*, 2007b, p. 4)

In the following issue (February 19, 2007), the public responded with letters to the editor, but university administrators and higher educational institutions were largely silent, leading the editors to headline their remarks as "Go ahead and cheat" (*MacLean's*, 2007c, p. 2)*:*

> [T]he only knot of concern we could find in the wake of our story was among the nation's minority of honest university students…We sympathize with the honest students, but maybe it's time they faced facts. Professors, provosts, principals and presidents aren't hugely concerned with widespread cheating. What used to be considered dishonorable student behavior is in the process of being redefined as normal. (*MacLean's*, 2007c, p. 2)

The next issue (February 26, 2007) featured even more letters to the editor from faculty, alumni and students alike, with Canadian's sharing their personal experiences and perceived explanations. Comments referred to (*MacLean's*, 2007d, pp. 4–5): universities "sell"ing credentials with students as "customers"; teachers who pass undeserving students, favouring "esteem" over competence; the negative influence of unethical parents, sports stars and "entertainment idols"; increased use of freelance writing agencies; the prioritization of research over teaching; cheating during exams, including hiding materials in the washroom and writing on thighs, driven by a misplaced focus on memorization versus critical thinking; and the tension between the academy's focus on learning and society's focus on job training.

Another article in this same issue discussed *MacLean's* attempt to get presidents of Canada's leading research-intensive universities to comment publicly. While few agreed to do so, those who did questioned the "prevalence of misconduct among their own students" as well as the extent to which universities were to blame (Gulli, 2007, p. 41). Instead, they suggested that a range of external influences were

at play, including reduced government funding (which had resulted in increasing student/faculty ratios); inappropriate values instilled by parents and primary and high school experiences; the Internet; and increasing competition for grades and jobs.

Interestingly, by the time of this controversy, three Canadian research intensive universities—McMaster, Calgary and Queen's—had all established academic integrity offices. These were pointed to as tangible evidence of these institutions' commitment to encouraging academic honestly amongst students. Peter George, then President of McMaster University in Hamilton observed, "I would be devastated to think that some day a credential from any of our universities would be subject to some kind of doubt because of an epidemic of cheating that went unchecked" (Gulli, 2007, p. 41).

MacLean's March 5th, 2007 issue (*MacLean's*, 2007e, p. 6), included additional letters to the editor, commenting on parents inappropriately "helping" their children complete university assignments, students who lack basis mathematical and English literacy skills (suggesting lax standards in high school), and blatant cheating on exams outside of the academy, such as technical skills certification.

Finally, the April 2, 2007 issue—the university rankings issue—included a response from Claire Morris, then President of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC), in which she appropriately clarified the limitations of the Christensen Hughes and McCabe (2006b) study. She also defended the commitment of Canada's universities claiming, they are "active and vigilant in combatting academic misconduct" using such strategies as "review of regulations on examinations, online tutorials for faculty and students on how to reduce cheating, the introduction of honour codes, workshops for faculty and educational sessions for students to help them better understand the issue of academic integrity" (*MacLean's*, 2007f, pp. 4–5).

This same issue featured an interview with Nobel laureate and physicist Carl Wieman, who had just joined the University of British Columbia to head the Carl Wieman Science Education Initiative. During the interview Carl was asked about his views on student cheating. His response focused on the purpose of education and the need to switch the focus from grades to learning; "when we work quite actively to convince [students]… that the purpose of them being in class is to learn certain things, that are of value, once you do that—and we have a little bit of data to support his—the cheating goes way down. Students realize they're actually cheating themselves" (*MacLean's*, 2007f, p. 13).

Following, many Canadian universities and colleges began to take concerted action, revisiting and revising their policies and practices, holding workshops and orientation events, and enhancing academic integrity resources and supports (including developing anti-plagiarism tutorials). Some of those who had participated in the original Christensen Hughes and McCabe survey, boldly went public with their results, posting them on on-line and acknowledging that they had a problem that needed addressing. In parallel, increasing attention to the quality of teaching and learning was well underway at teaching centres across the country, with enhanced attention being paid to student engagement and authentic assessment.

This was a busy time for me [Julia], as I was regularly invited to present keynote addresses and facilitate workshops on academic integrity at higher education institutions across the country. Specifically, I encouraged Canada's universities and colleges to collaboratively develop concrete plans, using what I called "5 levers for change":

1. Recommit to integrity as a core value.
2. Provide quality education.
3. Reform assessment practice.
4. Review, revise and clarify academic integrity/misconduct policies and procedures (including invigilation).
5. Provide educational/orientation activities.

