



# **MIT Discussion Group: Academic Integrity Strategies and Initiatives for International Students**

**MIT Campus -- November 6, 2015**

Ideas identified below were expressed by discussion group participants during and shortly after our conference at MIT on November 6, 2015. Staff members of the [Academic Integrity Seminar](#) contributed to the discussion and subsequently wrote and edited this document. No copyright is claimed, though proper attribution is requested.

See also: [Link to Online Version](#)

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# MIT Discussion: Academic Integrity Strategies and Initiatives for International Students



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## 1. SUGGESTIONS FOR FACULTY MEMBERS

### a. Candidly discuss relevant personal experiences with students, including challenges encountered in your own education.

**Note:** Discussion included reference to this language from Ken Bain's book *What the Best College Teachers Do* (Harvard, 2004) (winner of the Virginia and Warren Stone Prize "awarded annually by Harvard University Press for an outstanding book on education and society"):

"Highly effective teachers tend to reflect a strong trust in students. They usually believe students want to learn, and they assume, until proven otherwise, that they can. They often display openness with students and may, from time to time, talk about their own intellectual journey, its ambitions, triumphs, frustrations, and failures, and encourage their students to be similarly reflective and candid. They may discuss how they developed their interests, the major obstacles they faced in mastering the subject, or some of their secrets for learning particular material. They often discuss openly and enthusiastically their own sense of awe and curiosity about life. Above all, they tend to treat students with what can only be called simple decency" (p. 18).

### b. Consider these suggestions offered in "[Advice from Students to Faculty Members on Protecting Academic Integrity](#)" (Law and Policy Report).

- i. Discuss why you were attracted to your field or discipline. Why does the subject interest you? What questions or mysteries remain to be solved?
- ii. Discuss the academic challenges you encountered and the strategies you developed for success.
- iii. Invite discussion about the academic and ethical standards applicable to your discipline or profession.
- iv. Pay attention to students as individuals. Identify interests, strengths, and weakness. Urge students who are struggling to ask for help.
- v. Participate on one academic integrity hearing panel a year so you can discuss your personal insights with students about how the academic integrity system works.
- vi. Emphasize that cheating and plagiarism are a breach of trust with fellow students and with you."

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-- Ken Bain, "What the Best College Teachers Do," Harvard University, 2004

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c. **Recognize the special importance of mentoring to international students. Meet at least once with each student during office hours.**

d. **Include “timely reminder” integrity affirmations students should sign on papers and tests.**

**Note:** For additional background, see [The Educational Benefits of Timely Reminders](#) (TPR “Law and Policy in Higher Education”)

e. **Send academic integrity “timely reminder” class messages at critical times (e.g., just before mid-terms and finals).**

f. **Include “timely reminders” about ways of avoiding plagiarism in the body of writing assignments.**

**Note:** Here’s an example from assignment five in the Academic Integrity Seminar. See the concluding “important guidance”.

**ASSIGNMENT FIVE: One of Abraham Lincoln’s greatest attributes may have been his ability to recover and learn from failure.** The quality of perseverance seemed especially useful to him as he struggled with “melancholy” (what might now be called depression)

[Please read this article](#) by Joshua Wolf Shenk. Read the full article (it’s worth your time; this is one of the top-rated readings by students completing the seminar).

**Question:** For Lincoln, learning how to persevere also meant learning how to adapt. Based on your reading of Shenk’s complete article, please identify\* and discuss three of Lincoln’s most successful adaptation strategies (skills, habits, or ways of thinking) that helped him use his struggle with depression to accomplish worthy goals. For example, how did Lincoln’s love of learning sustain and enrich his life?

