

Cheating: An easy way to cheat yourself

Rebecca Warren
Staff Writer

"Integrity — both personal and institutional — is our most precious asset. Honesty in our academic work is vital, and we will not knowingly act in ways which erode that integrity. Accordingly, we pledge not to cheat, nor to tolerate cheating, nor to plagiarize the work of others."

— Expectations for Academic Conduct, UWF Student Handbook

This statement applies to all University of West Florida students. According to the UWF Student Handbook, students are expected to strive for honesty and excellence in academic performance.

Unfortunately, there are college students who do not always adhere to these standards. However, the University provides resources to educate students about academic misconduct to eliminate the chances of students knowingly committing an academic offense.

The term "academic misconduct" encompasses both plagiarism and cheating, said Tom Westcott, assistant dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Plagiarism is generally defined as claiming someone else's work or ideas as your own, including purchasing essays from Internet sources. Cheating is the more traditional act of

copying answers from another student's paper or smuggling test answers into class by several different means.

Debra Humphreys, vice president of communications and public affairs at the Association of American Colleges and Universities said, "Academic honesty is the cornerstone of college learning and liberal education and, indeed, is a continuing problem that colleges face."

Faculty members at UWF are concerned about academic misconduct because "it cuts right to the heart of the academic experience," Westcott said.

There are very few reported incidents of cheating at UWF, but it does occur, Westcott said. Plagiarism is a much bigger problem and most of the time, it is the result of ignorance as to what actually encompasses plagiarism rather than a deliberate intention to plagiarize.

"Students often don't know what constitutes plagiarism," he said. "They do something in a paper that constitutes plagiarism and don't even know it."

Everyone Westcott knows who is involved in dealing with cases of academic misconduct hates to see this happen. It's preventable, he said.

"Nobody wants you or anybody else having to go before an Academic Standards Committee when you did something by mistake," he said. "The system is set up to safeguard the student's rights."

An Academic Standards Committee is appointed by the appropriate dean and consists of an equal number of faculty and students. A student may also choose to go before the dean of the college rather than going before

"Do you want to go to a doctor who cheated his way through anatomy class, or drive over a bridge built by an engineer who cheated?"

Donald McCabe, founder

Center for Academic Integrity

an academic standards committee. A detailed description of this process is available in the Student Handbook on pages 48-49.

To eliminate the possibility of students inadvertently or purposefully plagiarizing or cheating, the University takes an active approach to educate students about what constitutes plagiarism and the consequences of academic misconduct.

Plagiarism is defined in the Student Handbook as "The act of representing the ideas, word, creations or work of another as one's own." In addition to this definition of plagiarism, the Student Affairs division has published a pamphlet, available in the UWF Writing Skills Lab, which specifically defines and provides examples of what does and does not constitute plagiarism.

According to the plagiarism pamphlet, "Ignorance of the rules about plagiarism is no excuse for it, and carelessness is just as bad as purposeful violation. Students who have plagiarized have cheated themselves out

of the experience of being responsible members of the academic community and have cheated their classmates by pretending to contribute original ideas."

A recent survey published in CQ Researcher in September 2003 reports that educating college students about plagiarism and its consequences is effective. The survey, from the Journal of College Student Development, indicates that nearly 90 percent of college students either strongly agree or somewhat agree that:

1. Handing in someone else's writing as one's own is wrong
2. Using the internet to copy text and claim as one's own is wrong
3. Purchasing papers from print term-paper mills is wrong
4. Purchasing papers from online term-paper mills is wrong

The majority of plagiarism incidents at UWF generally involve freshmen and sophomores and are not an actual attempt to deceive faculty, Westcott said. However, plagiarizing by juniors or seniors is viewed much more seriously because they have had several years to learn what plagiarism is and how to avoid it.

There's a pretty good chance of getting caught for plagiarizing, he said. For those people who do it intentionally, it's not worth the risk. Faculty members have access to Internet services that can identify plagiarized material and many times it's easily identifiable.

