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Exploring Web-Based University Policy Statements on Plagiarism by Research-Intensive Higher Education Institutions

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Recommended Citation

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**Exploring Web-Based University Policy Statements on Plagiarism by Research-Intensive
Higher Education Institutions**

February 9, 2015

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Abstract

Plagiarism may distress universities in the US, but there is little agreement as to exactly what constitutes plagiarism. While there is ample research on plagiarism, there is scant literature on the content of university policies regarding it. Using a systematic sample, we qualitatively

analyzed 20 Carnegie-classified universities that are “Very High in Research.” This included 15 public state universities and five high-profile private universities. We uncovered highly varied and even contradictory policies at these institutions. Notable policy variations existed for verbatim plagiarism, intentional plagiarism and unauthorized student collaboration at the studied institutions. We conclude by advising that the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AACU) and others confer and come to accord on the disposition of these issues.

Keywords: Plagiarism; University policies; Academic integrity; Undergraduates

INTRODUCTION

Plagiarism is not a new problem in higher education, but easy access to vast amounts of content from the Internet and other digital sources has facilitated widespread academic misconduct in universities and colleges (Freyer et al. 2013; Ma, Wan and Lu 2008; Park 2003; Tindell and Bohlader 2012; Waithaka and Gitimu 2012). Therefore, a concomitant focus on plagiarism has occurred, as internet access has widened for American students in the early 21st century. The data from the Academic Integrity Assessment Project, reported by McCabe (2005), found that 62% of undergraduates and a majority (59%) of graduate students admitted to “engaging in “cut and paste” plagiarism” from both written and Internet sources (6). The survey consisted of over 63,700 undergraduate and 9,250 graduate students over the course of three years (2002-2005) in the US and Canada.

The recent Harvard cheating scandal among the seniors of the Class of 2013 suggests that the problem has not abated among college students in ensuing years. The Harvard data (Freyer et al. 2013, May 28) revealed that seniors reported cheating on homework (31.5%), papers (32%), and take-home tests (70%). The rates for freshmen there were even higher, with 42% of the students admitting to engaging in cheating on homework and problem set (Moya-Smith 2013, Sept. 6).

This research seeks to uncover how some of the largest and most well-known US universities define plagiarism, but it is important to note that the existing literature does not concur to any exacting degree as to what plagiarism is, beyond the construct of unauthorized or unattributed use of words, concepts or ideas that have been written or published in another place. Indeed, as many authors have been accused of self-plagiarism, the fact that an author has not

turned to other sources does not entirely preclude the possibility of plagiarism in his/her work (Attwood 2008).

What is Plagiarism?

Because it acknowledges that plagiarism is a “multifaceted and ethically complex problem,” The Council of Writing Program Administrators (2003, 1) believes that plagiarism is often commingled with other problems of scholarship:

Most current discussions of plagiarism fail to distinguish between:

1. submitting someone else’s text as one’s own or attempting to blur the line between one’s own ideas or words and those borrowed from another source, and
2. carelessly or inadequately citing ideas and words borrowed from another source.

Such discussions conflate *plagiarism* with the *misuse of sources*” (italics theirs, 1).

The well-known literary theorist Stanley Fish (2010) wrote a controversial op/ed for the *New York Times* in which he argued that “(1) Plagiarism is a learned sin. (2) Plagiarism is not a philosophical issue” (para. 5). While he does not argue against measures that institutions take to reduce plagiarism, he maintains that “what you’re punishing is a breach of disciplinary decorum, not a breach of the moral universe” (para. 10). Part of his argument is dependent upon the postmodern proposition that no utterance is truly original. As Pennycook (1996, 209) has suggested, “The postmodern and poststructuralist positions on language, discourse, and subjectivity...raise serious questions for any notion of individual creativity or authorship.”

Such an assertion has a long and substantial pedigree, however. Consider both Goethe’s (1829, 103) aphorism, “Alles Gescheite ist schon gedacht worden, man muß nur versuchen, es noch einmal zu denken” (All the clever things have already been said; it remains only to think of them again) and the Roman playwright Terence (161 B.C.E.) who wrote, “Nullumst iam dictum

quod non dictum sit prius” (Nothing has been said that has not been said before) (*the Eunuch*, Prologue, 41). Terence knew whereof he spoke; his quote is from a play that is a rewrite of a similar one by the Attic playwright Menander (Lowe 1983).

However, what Fish’s (2010) more contemporary argument does not address directly are the twin questions of honesty and deception. In the past, as with Terence and the more recent Goethe, authors, especially those who produced fictional works, were not held by their readers to strict standards of originality. Since, as Lipton (2014, 953) noted that “no writer is an island and all new works rely to some extent on borrowing from works that have predated them,” plots and concepts flowed freely through history from one author to another, and their reading and listening audiences would take delight in the recognition of allusion or a plot twist borrowed from a writer from antiquity.

The record for writers of more prosaic works is more mixed. Goethe himself authored scientific works on color theory and regarded what he had accomplished as unique, if it was nothing else, in his century (Duck 1988). Thus, a much disregarded tension in the study of plagiarism is the differing needs of originality for different groups of authors, namely, scientists, factual essayists and fictional writers. What has happened - and since the Enlightenment particularly - is a greater and greater desire for originality in published work of all kinds, both factual and fictional (Woodmansee and Jaszi 1995; Biagioli, Jaszi, and Woodmansee 2011).