**\*Important guidance:** Here and in all your other answers, it’s essential to use quotation marks or block indentation when you incorporate any language from any other source, including all AIS readings. It’s equally important to avoid a “deceptive” or “patchwork paraphrase” (changing or adding occasional words, but otherwise using the author’s core ideas and phraseology without attribution). [Click here](#) for guidance from the University of Wisconsin on the difference between permissible and impermissible paraphrasing. [Click here](#) for guidance from Harvard University on the kinds of “common knowledge” you are not required to quote or cite. If in doubt, it’s always prudent to include quotation marks and a citation. Contact your AIS tutor if this instruction is unclear or if you have any questions.

g. **Use a “syllabus quiz” to determine if students are reading and understanding academic integrity policies described there.**

h. **Use “clicker-based” participation systems to assess student knowledge of academic integrity presentations.**

i. **Help students understand the “truth-seeking” objective inherent in the methodology of science.**

**Note:** This point is emphasized in the Academic Integrity Seminar. Students are also informed of the reputational and career consequences of a breach of trust in scientific research:

A book AIS recommends is E.O. Wilson’s Letters to a Young Scientist. (Wilson is University Professor Emeritus at Harvard University and winner the National Medal of Science). He wrote:

“You will make mistakes. Try not to make big ones . . . A simple error in reporting a conclusion will be forgiven if publicly corrected. But never, ever will fraud be forgiven. The penalty is professional death; exile, never again to be trusted.”

-- E.O. Wilson’s Letters to a Young Scientist, Harvard University

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One federal agency (HHS) publishes [names of offenders here.](#)

j. **See, generally, [Discussing Academic Integrity with your Students \(Law and Policy Report\)](#). Here is one of several suggestions:**

The importance of trust in the classroom can be highlighted by this exercise (initiated by the instructor):

'Pretend my syllabus states the mid-term examination will be on October 10. Then, at the beginning of class on October 3, I announce:

'I have good news and bad news: the good news is that I just found a great fare to Cancun! The bad news is I have to leave tomorrow. So, the examination scheduled for October 10 will be administered today. I apologize for any inconvenience, but part of what we do at the University to help prepare students for the unexpected.'

Some students are momentarily speechless when asked to respond to this scenario. It strikes them as an obvious breach of trust. They should be reminded that the principle of reciprocity applies. Teachers trust students to do honest work and feel betrayed when that trust is broken.

"You just see [this] year after year. The students who thrive are not necessarily the ones who come in with the perfect scores. It's the ones who love what they're doing and go at it vigorously."

-- Carol Dweck, Stanford University

k. **See, generally, McCabe and Pavela ["Ten Updated Principles of Academic Integrity for Faculty"](#) Change Magazine (May June 2004).**

## 2. SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

a. **Asking for help or clarification promotes academic success.**

"Successful students ask instructors for help".

b. **Pay careful attention to syllabus instructions and other institutional guidance about academic integrity. Keep this concept in mind:**

"It's better to ask a question or request an extension than seek forgiveness".

c. **Learn course rules for collaboration. Follow this guidance from a [collaboration statement](#) at Princeton University:**

"Never assume that you have permission to do a problem set or lab report collaboratively."

d. **Understand the value of finding a faculty mentor:**

"Finding a mentor can enrich your life."

**Note:** The following guidance to students is provided by AIS tutors:

"[1] Be resilient (determined) to establish or re-establish trust with a respected teacher or mentor. Sometimes you have to take the initiative, like asking a question after class and stopping by a teacher's office during office hours to seek academic or career advice. You won't be successful every time, but success even once in finding a mentor can enrich your life."

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[2] Perhaps with guidance from a mentor, develop a plan to find what engages you in any field or discipline. Please consider [this observation](#) from Stanford Professor Carol Dweck:

“You just see [this] year after year. The students who thrive are not necessarily the ones who come in with the perfect scores. It’s the ones who love what they’re doing and go at it vigorously.”

- e. **Students should also be advised that they’re more likely to succeed if they pursue academic work they find (or make) engaging.**

“Be intellectually curious. Make true learning a joy.”

### **Related guidance on the AIS letterhead:**

Physicist [Francis Halzen](#) wrote “I love to learn. Just understanding things that you thought you could never understand, that is the great pleasure of doing physics.” Whatever your field, how you perceive learning is under your control. Be intellectually curious. Make true learning a joy. Integrity in learning will follow.

