

March 31, 1952

To: Academic Standards Committee

Re: Examination Procedure

In February, 1951, a subcommittee of the Academic Standards Committee was appointed to study examination procedure at Youngstown College. The committee has completed its study and submits the following report for your consideration.

We shall first define cheating as an effort to gain scholastic credit for achievement not actually accomplished, which thus gains for the participant an unfair advantage over fellow students, denies him the full value of his educational career, and creates false impressions among faculty as to his abilities. The subcommittee has concluded that cheating is prevalent at Youngstown College. This conclusion was arrived at from the first hand experiences of the members of the subcommittee and from interviews with students from various departments. Specific information was obtained in certain interviews, but inasmuch as the survey was not all-inclusive we have decided against mentioning students and faculty involved. Instead we shall attempt to arrange our findings in three sub-headings: (I) Techniques of cheating used by students, (II) Poor practices of faculty which enable cheating to continue, and (III) Recommendations to the faculty.

Section I

TECHNIQUES OF CHEATING USED BY STUDENTS

- A. Cheating of the following types is related to pre-examination practices.
1. There is passing of test information between sections of the same course, where the same examination is given to more than one section.
 2. There is passing of test information from year to year where the same examination is given repeatedly. This occurs both on a student-to-student informal basis, and via organized file systems maintained by student organizations.
 3. There is pre-knowledge of test contents, as a result of careless preparation and protection of examinations. However, the committee has found no evidence that the present mimeograph office is subject to leak.
- B. Cheating of the following types is related to examination practices.
1. There is whispering of information even when the proctor is present.
 2. There is visual copying, primarily simple neck bending facilitated by overcrowded examination conditions.
 3. There is the use of notes passed between students and prepared "potties" on such articles as handkerchiefs and desk surfaces.
 4. There is the use of text and other materials, particularly in the back of the room where the proctor remains in the front. These techniques make use of feet as well as hands.
 5. There is open conversation in the absence of the instructor or other proctor.

The subcommittee feels that the above list of cheating practices is representative of actual practice, though it does not mean to imply that the list is all-inclusive.

Section II

POOR PRACTICES OF THE FACULTY

Faculty complicity is an important, perhaps the most significant, factor in student cheating. We list some poor practices.

1. It has been found that when a teacher leaves the room during a test, instant collaboration takes place.
2. When a teacher does not move about and observe students, information is gleaned from notes and from papers of other students. The student can cheat with comparative ease when the instructor sits reading or grading papers at the desk.
3. The teacher who gives a student a handful of test papers to pass out may expect an extra copy to find its way out of the classroom for future reference.
4. Using the same test for two classes gives a decided advantage to the second group.

The subcommittee wishes to thank those members of the student council and the faculty who began the "Honor System" and wish to go on record to the effect that a considerable factor in its poor showing to date is the cynical attitude held by some of the faculty regarding its chances for success. We feel that those faculty members whose attitudes and carelessness inadvertently encourages cheating, are contributing to the moral delinquency of their students, a result which is hardly the purpose of a college education.

Section III

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. We strongly recommend that in formal or informal contact with the students, the faculty maintain the expressed attitudes that:
 - a. Tests are necessary and proper, not necessary evils.
 - b. Tests are fair.
 - c. Testing procedures are fair.
 - d. Cheating is an unpardonable evil which works against the student, his classmates, and the teacher.
2. We recommend that tests be of the proper degree of difficulty, that they be solely on relevant material, and that they be changed from section to section and from year to year.
3. We recommend that the use of objective-type tests in crowded classrooms be strictly limited to cases in which more than one test pattern is used.
4. We recommend that there always be close supervision of the testing room in its entirety, and that seats be spread throughout the room.
5. We recommend permanent college-wide use of regulation examination books (except when answer sheets are passed out by the instructor) according to the following plan.
 - a. Books will be bought at the bookstore by the student.
 - b. The student will bring one to class and will exchange it with the teacher for another.
 - c. There will be no papers, books, or any other material near any student during the test except for the examination book.
 - d. The teacher will bring to class a sufficient quantity of fresh examination books for exchange as above. A student coming without one may purchase one from the teacher.

6. We suggest that a strict and dignified examination environment will not imply coercion or repression but rather will serve to maintain and enhance an air of fairness, impartiality, and respect.

It is the subcommittee's belief that if the above recommendations are followed cheating can be practically eliminated at Youngstown College.

The subcommittee recommends that the above report be called to the attention of the entire faculty - including part-time instructors.

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