Therefore, if any credence is to be given to fully educating undergraduates in literacy in argumentation and research, Fish’s argument is inapposite. It may well be that only a small percentage of students (those who will become professors, writers or scientists) will seek in their future to author demonstrably original work that has some modicum of external value. Yet for students to make the most productive use of the works they study for any other purpose in their

lives – economic, political or social - requiring them to have a hand in composing it in the most honest, and least derivative way possible is no doubt of value. This is especially true of students who wish to pursue a career in the sciences and technology, where the stakes for originality may be higher and have economic importance (MacLeod and Radick 2013).

Honesty and a proscription against deception are also useful things in themselves to preserve in the undergraduate population. Fish makes much of how avoiding plagiarism means familiarizing oneself with the arcana of attribution and quotation. However, there is some percentage of students – the figures vary widely in the literature that we consulted (cf. McCabe 2005 and Brown, Weible, and Olmosk 2010) – that clearly are aware that their work is partially or fully not their own, and attach their names to it for assessment or a grade anyway, presumably in the hopes that their deception will not be discovered. Fish (2010) uses the metaphor of golf rules to analogize plagiarism as a game in which the rules are both difficult to fully grasp and for whose violations self-reporting is required of all players. Yet, if we continue with Fish's analogy, few people play golf seriously who ignore the rules, yet wish to win tournaments anyway.

Why do Students Plagiarize?

The literature on intentionality or the motivation to plagiarize reveals a hotly contested, and highly various, set of potential reasons as to why students resort to plagiarism (Bedford, Gregg, and Clinton 2011; Colnerud and Rosander 2011; Cox, Cox and Moschis 1990; Greer, Swanberg, Hristova, Switzer, Daniel, and Perdue 2012; Gross 2011; McCabe 2005; McCabe and Treviño 1993 and 1997; Hughes and McCabe 2006; Power 2009; Shanahan, Hopkins, Carlson and Raymond 2013). These may generally be grouped as answers to somewhat different questions, however. As to why students engage in behavior which *a priori* is presumed to be

dishonest, Beasley's (2004, 7-8) research revealed eight overarching reasons for plagiarism, all but one of which are deliberate:

Ignorance of the rules, personal gain (time and other more satisfying activities), time management problems, thrill seeking in breaking the rules, defiance, (especially in an unsatisfying course or with an instructor for whom they have little respect), temptation and opportunity (the wide availability of the internet), calculation of cost-benefit, (the belief there is little chance of getting caught), and fear (largely as a result of pressure from parents and others to do well and get good grades).

From these, he adduces three broad categories that student plagiarists fall into: accidental, opportunistic and committed (Beasley 2004). While he questions what can be done about the second and third types, accidental plagiarists pose unique ethical problems for universities, because theirs is usually the result of an oversight, rather than revelatory of a moral deficiency. Few students in the large literature we consulted declared outright confidence in their ability to know exactly what plagiarism consisted of. Hughes and McCabe (2006, 10-11) state, for example, that

A particularly important issue concerns beliefs about what constitutes academic misconduct. [Our] present study found substantial differences in opinion between students and faculty for several behaviours, particularly those associated with unauthorized collaboration and falsification and fabrication behaviours. Many students may engage in these behaviours simply because they don't believe they are wrong.

Assuming that students must know that some particularly egregious behavior (opportunistic and committed plagiarism) is prohibited, Colnerud and Rosander (2009, 511) attempted to deduce which ethical norms these acts are evidentiary of. They note,

The lower the degree of effort and work, the lower degree of learning can be expected; the lower is the degree of learning, the higher will be the degree of academic dishonesty. [But] if the academic dishonesty does promote learning, it can be morally justified by mixed arguments from three ethical theories, consequentialist, deontology and virtue ethics.

The idea here is that if a student reasons that the *consequence* of the plagiarism is a beneficial one (getting through a course they would otherwise fail) or the rules are inapplicable or impossible to follow (thus, *deontologically* unacceptable) or if the student maintains that they are otherwise a good and moral person (by means of *virtue ethics*), then plagiarism might be embarked upon. “If a student breaches an academic norm but still learns parts or most of the expected knowledge, it is more acceptable according to the students’ answers than if he or she has done no work and consequently has learned nothing” (Colnerud and Rosander 2009, 514).

In reviewing the plagiarism of Canadian students, Hughes and McCabe (2006, 1) identify “student maturity, perceptions of what constitutes academic misconduct, faculty assessment and invigilation practices, low perceived risk, ineffective and poorly understood policies and procedures, and a lack of education on academic misconduct” as the culprits. Other reasons scholars found for the rise in plagiarism and other student cheating behaviors include ‘shortcomings in students’ character and moral development’ (Howell 2009, 91). In an older study, McCabe and Treviño (1997) found that student perception of the disapproval of their peers regarding cheating was the strongest predictor of reduced cheating. Hutton (2006, 171) discovered the contrapositive of this, when her research noted that

the many factors that have contributed to the development of more and stronger relationships between college students have helped to promote cheating by making

students more aware of its prevalence and influencing student perceptions of the acceptability of cheating among their peers.