## 3. SUGGESTIONS FOR ADMINISTRATORS

- a. **Learn international cultural characteristics in order to better understand and communicate with diverse groups of students. Nonetheless-- regardless of cultural background-- students should be seen and treated as individuals with their own experiences and perspectives. All students share a responsibility to learn and follow institutional academic integrity policies.**

**Note:** see, generally, the [“Academic integrity and cultural diversity”](#) (Law and Policy Report).

- b. **Review and monitor policies and procedures that assess language proficiency. Promptly address any breach of security in language assessment evaluations.**
- c. **Explore options to offer at least some instruction in the language of international students attending your institution.**
- d. **Develop a consistent campus-wide academic integrity statement, including a short explanation about the importance of academic integrity for student success.**

**Note:** This language is used in the [Academic Integrity Seminar](#):

### **IMPORTANT please read carefully**

“Here and in all your other answers, it’s essential to use quotation marks or block indentation when you incorporate any language from any other source, including all AIS readings. It’s equally important to avoid a “deceptive” or “patchwork paraphrase” (changing or adding occasional words, but otherwise using the author’s core ideas and phraseology without attribution). [Click here](#) for guidance from the University of Wisconsin on the difference between permissible and impermissible paraphrasing. [Click here](#) for guidance from Harvard University on the

### **AIS Plagiarism Guidance:**

Why are rules against plagiarism so important? Your university and AIS want you to be successful.

### **Successful students:**

[1] Learn how to think for themselves and express their own creative ideas (a critical capacity as routine work is computerized worldwide);

[2] Learn how to enrich and improve their own writing;

[3] Participate in collaborative scholarship by alerting readers to other sources of insight and information; and

[4] Honor other writers and thinkers by giving them credit for their work.

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kinds of “common knowledge” you are not required to quote or cite. If in doubt, it’s always prudent to include quotation marks and a citation. Contact your AIS tutor if this instruction is unclear or if you have any questions.”

Why are rules against plagiarism so important? Your university and AIS want you to be successful.

### Successful students:

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- [3] Participate in collaborative scholarship by alerting readers to other sources of insight and information;
- [4] Honor other writers and thinkers by giving them credit for their work.

Writing is a discipline critical to any profession. To learn how to be a disciplined writer (much as an athlete learns and perfects a physical skill) you must develop disciplined writing habits.

No formal citations or “works cited” list required. Just be sure to identify the author in your answer, using appropriate quotation marks or block indentation as needed. You’ll find [additional guidance about avoiding plagiarism here](#).

Please remember: our questions are designed to elicit your analysis and opinion. Be sure to explain your reasoning. When you use any excerpts, use short selections only.

Physicist [Francis Halzen](#) wrote “I love to learn. Just understanding things that you thought you could never understand, that is the great pleasure of doing physics.” Whatever your field, how you perceive learning is under your control. Be intellectually curious. Make true learning a joy. Integrity in learning will follow.

- e. **Arrange for translated versions of important institutional statements, including academic integrity policies.**
- f. **Create an international student advisory committee. Seek guidance from the committee in formulating and disseminating announcements to international students.**
- g. **Collaborate with individual student culture associations (e.g., Chinese association). Utilize student organizations to transmit and receive information.**
- h. **Conduct faculty workshops by senior faculty colleagues on the importance of mentoring and “best practices” in maintaining mentoring relationships.**
- i. **Faculty orientation should include discussions/presentations about “best practices” in teaching and mentoring international students. See #1 (“Suggestions for Faculty Members”).**
- j. **Urge international students to seek faculty mentors. This approach might be described to them as something “the most successful students do.”**

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- k. **Remind students of pertinent visa requirements and financial losses if their education is interrupted.**
- l. **Devise standard procedures for alerting the international student office about pending disciplinary allegations, including allegations of academic dishonesty.**
- m. **Seek to form more partnerships with parents. Confer with legal counsel about FERPA exemptions for parental notification and consultation.**
- n. **Use multiple forms of media (e.g., video) to communicate academic integrity standards and guidance.**
- o. **Explore and discuss boundaries between encouraged collaboration and collaboration that constitutes academic dishonesty. Prepare general guidance for students, approved by a campus body like an Academic Affairs Committee of the University Senate. The [following statement](#) is provided at Princeton University:**

