UBCO Academic Integrity Student Advisory Group

2023-2024

Introduction

The Academic Integrity Student Advisory Group (AISAG) was devised in the spring of 2023 based on a recommendation by the Academic Integrity Implementation Group (AIIG).

The objective was to recruit students for the purpose of discussing existing and emerging priorities in academic integrity (AI) from a student perspective on behalf of UBC Okanagan students, as well as providing feedback to the AIIG and to the Academic Integrity Matters (AIM) Program on academic integrity initiatives for the Okanagan campus. As a deliverable, the group sought to produce a report to share with the campus.

The AISAG presents this report to the UBC Okanagan community. This report contains recommendations and insights regarding academic integrity on our campus from the student perspective.

Acknowledgements

The AISAG acknowledges that the land on which this work occurred is the traditional, unceded, and ancestral territory of the Syilx Okanagan Nation.

The AIIG and AIM Program would like to thank those students who committed their time to the Academic Integrity Student Advisory Group as well as the campus partners that supported the formation of the group by sharing a call for expressions of interest with students across campus.

Organization

The AISAG is the first student-led advisory group composed of student members on the UBC Okanagan Campus. The AISAG solicited representatives from the diverse student population on our campus as their participation is imperative to the success of any academic integrity initiatives.

Consideration was given to inviting student representatives from various departments and roles and with various perspectives and experiences. Representation was sought from student groups including: undergraduate students; graduate students; students from various academic programs; international and domestic students; student staff members; and Students' Union Okanagan of UBC student staff members and elected student board.

The 2023-2024 group was chaired by Stephanie Awotwi-Pratt, the Academic Integrity Assistant from the Academic Integrity Matters (AIM) Program (Student Learning Hub), with the support of the Academic Integrity Facilitator from the AIM Program as an ex officio member. Membership of the 2023-2024 AISAG was as follows:

- **Stephanie Awotwi-Pratt**, Chair, Academic Integrity Assistant, AIM Program, Student Learning Hub, Graduate Student (Masters, IGS)
- **Twinkle Hora**, Director-at-Large, Students' Union Okanagan of UBC, Undergraduate Student (4th Year, PSYO, FASS)
- **Cady Gau**, Senior Writing Consultant, Student Learning Hub, Undergraduate Student (3rd year, VISA, FCCS)
- **Nadia Granato**, Student Connector, SEO, Undergraduate Student (2nd year, International Relations, FASS)
- **Maddi Grove**, Senior Writing & Language & Academic Integrity Consultant, Student Learning Hub, Undergraduate Student (4th year, ENGL/CRWR, FCCS)
- **Fatima Canales Gonzalez**, Senior Writing & Language Consultant, Student Learning Hub, Graduate Student (Masters, IGS)
- **Leah Wafler**, Notetaker, Ex Officio Member, Academic Integrity Facilitator, AIM Program, Student Learning Hub

Timing

The 2023-2024 AISAG met five times, for 60 minutes per meeting, between October 2023 and April 2024.

Meetings Summary

Meetings involved discussions regarding the student members' views of:
- their academic integrity education thus far
- where/when/how they learned about academic integrity
- how their experiences/backgrounds have shaped their views on academic integrity
- which particular topics/issues related to academic integrity on this campus they would like to discuss/address
- their experiences with generative artificial intelligence thus far
- their awareness of policies regarding generative artificial intelligence as they relate to academic integrity

Additionally, the group was asked to provide feedback regarding resources and information about generative artificial intelligence located on UBC's Academic Integrity website (academicintegrity.ubc.ca).

Discussions in these meetings covered a wide variety of topics relating to academic integrity, but two common themes across the discussions are apparent: 1. the student experience as it pertains to academic integrity education; and 2. the student experience as it pertains to the impact of generative artificial intelligence.

Recommendations

The AISAG's primary activity was to develop a list of recommendations regarding academic integrity to share with the UBCO community.

The group developed recommendations around five main themes:

1. Awareness and discussion

2. Skills/values vs. consequences

3. Recognition of diversity of understanding

4. Generative artificial intelligence

5. Graduate student information

1. Awareness and discussion

The AISAG highlights that academic integrity education amounts to a hidden curriculum and the onus of learning about academic integrity largely falls on students.