McCabe himself (2005) noted that there was a disconnection between the number of faculty reporting cut and paste plagiarism (perhaps the kind most often seen by professors) and student reporting of the same. McCabe then identifies four egregious behaviors that seem to professors and students alike to be plagiarism: “turning in work copied from another, copying large sections of text from written sources, turning in work done by another and downloading or otherwise obtaining a paper from a term paper mill or website” (5). He notes also that these are behaviors that are done the least. Instead, “it is possible that the perceived high level of student engagement reported by faculty is driven by instances which students view as less egregious and place in the ‘cut and paste’ category” (McCabe 2005, 5).

McCabe and his colleagues (McCabe, Treviño, and Butterfield, 2002) gained renown for showing that variously conceived honor codes were in general discouraging of plagiarism. “Hard” or “soft” honor codes, such as those found at smaller, private or religious institutions, have been found to be particularly effective at reducing plagiarism among students, but are difficult to initiate, since they require reporting and compliance by observers of improper academic behavior (Spain and Robles 2011, 155). McCabe (2005) opined that honor codes depended for their effectiveness on the peer culture at a given school. Therefore, he has advised the use of “modified” honor codes (in which reporting by onlookers is not required), and he notes their success at schools such as the research-intensive institution, the University of Maryland at College Park (McCabe 2005, 10).

Honor codes may be most useful because of their clarity. Both McCabe and Treviño (1993) and Crown and Spiller (1998) found that students were less likely to engage in cheating

behaviors if definitions, penalties and enforcement are clear. Specifically, McCabe and Treviño (1993, 531) found that academic dishonesty was significantly associated with:

- (1) the understanding/ acceptance of academic integrity policies
- (2) the perceived certainty of being reported
- (3) the perceived severity of penalties
- (4) the perceptions of peers' behavior.

The last of these explained most of the variance in the regressions that McCabe and Treviño ran.

Despite the near universality of strong proscriptions against plagiarism in US universities, it is not a *per se* legal infraction (Lipton 2014). No one has ever been prosecuted for the “crime” of plagiarism (although, of course, copyright infringement, which may occur concurrently with plagiarism, is a crime and is occasionally prosecuted in academic circles). However, some authors have noted the similarities between plagiarism and other lower-level criminal behavior, such as shoplifting.

Cox, Cox and Moschis (1990) found peer influence to be a major predictor of potential shoplifting, especially when the potential thief was in a close-knit group with others who did this, and – importantly – had an opportunity to observe closely and first-hand how the shoplifting took place. In a recent study, Shanahan, Hopkins, Carlson and Raymond (2013) used this comparison to probe student attitudes toward plagiarism. They discovered that close exposure to plagiarists tended to cause other students to plagiarize, and that students, in much the vein of shoplifters, view plagiarism as falling into greater and lesser categories, and that these categories encompass differing reasons for plagiarizing. Major instances of plagiarizing seem to involve economic factors, whereas for minor infractions, unattainable grades and low perceived risk, along with economic factors played a part in the decision to cheat.

McKendall, Klein, Levenburg, and de la Rosa (2010) examined the impact of a professor's perceived fairness on the propensity to cheat (including plagiarism behaviors). They found that students can be aggregated into three groups: non-cheaters, trivial cheaters and serious cheaters. Perceived fairness of the instructor was not a factor for non-cheaters or serious cheaters, but positively impacted cheating among trivial cheaters.

Several sources have noted the impact of extracurricular activities undertaken as cohesive groups, which have generally resulted in greater cheating in activities such as athletics, fraternities and sororities (McCabe and Bowers 2009; Williams and Janosik 2007). Unsurprisingly also, cheating tends to increase where perceived surveillance is lesser (Bedford, Gregg, and Clinton 2011; Crown and Spiller 1998; Love and Simmons 1998; Nowell and Laufer 1997; Whitley 1998).

Following a flurry of cheating and plagiarism studies from the 1990s through the early 2000s, the literature on plagiarism has fallen off somewhat in more recent years. Perhaps there is an overarching view that what can be done has been done; perhaps the greater and greater ease with which electronic, internet-capable devices can pierce the protections of new testing and new kinds of writing assignments has caused higher education professionals to throw up their hands in resignation. Moreover, the new studies have seemingly revealed pretty much what the old ones had; that plagiarism, along with other kinds of cheating, remains a problem on US campuses (Freyer et al. 2013; Ma, Wan and Lu 2008; Tindell and Bohlader 2012; Waithaka and Gitimu 2012).

Despite more than adequate research into plagiarism, the reasons it has continued to flourish in the face of widespread analysis and condemnation remain elusive. For example, Brown, Weible and Olmosk (2010) note in their surveys of business schools that unlike the high

levels of plagiarism reported by faculty and students alike, only five percent of college deans regarded plagiarism as a significant problem at their respective schools. As we can see, there appear to be several unresolved issues hidden in the attempts by researchers to answer the simple question, “Why do students plagiarize?” The first is whether we should ask, as Fish (2010) has done, if plagiarism, being so multifariously defined, may properly be termed a moral failing or a pedagogical deficiency.