Canadian Media Reports of Student Academic Misconduct, 2010–2020

In this section, we highlight cases of student misconduct (academic and co-curricular), at least one per year, reported by the mainstream Canadian media, as well as select academic sources, that occurred between 2010 and 2020. Rather than being exhaustive, we have included a curated list, adapted and extended from Eaton (2020a, b), demonstrating various types of student misconduct and associated concerns that have been publicly reported over the past decade. While we have chosen to focus on transgressions by undergraduate and graduate students here, we fully recognize that the questionable behaviour of faculty and senior administrators is an even more important issue, as faculty serve as essential role models, and administrators set the moral tone. It is also important to note that what comes to the attention of the press is arguably a small representation of the total number of incidents, given that many higher education institutions routinely endeavour to deal with, and report on, such incidents in private. We also observed that in attempting to find at least one story for each year (and in fact struggled to find one for 2012), our task became increasingly easier across time, suggesting academic misconduct may be becoming of increasing concern and/or increasingly prevalent.

This approach of reviewing media accounts to better understand academic misconduct, was previously employed by Osipian (2007), who systematically reviewed media accounts of corruption in higher education in the US, UK and Russia between 1998 and 2017. Osipian identified accounts of "bribery, fraud, cheating, plagiarism, diploma mills, breach of contract and other forms of misconduct" as well as "credentials fraud and research fraud" (p. 35). He concluded, "corruption in higher education receives good coverage in the media… [including] its significance, scale and scope, and variety of forms in which it manifests itself" (p. 34).

2010

In 2010, the Canadian Council on Learning (CCL) issued a press release, heralding their report *Liars, fraudsters and cheats: Dealing with the growth of academic dishonesty*. In it, Paul Cappon, then President and CEO of CCL advised:

> Over the past decade internet and high-tech devices have enabled a virtual explosion of classroom cheating… As this article reveals, educators, parents and students have to work together in order to properly address what has become a serious and widespread problem. (Canadian Council on Learning, 2010)

The press release and/or report were cited in several subsequent newspaper and academic articles. One focused on the increasing frequency of academic misconduct charges at the University of Toronto, providing specific examples (Brown, 2010). As one example, a student reportedly faced 67 charges before being expelled. In another, a TA was found to have charged students $1,500 CAD for providing answers during an exam. In yet another, a student falsified a doctor's note.

2011

The *Toronto Star* published *Cheating students get second chance in Newfoundland* (Allick, 2011), which reported on a new policy in Newfoundland and Labrador's largest school district. Students caught cheating were to receive a second chance rather than a zero—the opportunity to take "an alternate and appropriate assessment" with the student's mark being determined entirely from the new assessment. Teachers complained about the new policy; "cheating is wrong and there should be an academic deterrent for it".

2012

An article in the *Toronto Sun* reported that in 2012 a University of Toronto student was recommended for expulsion following an incident of exam impersonation:

> A chemistry professor realized one student, who was failing other parts of the course, performed particularly well in her midterm and final exams… Handwriting on the two exams also differed from handwriting on other assignments. The student was found guilty of having someone impersonate her at the two exams. The tribunal recommended expulsion. (Shah, 2013)

2013

A report by *CBC News* (2013a) concluded essay buying was a growing concern on Vancouver campuses; "An official with Simon Fraser University says more and more students are cheating by buying custom written essays online, instead of writing the assignments themselves", despite the high price tag, with a "10-page essay ranging from 250 to $400". The story also highlighted the problem of detection; "While both SFU and UBC use anti-plagiarism software to catch essays that lift entire passages or completely copy papers that might be online, the custom approach used by essay sellers makes it difficult for universities to detect" (2013a).

UBC's Sauder School of Business made headlines for a pro-rape chant, as part of its orientation activities, organized by its student-run Commerce Undergraduate Society (*CBC News*, 2013b). St. Mary's Student Union similarly made headlines for a chant based on an acronym for "young"—"Y is for your sister […] U is for underage, N is for no consent […] Saint Mary's boys we like them young" (*CBC News*, 2013c).