Plagiarism is only one side of the coin when it comes to academic misconduct. Cheating is also considered academic misconduct and students caught cheating are subject to disciplinary action. Some possible outcomes of being charged with academic misconduct include a failing grade for the assignment, failure of the course and possibly expulsion from UWF, which has happened.

Cheating is defined in the Student Handbook as "The unauthorized giving or taking of any information or



www.bio.ilstu.edu/human_biology/ReproUnit.htm

To cheat or not to cheat? Getting stuck on an exam can tempt one to violate University policy, but some still do it.

material on academic work considered in the determination of a grade."

Unauthorized giving or taking of information can involve looking on someone else's paper, programming answers into electronic devices or even collaborating with other students without the instructor's permission, said Donald McCabe, founder of the Center for Academic Integrity, which promotes anti-cheating campaigns on college campuses.

"Unpermitted collaboration" among college students is often deliberate," McCabe said. "The kids feel it's OK to collaborate, even if the teacher did not authorize it."

"They argue that the teacher did a poor job of explaining the lesson and that they learn more that way and finish their work quicker."

The consequences of cheating depend on how blatant the offense is, Westcott said. Most of the time students fail the course they cheated in, but cheating has also led to expulsion from the University in some cases.

Cheating affects more than the student and the professor, though. McCabe points out how it can affect other people as well, and he asks a

question that presents a new way to think of cheating and its consequences.

"Do you want to go to a doctor who cheated his way through anatomy class, or drive over a bridge built by an engineer who cheated?" McCabe said.

Cheating for any reason and by any means is considered academic misconduct at UWF and students who cheat should realize that, like plagiarizing, it's not worth the risk.

"When you cheat in someone's class," Westcott said. "It's like slapping them in the face."

Students who want more information about expectations for academic conduct and the process for addressing academic misconduct can pick up a UWF Student Handbook at the Student Affairs Office. Their Web site is uwf.edu/studentaffairs/.

Information about plagiarism is available at the UWF Writing Skills Lab in Building 51. The Writing Skills Lab also provides assistance in correctly documenting and citing sources.

For more information visit uwf.edu/writelab.

Top 10 Reasons for Cheating

1. The instructor assigns too much material
2. The instructor left the room during the test
3. A friend asked me to cheat, and I couldn't say no
4. The instructor doesn't seem to care if I learn the material
5. The course information seems useless
6. The course material is too hard
7. Everyone else seems to be cheating
8. In danger of losing scholarship because of low grades
9. Don't have time to study because I'm working to pay for school
10. People sitting around me made no effort to protect their work

Source: "College Cheating: Immaturity, Lack of Commitment and the Neutralizing Attitude," Research in Higher Education, 1986

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DEADLINE for applications is 5 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 4.

Crime and Punishment

From the files of the UWF Police Department

Compiled by Chris Louie and Andy Pennebaker

Criminal Mischief

On Oct. 14, 2003, a police officer was dispatched to the Village East apartments to make a report on an object that was found on a resident's porch.

The victim reported that a "phallic" object had been placed there sometime during the prior day.

The object appeared to be made of dough, sprinkled with what appeared to be black seasoning. It was approximately nine inches long and two inches in diameter.

Criminal Mischief

On Oct. 19, 2003, a police officer was patrolling lot 98 and observed a car with its rear window shattered.

Nothing was reported taken from the vehicle. A five-pound cement rock was found underneath the car.

The vehicle was checked for fingerprints, but none were found. Damage to the vehicle is estimated at \$500.

The officer looked for damage among the 15-20 other vehicles, but could find none.

Criminal Mischief

On Oct. 20, 2003, a police officer was dispatched to the University baseball field to take a report of vandalism.

A water cooler in the baseball field dugout was dented, and its water faucet destroyed with an unknown bludgeoning object. The damage to the water cooler was estimated at \$200.

There are no known suspects in the case.

Grand Theft

On Oct. 24, 2003, a police officer was dispatched to the Commons in reference to a golf cart being stolen. A staff member witnessed two suspects driving off in the cart.