The way we resolve this dilemma strongly impacts the way we answer the question of why students plagiarize. If plagiarism is an ethical defect, we would need to redouble efforts to educate students as to how plagiarism hurts the academy and hurts others, as we argue with shoplifting or cheating in sports. If, however, it is merely a case of deficient instruction as to the niceties of attribution and quotation, we need only to post the appropriate guidelines and/or add instruction specific to these details. If and when students err as to citation, it would become just another gradable area of pedagogy. Another not fully resolved question is whether plagiarism would lessen if everyone – but particularly students – were clear as to what plagiarism always and everywhere consisted of. In the absence of concordance on this point, each institution of higher learning has had to arrive at its own understanding of what plagiarism is. This is one of the reasons that we undertook this study – we sought to discover the true ambit of definitional breadth in plagiarism amongst the larger research-intensive universities in the United States.

We chose research-intensive universities *per se* for two reasons. The first is that as larger institutions, their various definitions each impact a great number of students over a considerable period of time. The second is that they are places where the bulk of high profile research is undertaken, so it was of importance for us to discover how institutions dedicated to the

production of large quantities of independent, individual research saw plagiarism, and how they conceptualized plagiarism as a problem, whether pedagogical, ethical, or pragmatic.

How do Stakeholders Define and Respond to Plagiarism?

So what *do* stakeholders think plagiarism is, exactly? Roig (2001) conducted a series of studies on what college professors thought was plagiarism. The professors were shown six rewritten versions of a journal article. In the first study, “Results indicated moderate disagreement as to which rewritten versions had been plagiarized” (Roig 2001, 307). In the second study, a different cohort of professors was asked to paraphrase a paragraph and as many as 30% of them appropriated some text from the original (Roig 2001). Clearly, disagreement among the initial arbiters of plagiarism themselves – professors – has led to misunderstanding among students as to what is and is not permissible. More recently, “confusion regarding what behaviour constitutes plagiarism” was also reported among 3405 students surveyed on their understanding of plagiarism policy at an Australian university (Gullifer and Tyson 2014, 1202). It is important to note that only half of those surveyed were reported to have read the university policy.

In response, universities have been overhauling and refining their plagiarism policies, and almost always with more specific sanctions for infractions. However, at many universities, while there may be one overarching plagiarism policy, it is sometimes superseded by a stricter or different policy at a subordinate college or school at that university. For example, at the University of Ottawa, each School makes its own decisions and interprets the university policies very differently. The Arts, Social Sciences and Health Sciences schools at the “U of O” are more lenient, while other schools, such as the Telfer School of Management, are much stricter (Student Federation 2008). At Telfer, students are required to sign a “Personal Ethics Statement”

(n.d., 2-3), encompassing both group and individual work that affirms the student's commitment to the academic regulations at the University of Ottawa.

There have been several attempts to codify plagiarism more universally. The collegiate Council of Writing Program Administrators (WPA) has published a guide, *Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism: The WPA Statement on Best Practices* (2003). In it, the WPA puts forth its own definition of plagiarism: "In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else's language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source" (2003, 1). Notably, the WPA distinguishes intention as a necessary component of plagiarism; as we will see below, it is a distinction that many schools do not make.

Another multi-university development is honor codes. McCabe, Treviño, and Butterfield (2002, 365) discuss the recent profusion of honor codes at American universities and note that they place academic integrity as "an institutional priority" in reducing cheating behaviors. In their study of 21 university honor codes, the researchers connected a decrease in levels of student dishonesty to modified honor codes. "Although there is no single definition of what constitutes a modified honor code...modified codes emphasize students' responsibility for academic integrity, just as traditional honor codes do, but without the reporting requirement" (McCabe, Butterfield and Treviño 2012, 98). Brown and Howell (2001) also found that a "carefully worded" policy statement on plagiarism was indeed effective in instilling the importance of this concept among students (2001, 103). Gullifer and Tyson (2014, 1203) underscored the importance of university plagiarism policies in this way: "It is these definitions that all stakeholders in the university setting must abide by, and that set the parameters for reporting, investigating and penalizing infringements." The researchers argued further that "it is these definitions that should be the

benchmark for assessing how well students understand plagiarism” (Gullifer and Tyson 2014, 1203).

That individual university policies almost always exist is undisputed. What they do or should contain has not been analyzed to a great degree in the literature. Gullifer and Tyson (2014) and Bretag, Mahmud, et al. (2011) are the only scholars in the literature we examined that probe university policies in any depth. Their studies were limited to universities in Australia. Bretag, Mahmud, et al. (2011, 6-7) identified five characteristics of university policies, culled from a longer list, that they believed would result in exemplary guides for academic integrity. These were: *access, approach, responsibility, detail and support*. However, they made no recommendations whatever about the actual *content* of the policies, i.e. what exact policies should be in place. Indeed, we could find no overall guide to exactly which policies are in place anywhere. Because of this dearth of knowledge, our study explores web-based university policy statements on plagiarism for undergraduate student work by research-intensive higher education institutions, and is guided by the following research questions:

RQ1: What specific plagiarism policies are in place at research-intensive universities in the US?

