WHY ACADEMIC INTEGRITY?

Academic integrity is a key component to a successful academic institution. Though the University of Toronto provides foundational documents for guiding the practices of academic integrity at the university, the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters and supplementary documents are inaccessible to undergraduate students and emphasize disciplinary action instead of student responsibility.

THE CODE: WORKING WITH EXISTING POLICY

The University of Toronto's current policy on academic integrity, the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters, is a 20 page document detailing the procedures related to academic misconduct at the university. All undergraduate students at the University of Toronto are held accountable for knowing the content of this code. Though a necessary legal document, the Code and supplementary documents meant to inform students about academic integrity, lack clarity, consistency and accessibility.

As reference librarians can attest and as years of anecdotal media reports claim, a serious lack of understanding exists in the university community when it comes to academic integrity.

PROJECT SCOPE

The proposed rollout and implementation for rebranding of the teaching and creation of awareness of academic integrity consists of a three-tiered approach:

1. Mandatory e-learning modules
2. Branded outreach campaign highlighted by an Infographic
3. Signing The Pledge on all submitted assignments

THE PLEDGE

The Pledge distills the principles outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters into one brief, easy-to-remember sentence: “I pledge that I have neither received nor given unauthorized aid during the completion of this work.”

Implementation of student honour codes (The Pledge) have been shown to be an effective tool in achieving institutional goals of academic integrity. Honour codes have been proven to continually reinforce student understanding of existing policies while also encouraging students' take responsibility for their scholarly work.

BRANDING & INTEGRATION

The Pledge is an attempt to distill the current Code into a concise format with accessible language, no jargon, and clear terms. The Pledge is a comprehensive strategy that engages students in a contract of mutual respect with their instructors, stressing their ethical responsibility to produce original scholarship and, most importantly, providing tools and resources to achieve this.

The Infographic, the e-learning module, and the Pledge are branded in a way to makes them recognizable and accessible to students. Academic Integrity outreach and marketing requires a strategic communications strategy.

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PROJECTIONS

- Accessible and friendly language, making the concepts of academic integrity easy to understand and avoiding accusatory or threatening language
- More detailed explanations and examples in a more concise format
- An emphasis on the relationship between students’ scholarly output and the support provided by the university’s input
- The use of the e-learning module not only as a tool for introducing students to key concepts in Academic Integrity but also as a reference resource accessible throughout their studies at U of T
- Ensuring that the infographic is available and visible to students across campus in different contexts and locations to provide a constant reminder of the importance of The Pledge and its components.