“In the ideal case, your professor will make explicit on the syllabus the expectations for your academic work. If the course policy is clear, follow it scrupulously. If the expectations and rules are unstated or unclear, **ask your professor**. If a deadline is imminent and you’re not sure of the course policy, do your work independently. Never assume that you have permission to do a problem set or lab report collaboratively. Given the variability from professor to professor, it’s also very dangerous to rely on the “rules” from another course, even within the same department. Too many times, students have turned in identical or similar problem sets, lab reports, or papers, only to discover that they were operating under a false set of assumptions. The wise thing to do is to ask.”
- p. **Invite alumni to give presentations about the importance of trust in the workplace and the “reputational” risks in business when public trust is broken. See the AIS student reading: [“Corporate America: social media and social trust.”](#)**
- q. **Enable the “Google Translate” module on campus websites.**
- r. **Provide translation services for discussions with students referred for alleged academic integrity violations.**
- s. **Provide students with guidance on language frames (e.g., common usage).**
- t. **Conduct regularly scheduled student and faculty surveys on the nature and extent of academic dishonesty on campus. See: [Using data-driven analysis to enhance your academic integrity program \(Law and Policy Report\)](#).**

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- u. Evaluate data on international enrollment and incident rates. Explore why there is the reality (or perception) of higher rates of international student cheating. Take precautions to eliminate unjustified “spotlighting” of international students in academic integrity reporting.
- v. Provide guidance and support for students facing sanctions, especially if they may be required to leave the country.
- w. Schedule an orientation meeting with students returning to the university after being dismissed for an academic integrity violation.
- x. Maintain close collaborative relationships with the International Student Office.

## 4. PREVENTION STRATEGIES

(please read in conjunction with other categories above)

- a. Create a pre-arrival online tutorial about academic integrity expectations.
- b. Collaborate with student peer leaders (e.g., officers of an international student organization) to draft and send a “welcome to campus” letter that includes academic integrity expectations to all new students.
- c. Disseminate a document with “suggestions for students” (see item #2 “Suggestions for Students”). The document should include comments from international student organizations and faculty members who were themselves international students.
- d. Offer “strategies for academic success” seminars in person and online. Explain what circumstances tend to lead to academic dishonesty (e.g., poor time management skills). Work with international student organizations to help design and announce the seminars, which might also be made available in multiple languages.
- e. Inform students about the likely consequences for acts of academic dishonesty, especially serious or repetitive violations that may result in suspension or expulsion. Highlight the possibility of visa revocation for academic or disciplinary dismissal. Here’s an [example](#) of relevant guidance with step-by-step instructions to students at Eckerd College.
- f. Partner with outside employers and government agencies to offer presentations on the importance of trust and truth-telling in “the real world.” Consider these examples from AIS content (as suggested elsewhere in this document).

Offer “strategies for academic success” seminars in person and online. Explain what circumstances tend to lead to academic dishonesty (e.g., poor time management skills). Work with international student organizations to help design and announce the seminars, which might also be made available in multiple languages.

[i] An observation by E.O. Wilson in his book *Letters to a Young Scientist* (Wilson is University Professor Emeritus at Harvard University and winner the National Medal of Science):

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never, ever will fraud be forgiven. The penalty is professional death; exile, never again to be trusted. (underlining added).

[ii] A recent article about fraud in stem cell research (and a subsequent suicide);

[iii] A federal agency (HHS) that openly publishes names of “research misconduct” offenders.