RQ2: What are the overarching descriptive and definitional elements of these policies?

METHODOLOGY

Theoretical and Analytical Frameworks

This work examines web-based plagiarism policies at research-intensive institutions in the United States that are primarily applicable to undergraduates. We view these documents as public records and as the records of “social facts” (Durkheim 1895/1982, 82), in that they are necessarily coercive as to some actions, because they presumably apply equally to all and demand censure and reprobation from those who offend their precepts. Durkheim (1895/1982,

52) noted the extraordinary ability of social facts to exert influence upon individuals beyond their conscious will, referring to them as “commitments” and “duties” that are nevertheless exterior to the self:

When I perform my duties as a brother, a husband or a citizen and carry out the commitments I have entered into, I fulfill obligations which are defined in law and custom and which are external to myself and my actions. Even when they conform to my own sentiments and when I feel their reality within me, that reality does not cease to be objective, for it is not I who have prescribed these duties; I have received them through education (Durkheim 1895/1982, 52).

Lukes, in his Introduction to the contemporary English translation of Durkheim’s work, *The Rules of Sociological Method* (1982) argues that Durkheim believed that such social facts ought to be investigated and analyzed by social scientists because

'social facts' should be regarded by the sociologist as realities; that is, as having characteristics independent of his conceptual apparatus, which can only be ascertained through empirical investigation...and, in particular, through 'external' observation by means of indicators (such as legal codes, statistics, etc.), and as existing independently of individuals' wills, and indeed of their individual manifestations, ...in forms which exist permanently (Introduction, 1982, 3-4).

More recently, Coffey (2014) notes that documents can be social facts, “in that they are produced, shared and used in socially organized ways” (369). They convey “particular kinds of representations using particular kinds of textual...conventions” (369) which, in this case, tell us about their institutions’ constructs of plagiarism. Because plagiarism resists easy definition, we view these documents, then, as social artifacts and “act[s] of persuasion” (Coffey 2014, 372). We

cannot know how they are being received by their respective audiences; rather, we are interested in their intended meaning.

We have thus adopted an interpretative stance for conducting an analysis of the meanings in the policy documents in this manner and have undertaken a thematic qualitative analysis (Corbin and Strauss 2008) for establishing a methodological framework for coding and categorizing these understandings. Together, these approaches have allowed examining the language, phrases and other communication systems for the intended meanings and social practices that universities have used to communicate their policies to their audiences.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data for this study were the web-based university policies on plagiarism that appertained to undergraduate student work. On a few occasions, we referred to supplementary documents or websites as an audit trail (Coffey 2014). This occurred when the policy documents were connected to supplementary sources, or when making sense about particular statements within the policy required examining other documents as well. Since it would have been impractical, even in book length, to treat the policies of every institution of higher education, we decided to narrow our scope to the institutions that are “Very High in Research” according to the Carnegie Classification website (<http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/>).

There were 108 institutions (see Table 1) in this category (Carnegie 2014). Because we sought a nuanced analysis of plagiarism policies and websites, we culled a systematic sample (Fricker, 2008) of this number and chose every fifth institution. After the deletion of one university because it lacked undergraduates, we were left with a sample of 20 universities. We sought out plagiarism policies on these universities’ websites via standard Google searches. We began with the home pages of the respective institutions, and utilized the websites’ search

engines with such terms as “plagiarism,” “academic misconduct,” “academic integrity,” “academic conduct”, “honor code,” “student code,” and others.

We note here that despite our best efforts, a slight possibility exists that we may have overlooked important pages or parts of websites that were relevant to our search. Moreover, we are cognizant that it is possible that important codicils of policy may exist for certain universities in either paper form or on password-protected pages accessible only by authorized students or other university personnel.

The sample (see Table 2) we obtained includes five private non-profit and 15 public institutions. Geographically speaking, the sample consists of universities from all major areas of the United States. The schools we studied were all sizeable in population, with the largest having 50,000 students, and included many land-grant universities. The initial analysis began while the data were being gathered. This involved reading, “chunking,” and coding (Bogdan and Biklen 2006) the policies in our sample and identifying the patterns and themes (Corbin and Strauss 2008) therein. This second step led to initially isolating the descriptive elements in the definition(s) of an individual school’s policy on plagiarism and then reducing these to clusters of definitional elements across universities. Eventually, these elements formed a matrix and coding instrument for this analysis (see Table 3). The categories within the matrix also served as an organizational framework for presentation of the results from the analysis for this paper.

Characteristic of the thematic approach and constant comparison methods in qualitative data analysis (Corbin and Strauss 2008), the matrix was refined in the second and third round of coding individually, and then together by the two researchers. This provided a means for clarifying differences and answering questions from each other and recoding the data where necessary. To assess intercoder agreement, the researchers multiplied the number of descriptive

elements (12) that were discovered by the researchers together by the number of institutions (20) to arrive at the number of total responses (240, 100%). Then the researchers calculated the number of the responses in disagreement (26) and converted this number to a percentage, which was 10.83%. Thus, intercoder agreement, constituting the remainder, stood at 89.17%.