An article in the *Toronto Sun*, *Cheaters never prosper—if universities can catch them*, reported on cases adjudicated at the University of Toronto, including impersonation, buying papers, and fraudulent university records. The article also reported that the university had "expelled 45 students and recalled five students' degrees since 2006–2007" (Shah, 2013).

2014

The CBC released the results of a study of cheating at Canadian universities. A 2012 survey of 41 Canadian universities found approximately 7,000 cases of cheating had resulted in disciplinary action, ranging from 286 cases at the University of Manitoba, representing 1.0% of the student population, to 607 cases or 2.6% of students at Carleton (Moore, 2014). The point was made that there is a large discrepancy between the high percentage of students who have self-reported engaging in academic misconduct in research studies, and those who are caught and penalized.

MacLean's reported on the rising role of technology entitled, *New frontiers in high-tech cheating: With shrinking wireless devices, online classes and the emergence of wearable technology, it's easier than ever to cheat* (Counter, 2014). The story highlighted escalating use of wireless technology, making detecting exam based cheating increasingly difficult. One example shared from the University of Victoria included a student taking a medical school admission test wearing a pinhole camera, allowing him to transmit questions to tutors, who communicated answers back through a smartphone. The tutors were unwitting accomplices, thinking they were taking an employment test. The article suggested that "Apple Watch, Google Glass and 'invisible' Bluetooth earpieces" are becoming a challenge for instructors "who may not be as tech-savvy as their students", who don't want to run classrooms

and exams "like a prison" and may be reluctant to "confiscate watches" (Counter, 2014, para. 9).

A female student from the University of Waterloo made the news for allegedly paying a male student from York University $900 to write her math exam (Caldwell, 2014; *CBC News*, 2014). According to officials from the university, "a 26-year-old PhD student at Toronto's York University was contacted by the first-year student through a website connecting international students to others who are willing to write exams for compensation" (*CBC News*, 2014, para. 2). Staff had been alerted to the possibility and had increased exam security including "mandatory student card scans, which would identify any fake documentation" (*CBC News*, 2014, para. 6). Both students faced criminal charges for personation and forgery (Caldwell, 2014, *CBC News*, 2014).

2015

Alex Gillis (2015), writing for *University Affairs* highlighted increasing opportunities for students to receive unpermitted help including customized papers (contract cheating) from Internet sources. Gillis (2015), noted "sites like GradeSaver.com and StudyMode.com (which claims to have nearly 16 million members) are glitzier and offer entire libraries of past essays for a fee" (para. 4). He explained, "At StudyMode.com, students upload their own papers to the site and pay $30 a month to get full access to other uploaded essays. In spite of much badly written content, StudyMode.com claims to be making $10 million a year from the use of its 1.5 million documents" (para. 6).

The *National Post* ran a story under the title, "Canada is at the leading edge of killing the dreaded annual 'final' for good" (Brean, 2015). Brean argued that high stakes exams are not effective, referencing the now infamous photo of relatives of students in India, climbing the walls of a school, to help the students cheat.

2016

The media reported on a case of exam impersonation at Concordia University, involving a 24-year old student and his tutor (Bernstien, 2016; Meagher, 2016). Allegedly, the student hired the tutor to impersonate him during a final exam. The tutor was employed by Montreal Tutoring, which describes itself as "Montreal's premier tutoring agency focusing on Concordia University & John Molson School of Business courses" (Bernstein, 2016). Both parties faced criminal charges, including conspiracy, forgery, and identity fraud. A university spokesperson commented (Meagher, 2016): "We really value academic integrity, and students are made well aware at the beginning of their courses that issues of cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. It's really well set out in our own codes of academic integrity."

Meagher (2016) also made it clear that impersonation is a criminal offence, citing Article 404 of the Canadian Criminal Code:

> Everyone who falsely, with intent to gain advantage for himself or some other person, personates a candidate at a competitive or qualifying examination held under the authority of law or in connection with a university, college or school or who knowingly avails himself of the results of such personation is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction.

2017

A number of news stories featured incidents at the University of Regina in 2017. These included a story about engineering professors being warned about teaching assistants allegedly taking bribes from students to increase grades, when entering marks for "assignments, quizzes, and exams": professors were urged to "please discourage your graduate students from taking any bribes to help undergraduate students cheat" (Leo, 2017a). A related story focused on a dean's computer allegedly being hacked, in which failing grades for four students were adjusted to passing grades (Leo, 2017b).

