

Memo

To: Faculty and Instructors
From: Margaret L. Usdansky, Director, Academic Integrity Office
Date: August 22, 2016
Re: Why You Are The Key Messenger – Throughout the Semester

Each fall, the Academic Integrity Office (AIO) is asked to make presentations to incoming students about the importance of academic integrity. The request makes sense. After all, we want new students to appreciate the value we place on academic integrity at SU, and the AIO oversees academic integrity policy and procedure on behalf of the entire University.

But while this approach is intuitive, I am skeptical that it is effective – for two reasons.

First, few, if any, students who enroll in our Schools and Colleges do so with a plan to violate the University's academic integrity policy. Indeed, the error too many students make is assuming that good initial intentions suffice when it comes to avoiding any violation. Why tune in for a message from the AIO Director or Program Coordinator about something you're confident won't happen to you?

Second, orientation programming can be overwhelming. It spans multiple "must know" topics and takes place before or as classes begin – several weeks in advance of the build up to midterm exam and assignment pressures that present hurdles for many new students.

So while our staff of two will continue to make as many presentations as possible at the beginning of each new year, I ask you to consider a more personalized, small-dose approach instead or in addition to the orientation lecture: Customize our materials for your classes and use them incrementally, introducing discussion of key elements of academic integrity where and when they fit your teaching objectives and assignments and thus are most likely to resonate with students.

To this end, we are providing faculty and instructors with an updated set of materials aimed at engaging students in discussion of academic integrity. Some materials will be familiar from last year. Others are new. We provide a list of recommended topics for discussion and related information and/or material to assist you in addressing each topic. The goal is to provide a menu from which you may choose what is most relevant to the courses you teach.

Feel free to modify these topics and materials for your courses. Please credit AIO and include citations indicating the source of material you provide to students whether in written or oral form. Many students note and puzzle over instructors who emphasize the importance of citation in written assignments but do not consistently include citations in their own class presentations. Please do not hesitate to contact AIO with comments, questions or requests for additional information by emailing or calling us at aio@syr.edu or 443-5412.