Analytical memos were written by the researchers to keep track of the emerging themes, and to record quotes and policy codes for future reference. Excerpts from these memos were used extensively in the results section of this work.

FINDINGS

What Specific Plagiarism Policies Are in Place at Research-Intensive Universities in the US?

The honor system. In four of the 20 universities whose policies we reviewed, the plagiarism policy is connected to an honor system that describes what the institutions consider ethical or honorable academic behavior. In one other case, the University of Cincinnati, an honor system apparently exists, but does not pertain to all students. The California Institute of Technology (Caltech) has the *Honor Code*,¹ the University of California, Berkeley (UC Berkeley), and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) have the *(Student) Code of Conduct*. At the institutions we studied, plagiarism was often included in regulations and procedures concerning academic and scholarship activities, as in *Academic Integrity of Students Regulation* at the University of South Florida (USF) or the *Policy on Integrity of Scholarship* at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD). The name of the policy where plagiarism is discussed can communicate either a positive or negative tone. At times, wording was used that draws attention to the behavior that upholds the honorable conduct (e.g., *Policy on Integrity of Scholarship* at UCSD), or it accentuated the act of violation and breach of the desired behavior

¹ This policy for Caltech and all other policies cited in this work are referenced in Table 2

and ethical standard [(e.g., *Academic Misconduct and Dishonesty Policy at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)*]. Alternatively, the name was sometimes neutral (e.g., *Student Code of Conduct* at UNL).

Some institutions we studied required students to sign a pledge. As an example, undergraduates at Florida State University (FSU) are asked to submit to an “FSU Academic Honor Pledge” which reads:

I affirm my commitment to the concept of responsible freedom. I will be honest and truthful and will strive for personal and institutional integrity at the Florida State University. I will abide by the Academic Honor Policy at all times (The FSU Academic Honor Policy n.d., 1).

Similarly, at the University of Georgia (UGA), students are expected to acknowledge as part of their application that they have read and will abide by the University’s *Honor Code: A Culture of Honesty* (2007, 3).

Location of the policy. Some universities provide general information concerning academic integrity expectations and the policies that are in place, but in fact require individual colleges to have their own policies on plagiarism, especially as to how to respond to plagiarism allegations and violations. Pennsylvania State University follows this model and uses the University Office of Judicial Affairs to address only those cases that have not been resolved at the college level. The colleges at Penn State must, however, develop their individual policies in consultation with the Office of Student Conduct and the Office of the Provost of the University, to ensure that these policies are aligned with the university-wide principles and policies on academic integrity. Alternatively, a university may have a university-wide policy, but will make

exceptions for select colleges (e.g. UNL’s controlling plagiarism policy makes exception for the College of Law, Section 2 Academic Dishonesty).

Although we could not find a workable definition of plagiarism for the entire university on the website of the University of Iowa in its *Code of Student Life* (2013-2014; section on *Dishonesty*), plagiarism is prohibited there and it is catalogued under a rubric of *Academic Misconduct*. Alternatively, the University of Wisconsin at Madison notes and gives examples of academic misconduct in the Academic Integrity Statement (UWM) Chapter 14 (1989, 9) such as this one: “Seek[ing] to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation,” but nowhere uses the word “plagiarism.”

In summary, the institutions in our sample markedly differ in the ways in which they conceptualize their plagiarism policies, and the ways in which they determine to whom the policy applies and who is responsible for implementing it. We next discuss the descriptive and definitional elements of these policies (See Table 4 for a summary of the findings from this study).

What Are the Overarching Descriptive and Definitional Elements of These Policies?

A plethora of differing definitions and examples. Although the majority of the universities in our sample provide some form of definition, the ones we studied varied vastly in the ways in which they define and conceptualize plagiarism, as well as in the amount of information that they convey about this construct in their respective policies. Some institutions provide examples along with an explanation. For instance, plagiarism at Texas A&M University is defined as the “appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit” and appears on the list of academic misconduct violations. Other violations include: ‘Cheating, Fabrication, Falsification, Multiple Submissions, Plagiarism, Complicity, Abuse and

Misuse of Access and Unauthorized Access’ (Section 20.1.2. Honor System Rules). The definitions for plagiarism and other violations at Texas A & M are by no means mutually exclusive, leading to real questions as to precisely which inappropriate conduct an accused student might have engaged in. For example, “Cheating” is (partly) defined as “acquiring answers for any assigned work or examination from any unauthorized source. This includes, but is not limited to, using the services of commercial term paper companies...” (Section 20.1.2.3.1., Example c, under Honor System Rules). Such a definition was in our study elsewhere regarded as plagiarism, rather than cheating, although at some institutions we studied, plagiarism and cheating were placed under the common rubric of academic misconduct (e.g. the University of Wisconsin’s policy).