2018

The University of Regina continued to be the subject of several news stories in 2018. One explored how reports of academic misconduct had nearly doubled between 2013–2014 and 2016–2017 (Leo, 2018a). It is worth noting that increases in reports of academic misconduct do not necessarily mean increasing rates of misconduct, but rather, can reflect increased vigilance on the part of instructors at the institution. Two additional media reports pointed to "a significant amount" of academic misconduct in a class on law and ethics for engineering students (Leo, 2018b). The report also discussed cheating during a fourth-year law and ethics exam that led to changes in exam invigilation, including the use of cameras in exam rooms (Leo, 2018c).

City News reported on a story of contract cheating (Sutherland, 2018). Highlighted was the proliferation of flyers on lampposts and student desks at the University of Toronto, as well as campuses across the country, advertising 3rd party assignment completion services, featuring low prices and fast turnaround ("cheap and fast"). Sutherland suggested that such assignments are often completed by graduate students. Investigating one particular service, Sutherland (2018) found that a paper could be purchased from Ehomework.ca for $25 per page. Suggesting such services don't necessarily provide high quality work, the paper she received was shorter than requested and on the wrong topic.

The *Toronto Star* put the spotlight on Niagara College, after over 400 students were required to retake an in house English language proficiency test after being found to have inconsistent skills (Keung, 2018). Niagara had decided to investigate after a

significant increase in the number of students deemed to be "at risk academically". The investigation found that as many as 200 students were failing due to inadequate English skills despite having passed the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test, a standard for Canadian higher education institutions.

In another story, an Alberta judge upheld the University of Calgary's right to rescind a Master of Arts degree it had awarded to a student in 2003 due to plagiarism (*CBC News*, 2018). According to the report, the students' examination committee had raised a concern about plagiarism and had expected the issue to be addressed. Ten years later, Saint Mary's University (SMU) in Halifax who employed the individual as an instructor, requested a copy of the thesis. SMU ran the work through text-matching software and alerted the University of Calgary, who agreed that it contained substantial plagiarized elements. Subsequently, the University of Calgary attempted to rescind the degree. After a number of unsuccessful appeal attempts, the matter went to court, where the court upheld the University of Calgary's decision, ruling; "the university was entitled to rescind the degree once it found that the thesis included substantial plagiarism, because the power to award degrees necessarily implies the power of rescission" (*CBC News*, 2018).

2019

An entire class of students in a second-year nursing course at Brandon University faced disciplinary action after a final exam for the 2019 fall semester was deemed "compromised" (Slark, 2020). The students were offered the opportunity to re-take their final exam, with the caveat that the maximum they could earn would be 70%.

Burnaby RCMP investigated allegations of someone being paid to impersonate a student during a final exam at Simon Fraser University (Bains, 2019). The test writer was arrested.

Sutherland (2019) wrote a follow-up investigative piece on the existence of academic sweatshops that serve the contract cheating market. In *EXCLUSIVE investigation: Kenyan man says he wrote essays for Canadian students*, Sutherland reported that a Kenyan man (Joseph) contacted her, claiming he had written the paper she had reported on in 2018 (for which she had paid $165). Joseph said he had been hired as a freelance writer, after responding to a Craigslist advertisement. For Sutherland's paper, he had been paid $18 and promised assistance in immigrating to Canada. Joseph further claimed that he had "written hundreds of assignments for at least 50 students over the last year…for students from schools including University of Toronto, York, University of Ottawa and Simon Fraser" (Sutherland, 2019). Underscoring the growing concern surrounding contract cheating, Sutherland (2019) observed:

> A simple online search for terms like 'essay writing' or 'contract cheating' will bring up hundreds of results for services that offer to write university papers. Many promise original term or research papers by professional writers, delivered within a quick turnaround time. The websites may be able to skirt any legal complications by claiming to provide only notes or

> structure for essay writing. However, some states in the U.S. and countries like New Zealand have set up laws against providing any form of assistance to cheat, with penalties in place if caught. (Sutherland, 2019)

The article went on to highlight a specific problem with Canadian law:

> In Canada however, the practice is legal, with the onus falling on the student to do the right thing and only submit papers they have personally researched and written. Education lawyer John Schuman says legally, there's not much that can be done to prevent students from plagiarizing or purchasing fully written essays outright. "There isn't much by way of the law in Canada that addresses this type of academic dishonesty. That's entirely within the universities and their own codes of conduct and their own disciplinary procedures," he says. (Sutherland, 2019)

In another story twenty-two (22) construction electricians had their journeyperson certificates suspended or cancelled as a result of an investigation into exam cheating at Saskatchewan Polytechnic in Moosejaw (*CBC News*, 2019). An investigation found that apprentices had accessed unauthorized materials over several years. An instructor was subsequently fired for providing answers to exam questions and a staff member resigned (*CBC News*, 2019). Following, Saskatchewan Polytechnic conducted an internal audit on exam procedures (*CBC News*, 2019).