As stated by Uncovering the Hidden Curriculum (n.d.), the hidden curriculum refers to "the unwritten and unofficial lessons learners acquire implicitly and are not taught formally," (para. 1) and "because the hidden curriculum is often not explicitly taught, … it can have a negative impact on student success and mental health" (para. 2). Amanda McKenzie (2023), writing for the International Center for Academic Integrity blog, draws the connection between this hidden curriculum and academic integrity, stating, "We expect all students to know about academic integrity when they enter university or college, yet the fact remains– they don't. It's hidden" (para. 1).

Students attend university to learn about things they are not familiar with, so academic integrity education should be explicit and treated as any other subject being taught. The AISAG thus highlights the need for increased discussion of academic integrity with students across campus and through various avenues. In particular, the group recommends intentional, consistent, recurring, and scaffolded discussion of academic integrity in class. The AISAG would like students to be able to see all instructors as sources of help and knowledge of academic integrity as opposed to seeing them as reporters of misconduct.

The group recommends that academic integrity education be integrated in course curriculums and occur throughout the term, year, and a student's degree. By integrating academic integrity throughout the curriculum and having increased instructor engagement, our academic community could shift away from academic integrity being a hidden curriculum and position education in academic integrity as everyone's responsibility. Finally, the AISAG recommends that more resources for learning, education, and support be integrated into all syllabus statements on academic integrity.

Summary

- Integrate academic integrity education into the curriculum
- Address student responsibility for AI education and the hidden curriculum
- Increase instructor and supervisor engagement
- Include support and learning resources in academic integrity syllabus statements

2. Skills/values vs. consequences

In relation to increased instruction on academic integrity, the ASIAG proposes that all members of the campus work towards reframing the terminology used regarding academic integrity.

The group indicates that discussions of academic integrity in class often revolve around the negative—being academic misconduct—and what shouldn't be done—don't cheat, don't plagiarize, don't share your work, and so on. However, they feel left wondering how they should *do* academic integrity—how does a student show integrity in their work? What values should they express? What skills and abilities do they need?

By reframing terminology towards the positive and highlighting that academic integrity is a set of skills and values to be learned and built upon, it would allow students to think practically about integrity and treat it as something to work towards, as opposed to something one either has or fails to have at any given point. It would make the subject less intimidating and more approachable for students and for faculty to facilitate effective and open discussions.

In relation to recommendation #1, by locating academic integrity education in the curriculum and treating it as positive and skill-based, students may see academic integrity as having value to them, particularly in terms of being something they can be awarded for (such as in terms of their grades). Most specifically, if academic integrity is treated as a skill to be learned over time, students should be taught how academic integrity can be developed in their particular discipline and learn discipline-specific skills.

A well-rounded, balanced, and positive education in academic integrity would benefit students in allowing them to fully see how academic integrity is valuable in their subject areas and beyond, such as in their future careers.

Summary

- Reframe terminology to positive
- Treat academic integrity as a skill
- Teach discipline-specific skills and approaches

3. Recognizing diversity of understanding

The AISAG would like to address the importance of acknowledging students' cultural backgrounds and the previous educational experiences that students bring with them to UBCO.

This diversity profoundly influences students' perceptions and understandings of academic integrity. Recognizing that students arrive with varying conceptions of academic integrity, shaped by their unique cultural and educational histories, is crucial. The AISAG recommends a more nuanced approach to academic integrity education, one that recognizes and integrates the diversity of student backgrounds. This involves creating educational materials and having discussions that are not only accessible for but also relatable to students from different cultural contexts, thereby fostering inclusive understandings of academic integrity.

In addition to students' cultural backgrounds and lived experiences, the AISAG would also like to note the importance of recognizing the many transitions students undergo during post-secondary education and the impact these transitions have on their understanding of academic integrity. This can include the transitions from high school to post-secondary, from undergraduate to graduate, for visiting students, students who to gap years, those coming back from co-op, and mature students, amongst many others.