Lack of specificity. Unlike the definitions noted above, some universities’ definitions were very brief and provide few or no examples. For instance, at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), in the Academic Misconduct and Dishonesty section of the school’s official online policy (Section 10.2), plagiarism is mentioned only once (although in a supplement to this guide, it is mentioned three times, but with no extensive definition). However, MIT makes available an Academic Integrity Handbook as a downloadable PDF that goes into more detail as to what plagiarism actually is. In the handbook, plagiarism “occurs when you use another’s words, ideas, assertions, data, or figures and do not acknowledge that you have done so” (Academic Integrity Handbook 2013, 5).

Caltech, on the other hand, offers generic examples such “inadvertent paraphrasing or direct substitution” but no *per se* definition of plagiarism (*Honor Code Handbook*, Section III. Papers and Reports 2012, 6).

Verbatim vs. Non-Verbatim Plagiarism. In many of the universities studied, plagiarism was purported by policy to consist of both verbatim and an over-close resemblance of verbiage. We note that in our sample, perhaps the greatest variation occurs amongst the definitions for non-verbatim plagiarism of another source. To illustrate, at UGA, for example, plagiarism is “[p]resenting an idea, theory or formula” (*Academic Honesty Policy 2007*, 6), but according to the North Carolina State University’s (NCSU) “Policies, Regulations and Rules”, it is “another person’s ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit” (POL.11.35.01). At UMass/Amherst, it is “the representation of the words or ideas of another as one’s own work in any academic exercise” (*Academic Honesty Policy 2007*, 11). The difference is thus not only in wording, but also in the meaning and construct of these definitions.

Value Judgments. Several definitions used language that implies normative judgments, indicative of policies possessing either an ethical or moral dimension regarding an act of plagiarism. For instance, Caltech posits that any act of plagiarism, “whether inadvertent paraphrasing or direct substitution, takes unfair advantage of any original authors, the instructor who incorrectly believes that the ideas are the plagiarist’s, and other students who correctly footnote all sources” (Section III, *Papers and Reports 2012*, 6). NCSU takes a similar position, but uses even stronger language when it characterizes acts of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, not only as affirmative attempts to take “an unfair advantage in an academic evaluation” but regards the allowing of such behaviors by others as academic misconduct, and as “detrimental to the scholarly community as engaging in the acts themselves” (POL 11.35.01 - Code of Student Conduct, Section, 8.1 Aiding and Abetting).

When describing penalties and consequences, Harvard takes a strong evaluative position as well. It is reflected in the emotive and persuasive language (e.g., “owe”) in the statement

presented to the student in the guide, entitled “Why Does it Matter if You Plagiarize?”: “The bottom line is this: Whenever you report on or summarize someone else's ideas, you owe it to that person to properly credit him for his work.”

Intentionality. Closely related to value judgments is the question of intentionality, which is another element that emerged as we explored our sample of university policies on plagiarism.

Some university policies make clear reference to intentionality, but others do not. For example, at Harvard, plagiarism is defined as “the act of either intentionally *OR* unintentionally submitting work that was written by someone else” (Harvard Plagiarism Policy: Section, *What Constitutes Plagiarism* (majuscule lettering and emphasis theirs)).

Texas A &M makes reference to intentionality somewhat differently, with its definition of plagiarism as “[i]ntentionally, knowingly, or carelessly presenting the work of another as one’s own” (i.e., without crediting the author or creator) under section 20.1.2.3.5 of Rules and Procedures, the Honor System Rules. The University of Massachusetts at Amherst (UMass/Amherst), however, provides for the mitigating factor of intent with their definition, namely: “knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one’s own work in any academic exercise” (Code of Student Conduct 2013-14, 9).

The policy on intentionality at UGA is perhaps the most strongly stated of any school’s policy that we examined: “A student does not have to intend to violate the honesty policy to be found in violation. For example, plagiarism, intended or unintended, is a violation of this policy” (2007, 6).

At the University of California at Berkeley, the definition of plagiarism that is in the Berkeley *Campus Code of Student Conduct* (2012) includes no mention of intentionality. However, at the Berkeley Research site on “Research Misconduct”

(<http://vcresearch.berkeley.edu/research-policies/research-compliance/research-misconduct>), intentionality is a mitigating factor in the definition, which is modeled on federal requirements for research conducted under governmental auspices. At North Carolina State University (NCSU) and the University of Nebraska at Lincoln (UNL) the plagiarism definitions gave no information on intentionality.

Multiple Submission. Some schools view multiple submissions of the same otherwise unplagiarized paper to two or more different instructors or for two or more different assignments as “self-plagiarism”; others do not. For example, this is how Harvard explains this violation as an example of plagiarism:

Turning in the same paper for more than one class (emphasis theirs)

Harvard has a very clear policy on using the same paper for more than one class (see Harvard Plagiarism Policy). Although a paper you write is clearly your own work, you are expected to produce new work for each course so that you can incorporate what you have learned in that course, and so that you can receive credit for doing work in that course (*Harvard Plagiarism Policy*, Section, Other Scenarios to Avoid).