9. **Show engaging films on trust and integrity (e.g., *Fragile Trust* or *Shattered Glass*).**

## 5. RESTORATIVE ACCOUNTABILITY

- a. **Provide tailored sanctions to fit needs of international students (e.g. mandated instruction and exercises on ways to avoid plagiarism). Include guidance on why plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are a breach of trust and ultimately self-defeating.**

**Note:** one “restorative” exercise developed by AIS tutors for students at Stanford University is the “trust in daily life” thought experiment:

“Please review this document (including links therein). Think for yourself about the implications.

On any single day of your choice, please keep a written log of every occasion when you trusted others (a person, design, product, or service) and others have placed trust in you.

We’ll call this a “trust identification” experiment. No sensitive personal or confidential information is requested or should be provided.

Keep your “trust identification” log in two categories, please:

[a] You trusted others

[b] Others trusted you

I’ve conducted a comparable experiment and can offer the following examples. I make tea when I get up in the morning, but don’t do my own verification of water purity. I trust whatever company or municipal agency provides my water. Likewise, when I put my teabag in the water I trust the tea manufacturer not to include some toxic substance. At the same time, I trust the contractor who built my roof not to use materials that will result in a catastrophic collapse while I drink my tea.

So, I can provide three examples of the importance of trust within ten minutes of my first waking moment.”

- b. **Allow students (on an optional basis) to give presentations explaining violations to others.**
- c. **Explore the “academic negligence” penalty for first offenses that do not involve an attempt to deceive. “Academic negligence” is typically associated with a lower course grade reported to a central office and retained as a non-disciplinary warning until the student’s graduation. Here’s an excerpt from [a recent report](#) at Colby College in Maine:**

The Academic Affairs Committee reviewed the academic negligence reports over the almost two years the system has been in place (data presented below). The original intent of the academic negligence system was two-fold: 1) to increase reporting of academic “incidents,” and 2) to allow for an educational moment in cases where new students might not understand all the rules as well as other students. In the almost two years of the academic negligence reporting system, reporting of academic negligence has increased, and the total

“In the almost two years of the academic negligence reporting system, reporting of academic negligence has increased, and the total number of academic honesty and academic negligence reports is higher than in the previous years. In addition, first-year students are the largest class year reported for academic negligence, although all class years are represented in the data. AAC recommends continuing with the academic negligence reporting system with continued close communication between the Dean of Students’ Office and AAC.”

-- Report from Colby College

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number of academic honesty and academic negligence reports is higher than in the previous years. In addition, first-year students are the largest class year reported for academic negligence, although all class years are represented in the data. AAC recommends continuing with the academic negligence reporting system with continued close communication between the Dean of Students' Office and AAC.

These [relevant procedures](#) are followed at Boise State University

Faculty, when determining what sanction to apply, may take into consideration whether it is believed the student has engaged in **academic negligence** or a more intentional act of **academic dishonesty**. Academic negligence includes, but is not limited to, the act of a student who, through ignorance, carelessness, or mistaken academic work, engages in behavior that, upon initial review, appears to be a deliberate act of academic misconduct but ultimately is found not to be intentional in the act. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, determining a student intentionally acted in a way to gain an unfair advantage over other students. It is the role of the faculty member to determine the severity of the behavior and determine the appropriate sanction. Boise State considers both academic negligence and academic dishonesty to be acts of Academic Misconduct and are violations of the Student Code of Conduct. In general, acts of academic negligence should result in no more than a than zero for an assignment/test. For behavior believed to be acts of academic dishonesty, faculty are encouraged to sanction an "F" for the course. Multiple reports for academic misconduct (either academic negligence or academic dishonesty) may result in a formal sanctioning hearing where the outcome may result in suspension and/or expulsion for the student.

- d. Consider “removable” sanctions like the “[XF grade penalty](#)” at the University of Maryland and elsewhere. The “X” (signified on the transcript as “failure due to academic dishonesty”) can be removed after one year, if the student completes an academic integrity seminar.
- e. This related reading was shared with discussion group participants in advance:

Fine, Sarah. (2015). Deeper Discipline Demands Deeper Pedagogy. [http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/learning\\_deeplly/2015/10/deeper\\_discipline\\_demands\\_deeper\\_pedagogy.html](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/learning_deeplly/2015/10/deeper_discipline_demands_deeper_pedagogy.html). Education Week, October 7, 2015. [submitted by Robert Bishop, at MTU]

Excerpt: “...When students engage in open-ended tasks that require them to think deeply and to work collaboratively, they are not only mastering new skills and content but also encountering (and likely internalizing) implicit messages about their roles in relation to each other, the adults around them, and the traditions of knowledge with which they are asked to engage.”