Rivers (2019), reported that while "[i]nternational students are boosting the bottom lines of Ontario's community colleges…they also are forcing schools to pay closer attention to cheating" (para. 1). An increase in incidents of academic misconduct at St. Clair College, for example, was attributed to increasing enrolments of international students, along with different cultural understandings of what constitutes plagiarism as well as pressure to succeed. Following, the college established an academic integrity coordinator position, to help address "a spike in cases of academic misconduct including plagiarism and using prohibited materials on exams" (para. 2) as well as offer mandatory workshops. The article also suggested, however, that rather than international students actually engaging in higher rates of cheating, it may be that plagiarism is easier to detect in second-language writers.

Writing in the *Financial Post*, Francis (2019), offered, "If you think cheating at universities is just an American problem, you're wrong". This article addressed the admissions scandal in the US, that resulted in fines and jail time for wealthy elites, having paid people to write their children's admission exams or help falsify sports experience. According to the article, "British Columbia businessman and philanthropist David Sidoo [was] alleged to have paid US$200,000 to have an American fly to Vancouver to take SAT tests for his sons". She also referenced the work of Sutherland (2018), concluding:

> the reality is that the incentive to cheat, to obtain a student visa or a prestigious degree, is too great to rely simply on the honour system. The vast majority of students work hard to achieve graduation, but Canada's institutions of higher learning, and lawmakers, must smarten up and close all loopholes. (Sutherland, 2018)

2020

In an opinion piece in *The Hill Times*, lawyers Juneau and Drapeau (2020) called out Canada's Royal Military College (RMC) for its "rape culture" reporting that "68% students witnessed or experienced unwanted sexualized behaviours and more than one in seven female cadets were sexually assaulted last year (15%)". Suggesting that RMC does not live up to its "core values of honour, courage, integrity, and to display the most scrupulous regard for the truth", they also reported that "[b]etween September 2014 and December 2016 there were 87 reported incidents of plagiarism and cheating, mostly committed by third- and fourth-year cadets" (Juneau & Drapeau, 2020).

Also during 2020, many articles focused on issues of misconduct associated with students completing exams remotely, as universities and colleges grappled with how to respond during the Covid19 pandemic. One article, "Ethicist raises concerns about program's ability to lock students' computers and monitor webcams" (Grabish, 2020), focused on the University of Manitoba's official choice of *Respondus* for monitoring and recording students during exams, on the basis of an algorithm (sound, eye movements, faces). Ethicist Neil McArthur raised issues with the technology:

> To have software that not only locks a student's computer but monitors their eye movements and their physical movements I think is a clear violation of privacy…The consent is complicated because what they're consenting to is in a sense coerced in that they need to compete for this in order to get to pass the course and write the exam. (Grabish, 2020)

Instead, he suggested using take-home exams within a 24 hour window, in which students are welcome to access and apply course material. In this same article, Red River College professor Connor Lloyd advised:

> By increasing the ways in which we evaluate students, we are able to provide more comprehensive assessments and take the weight off of a single exam. Our ultimate goal with this approach is to discourage cheating online and ensuring our students can access resources and supports early on to help them with their programs this fall. (Grabish, 2020)

Another article reported that 100 first year UBC students were accused of cheating on a math midterm, with the professor posting: "I am extremely disappointed to tell you that there were over 100 cases of cheating…If confirmed, the students involved will receive a 0% for the course (not just the midterm) and I will recommend their expulsion from UBC" (*CBC News*, 2020).