The witness ran after them and saw them head toward lot 22. An officer was in the lot at the time but did not see the cart.

A search was conducted and the cart was found between dorms. The witness stated that the golf cart usually has a lock on it, but it did not at the time of the theft.

Covenant Hospice aims to raise \$250,000 at annual garage sale

Ted King
Staff Writer

Pensacola's Covenant Hospice garage sale, an event that raises more than \$100,000 annually, will bring many University of West Florida students and faculty together with members of the Pensacola community both as volunteers and as bargain-hunters.

The garage sale raked in \$188,000 last year, said Aurora DeSena, volunteer services coordinator for Covenant Hospice of Pensacola. The goal for this year is to raise \$250,000, she said.

The sale will be Nov. 7, 8 and 10, and the money raised will be used to fund the work of Hospice, an organization that provides care for terminally ill patients and their families.

The palliative, or comfort care provided by Hospice has helped many people, such as Jack Fillingim, who was told that he had only a few months left to live after being diagnosed with throat cancer that spread throughout his body.

As the end of his life grew near, it was important for both him and his family that he stay at a relative's house in Molino, Fla. As the cancer progressed, it became increasingly difficult for his family to take care of him.

That is when Covenant Hospice stepped in. The organization helped Fillingim stay at his sister's home by keeping a staff member with him 24 hours a day in the final two months of his life. Hospice took over responsibility for administering his medicine intake, keeping up his hygiene and helping the family through the ordeal.

Known for their perpetual care, Hospice's motto is "To put life into

days when days can no longer be added to life." With a professional staff of doctors, nurses, counselors, chaplains, personal care-givers and volunteers, Covenant Hospice provides care to as many as 800 terminally ill patients in the Northwest Florida and south Alabama area.

Covenant Hospice is a not-for-profit organization that relies on financial support from the communities they serve through donations, memorials, grants, fund-raising and special events.

One of the largest and most popular of these special events is the annual garage sale. The sale will be held at the old Builder's Square at 1412 W. Fairfield Dr., just off I-110 Exit 4. A \$2 entry fee will allow a person access to more than 100,000 square feet of donated merchandise that is sold at a discounted price.

Volunteers and other contributors ensure the garage sale goes smoothly, DeSena said.

"We have several furniture stores that have donated new furniture to us," DeSena said. "(Local car dealer) Ted Ciano donated a box truck to help us pick up and deliver goods. Wal-Mart is also an incredible supporter. We have been preparing for this sale since February."

DeSena said the money from the sale goes toward the many Covenant Hospice programs.

"The money that's raised goes to fund some of our special services such as our bereavement program," DeSena said. "Because we are a not-for-profit organization, we help everybody regardless of their ability to pay. That leaves us with a deficit."

Profits from the garage sale help

offset the extra cost.

Many UWF students and faculty have helped with the garage sale in the past and will also be helping this year by setting up and working on the days of the sale.

With the sale less than two weeks away, DeSena said she has enough volunteers for the event, but she encouraged those who wished to help to attend the sale and find some bargains, or contact her about volunteering next year.

DeSena said that it was important for events like the garage sale to not only make money, but to also bring awareness to the importance of the organization.


"When people think of Hospice, sometimes they think of a place, but it is not a place. Our aim is to keep people who are at the end of their life in their home or homelike setting," DeSena said. "We are able to provide Hospice services both prior to and after the death."

Lil King and Marian Mobley know first hand the benefits of having an organization like Hospice. Both are sisters of Jack Fillingim and are thankful for the help the Hospice staff provided in their time of need. When Fillingim died this past July, help was still available.

"They were wonderful. They even cried with you," King said. "Hospice gives you comfort during and even after the death of your loved one."

The upcoming garage sale is one of the fund-raisers that makes Covenant Hospice care possible.

For more information on the upcoming garage sale or to find out more about Covenant Hospice, contact DeSena at (850) 433-2155.



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