- f. Additional online resources on restorative practices:

[Skidmore College: Restorative Justice for College Student Misconduct](#)

[Restorative Justice at the University of Colorado](#)

[How do we encourage good restorative justice practice](#)

[University of Minnesota Center for Restorative Justice and Peacemaking](#)

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- Sarah Fine, Deeper Discipline Demands Deeper Pedagogy (2015).

## 6. Additional resources

[Click here](#) for additional suggested readings from discussion group participants.

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# Conference leaders



Gary Pavela

**Gary Pavela** is a past President of the International Center for Academic Integrity and a co-founder with Don McCabe and DeForest McDuff of the Academic Integrity Seminar. Gary was an administrator and Honors College faculty member at the University of Maryland at College Park for over 25 years. During that time he developed Maryland's Code of Academic Integrity (a modified honor code) and was voted the University's "Outstanding Faculty Educator" by the Maryland Parents' Association (2006). Gary is a "Fellow" of the National Association of College and University Attorneys and writes frequently on law and policy issues in higher education. He has served on the Board of the Kenan Institute for Ethics at Duke University. Gary can be reached at [garypavela@integrityseminar.org](mailto:garypavela@integrityseminar.org)



DeForest McDuff

**DeForest McDuff** is a co-founder with Gary Pavela and Don McCabe of the Academic Integrity Seminar, a company dedicated to improving academic integrity and student ethical development at colleges and universities nationwide. He has coordinated the seminar at dozens of schools across the country and has tutored thousands of students on issues of academic integrity. He holds a Ph.D. in economics from Princeton University, where he won the Towbes Teaching Prize for outstanding undergraduate teaching. DeForest currently lives in Boston with his wife and four children. DeForest can be reached at [deforest@integrityseminar.org](mailto:deforest@integrityseminar.org).



Anastasia Pavela

**Anastasia Pavela** works as a program coordinator and senior tutor for the Academic Integrity Seminar. She has worked with thousands of students taking the Seminar since 2013. Anastasia holds master's and bachelor's degree in Economics from Moldova State University. While in Moldova, Anastasia worked several years for a Swedish company operating in five countries, reaching the rank of Operations Manager. She speaks six languages and currently lives in Houston, Texas. Anastasia can be reached at [anastasia@integrityseminar.org](mailto:anastasia@integrityseminar.org).



Kevin Kraft

**Kevin Kraft** is the Director of Community Standards at Tufts and formerly the Director of Student Citizenship at MIT. Kevin's office provides comprehensive service to students, faculty, and staff on issues related to student behavior and misconduct and provides structured reflection, mentoring, and education to students who have violated the high standards of the academic community. He provides direction at a strategic and policy planning level to the student conduct process; consults with the Institute's faculty and senior leadership about academic integrity, behavioral misconduct, and related policies; and manages the legal and compliance issues related to student behavior. Kevin holds a bachelor's degree in English Literature and Psychology and a master's degree in Education Leadership. He is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Higher Education. Kevin has taught a graduate course on higher education law, is a threat assessment and management specialist, and has testified at judicial proceedings on related issues. [Kevin.Kraft@tufts.edu](mailto:Kevin.Kraft@tufts.edu)

## Call for Additional Comments

Please send any questions or additional comments to Gary Pavela at [garypavela@integrityseminar.org](mailto:garypavela@integrityseminar.org). Conference participants can continue to send comments for inclusion below. Different perspectives concerning any of the above suggestions are welcome. Also, please inform me if you made a suggestion at the conference and wish to credit your work or a related policy on your campus.