Experiences with academic integrity prior to attending UBCO vary greatly; for example, much of the group expressed that they were not explicitly taught about academic integrity or skills like citation in high school. These experiences form students' initial understanding of what constitutes academic integrity that they begin their time at UBCO with. Therefore, to point back to recommendation #1, the hidden curriculum can thus pose an equity issue, where, depending on their background, some students may have more untaught expectations or skills to discover than others. The group suggests that recognizing that students' foundational experiences vary widely, and acting upon this knowledge, is essential in developing effective academic integrity education at UBCO.

Summary

- Acknowledge and act upon students' cultural backgrounds and disparity in prior knowledge as they relate to academic integrity

4. Generative artificial intelligence

The AISAG spent a significant amount of time discussing generative artificial intelligence (gen AI) and how its arrival has impacted students, specifically in relation to academic integrity.

The group agreed on a shared feeling of hesitancy when considering use of gen AI and committing academic misconduct. However, the group also felt that there is great value in these tools and that they will likely stand as important and unavoidable tools in many, if not all, students' futures. While the AISAG acknowledges that certain learning outcomes would not be met appropriately if using gen AI, the AISAG proposes that prohibition stances regarding gen AI tools could have negative impacts for students, including hindering their ability to thrive in the future workforce by: limiting their opportunity to develop and demonstrate key skills that will likely be increasingly valued in the job market (Koutroumpis, 2023); stifling their learning about and ability to explore gen AI as an area of academic interest; and restricting students' ability to learn gen AI literacy, including understanding the risks and drawbacks and how to use it ethically.

The AISAG recommends that both the permitting and, of equal importance, the prohibition of gen AI use in class be clearly linked to learning outcomes for that course and be explicitly discussed with students. If gen AI use is said to equate to academic misconduct in a course, the AISAG recommends that instructors be explicit in why such use cannot be effectively linked to learning outcomes.

The AISAG also identified insufficient communication on academic integrity policies regarding gen AI, so the group recommends that communication to students on academic integrity policies regarding gen AI be increased and made more explicit. In relation to that, the AISAG recommends that syllabus sections on gen AI use in each course should be standard and such information should be detailed.

Summary

- Tying both permission to use and prohibition of gen AI explicitly to learning outcomes
- Increase opportunities for students to experiment with and learn to use gen AI
- Increase education for students on ethical use and risks of gen AI

5. Graduate student information

The AISAG's graduate student members identified a need for more information and instruction regarding academic integrity that is specific to graduate students.

In particularly, graduate student members noted an absence of information for graduate students around use of generative artificial intelligence as it relates to theses and dissertations.

Many graduate students are attending UBCO for the first time and may not be familiar with the UBCO-context of academic integrity; thus, dedicated instruction on academic integrity in the UBCO-context is vital. The AISAG recommends that detailed information regarding academic integrity specific to graduate students be developed and made available to graduate students and that written guidance be provided to all graduate student regarding use of generative AI in their theses or dissertations.

Additionally, the AISAG recommends that discussions of academic integrity with graduate students must occur outside of the classroom context and through to the end of each graduate student's degree.

Specifically, the AISAG recommends creation of resources for both graduate students and supervisors on how to have effective discussions about academic integrity and ethical use of generative AI in their research and theses/dissertations.

Summary

- More information for graduate students on academic integrity
- Sustained instruction outside of the classroom for graduate students on UBCO-specific context of academic integrity
- Information for graduate students on artificial intelligence

Summary of limitations and areas for improvement

The AISAG recommends that the group continue in the coming years. This is pertinent as academic integrity is a constantly evolving subject, especially as technologies continue to change at a fast past. It is vital that UBCO students have the opportunity to provide ongoing input into how we as community adapt to these new technologies with integrity.

That said, limitations and areas of improvement for the AISAG were identified and should be considered for future iterations of this group. Additional time would have been beneficial in allowing more in-depth discussions, particularly around other forms of academic misconduct, such as contract cheating, use of unauthorized websites, or collaboration.

Furthermore, in terms of the group's composition, there was no representation from first year students or from students who have experienced the academic misconduct process. The group should also prioritize maintaining and enhancing the diverse composition of members. Additionally, the group may have benefited from being provided information regarding existing academic integrity resources on campus prior to engaging in the initial discussions. Finally, an honorarium should be explored to acknowledge student time and increase engagement from students across campus.

References

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Thank you for taking the time to read this report.
If you have any questions, please contact aim.ok@ubc.ca.