In summary, there were numerous stories reported in the press on student misconduct from 2010–2020. Collectively, they highlight several areas of concern, including behaviours pertaining to sexual assault and harassment, as well as methods by which students may be cheating on their academic work. The latter included: wearable, wireless high-tech devices for communicating with accomplices; paying (bribing) TAs for answers and inflated grades; exam impersonation; and contract cheating (customized essay buying from freelance writers and essay sweatshops). The students in the stories were alleged to have cheated on a variety of assignments and tests, including admissions, English proficiency tests, skills-based certification exams, scholarly papers and

exams. Consequences varied, from the opportunity to redo the assignment, to more punitive measures, such as grade reductions, expulsion, the rescinding of degrees, and even criminal charges (in the case of fraud and exam impersonation). Steps reportedly being taken to reduce student misconduct were also reported, including better education for students on what is expected, innovation in assignment design and exam invigilation. Two articles also raised the point that contract cheating in Canada may be particularly hard to combat, given the lack of legislation prohibiting essay writing services.

The last year of our review period (2020) also raised many issues associated with the ethics and effectiveness of remote exam monitoring procedures. As the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic hit Canadian campuses, and courses and examinations pivoted to online environments, 2020 saw a rash of news reports concerning questionable online invigilation practices. Many of these raised concerns with the rise of the "surveillance state" and student privacy, including mental health effects and discrimination against racialized students (see Eaton & Turner, 2020).

The fact that stories became increasingly easy to find and numerous over the course of this review, as the years progressed, may suggest that misconduct in the Canadian academy is becoming increasingly common. Certainly the sophistication and brazenness of cheating methods appears to be growing, including the use of wireless technology. Third parties also appear to be increasingly involved, such as exam impersonators, those employed as freelance writers by contract cheating firms, and organizations that promote such unethical services.

Conclusion and Call to Action

Much has transpired across the Canadian higher education landscape since Christensen Hughes and McCabe (2006a, b) conducted their study on academic misconduct and recommended:

> Revisiting the goals and values of higher education, recommitting to quality in teaching and assessment practice, establishing effective policies and invigilation practices, providing educational opportunities and support for all members of the university community, and using (modified) academic honour codes. (Christensen Hughes & McCabe, 2006a, p. 49)

While this work attracted significant attention from national and local media, and many university and colleges revisited their policies and procedures, some establishing academic integrity offices as well as developing workshops, on-line tutorials and orientation activities, our current review suggests if anything, the problem has become substantially worse. While students admitted to many questionable behaviours in the Christensen Hughes and McCabe study (2006b), buying a paper to submit as one's own, was not among them. Interestingly, we didn't even think to include exam impersonation amongst our list of 25 questionable behaviours. In contrast, the newspaper articles cited above, suggest a culture may be emerging in which some students—buoyed perhaps from the relatively low percentage of those

disciplined—are pursuing more extreme forms of cheating, including using wireless communications technology, hiring exam impersonators or engaging with contract cheating services (academic sweat shops) for their written assignments.

Given the essentiality of integrity to the academy, it appears that more drastic measures need to be taken, in order to combat such behaviours, and ensure the integrity of both admissions and degrees conferred. Specifically, we suggest a campaign of advocacy for changing Canada's laws, to restrict the aggressive sales tactics of contract cheating firms, making it illegal to run such businesses in Canada.

Faculty also need to be much better educated in the temptations and opportunities their students are facing and provided with assistance in developing assessment strategies that can help to combat such practices. In fact, we suggest a fundamental rethink of assessment, placing much more focus on authentic approaches, such as requiring students to demonstrate what they can do, as a result of their learning. Such demonstrations could include a podcast on a topic, a debate, or the presentation of a recommendation to a community client, in which the students have the opportunity to demonstrate their breadth and depth of knowledge, as well as their skills in communication, and ability to respond to complex questions.

Exam invigilation also needs to be substantially revisited, vigorously defending against impersonation and the use of prohibited electronic devices, while ensuring that students are not writing under duress or falsely accused. Finally, we wonder if the time may be right to signal institutional commitment by having faculty and students adopt an honour pledge (in contrast to the traditional or modified honour codes used in the United States, see Eaton & Christensen Hughes, 2022). Such a pledge could help communicate institutional commitment to the highest standards of integrity, perhaps taken at an invocation ceremony for new students. Certainly, to have any meaning, it would need to be reinforced through a variety of educational programs and policies, for faculty and students alike.

Clearly, the time has more than come for all of Canada's post-secondary institutions to make an unequivocal commitment to academic integrity, and to put in place effective strategies to support its achievement. We are fortunate to have a press that continues to call out incidents of misconduct, hopefully helping to ensure that this essential issue receives the attention it deserves.

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