Several schools that we studied proscribe the above conduct, but under auspices different from that for plagiarism itself. It is sometimes referred to as “previously submitted work,” as at the University at Buffalo (UB (*Academic Integrity*, Para. Examples of Academic Dishonesty)). At the University of South Florida (USF), self-plagiarism is dealt with in a separate section entitled “Multiple Submissions,” and is strictly prohibited, except where both or all instructors have been notified. Like USF and UB, FSU and Texas A & M consider self-plagiarism separately from plagiarism (see FSU’s *Academic Honor Policy* n.d., 2) and Texas A&M’s Honor System Rules

(20.1.2.3). At still other schools (e.g. USCD and UNL), multiple submission is not mentioned at all.

Unauthorized Collaboration. Universities in our sample also vary in their expectations regarding collaboration. Some schools view unauthorized collaboration in the creation of a student paper or other written assignment to be plagiarism *per se*, and some do not. For instance, the University of Cincinnati's (UC) policy on plagiarism illustrates the first viewpoint. It is expressed in the following statement in the Rule 3361:40-5-03 of the *Administrative Code on Academic Misconduct*, part of Judicial Affairs): "Submitting as one's own original work material that has been produced through unacknowledged collaboration with others without release in writing from collaborators" (Section, Plagiarism, under item iii) is considered plagiarism.

Harvard University takes a different view. There, collaboration is permitted except in instances where it is specifically prohibited by the instructor, and except in examinations: "If the syllabus or website does not include a policy on collaboration, students may assume that collaboration in the completion of assignments is permitted," but with the apparent exception that "[c]ollaboration in the completion of examinations is always prohibited" (Harvard University; Harvard Plagiarism Policy: Section, Plagiarism and Collaboration)

Typology of Source Material. The specific source of borrowed material is another element that we studied in our sample of university policies on plagiarism. Many schools made direct reference to the source type, especially print sources or web and Internet-based sources. Here is an example of source references from Florida State's definition of plagiarism:

Presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., without proper acknowledgement of the source). Typical examples include: Using another's work from print, web, or other

sources without acknowledging the source” (USF System Regulation, Section, § 3.027, Academic Integrity of Students 2008, 2).

At UMass/Amherst, the following proscriptions against plagiarism also mention sources in an explicit way:

failing to acknowledge and properly cite information obtained from the Internet or other electronic media as well as other sources; submitting term papers written by another, including those obtained from commercial term paper companies or the internet” (Academic Honesty Policy 2007, 11).

At the University of Cincinnati sources are “material obtained from an individual, agency, or the internet without reference to the person, agency or webpage as the source of the material” (Section Academic Misconduct Definitions (ii) of Student Code of Conduct 2012).

The Process and Penalty Procedures

The process and penalty procedures of the policies for dealing with violations to policy on plagiarism were discussed by all institutions reviewed for this study. In general, the institutions engage in a multilevel process that often begins with a conference with the instructor and a preliminary investigation. If the faculty member asserts that academic misconduct has taken place, the accused student is generally referred for university judicial action. Examples of the process include 1) by a “college conduct administrator” (CCA) to the Office of University Judicial Affairs (OUJA) at the University of Cincinnati (UC), 2) by a “facilitator” from the Office of the Vice President for Instruction at UGA, and 3) a “Judicial Officer” from the Office of Student Judicial Affairs at University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL).

Although this phase of the process is perceived as an initial step in dealing with plagiarism violations and hence is described as 1) an “informal meeting” at UNL, 2)

“consultative resolution” at the University at Buffalo (UB), 3) an “informal resolution” at UC Berkeley, 4) an “informal conference” with the student at UMass/Amherst and 5) a “facilitated/continued discussion” with the student at UGA, it can lead to a resolution and imposition of sanctions. If no resolution is reached at the initial phase of the process or if the instructor is unable to make a decision, or wishes to bring the case for formal resolution, the instructor has resort to differing but analogous bodies, such as the Office of Student Citizenship or to the Committee on Discipline at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). At Penn State, if a student rejects the disciplinary sanctions imposed through the informal process, the case is resolved through a formal process at either the college and/or university levels. At UC Berkeley, a student must first opt for a formal process in order not to be subject to informal disciplinary sanctions.

The formal process usually involves establishing an academic review hearing body. At UGA, it is the Academic Honesty Panel; it is referred to as the Academic Honor Policy Committee at FSU, the Conduct Hearing Board at UMass/Amherst, and the Academic Integrity Review Board (AIRB) at the University of California-San Diego (UCSD). These bodies make disciplinary recommendations to the administrative officers for academic or judicial affairs, such as deans of colleges, deans of students, the vice president or provost. These review bodies and similar hearing units operate under guidelines specific to each university as to the composition, procedure and process of hearing proceedings, as well as for the sanctions that they may assign for reaching a resolution.

The membership of the hearing body typically includes faculty members, the administrative officer and students; however, the number from each group varies from institution to institution. For example, at UNL “A quorum will consist of at least two faculty members and

three student members of the Board,” according to the Student Code of Conduct statutes (Section, 5.3.), and at UMass/Amherst a hearing panel “will be composed of five disinterested members of the Academic Honesty Board. Three will be members of the faculty, and two will be students of the same status (i.e., graduate or undergraduate) as the student in the case” (Academic Honesty Policy 2007, 6) while at UGA, serving as a panelist is discussed on the information webpage about the *Student Academic Council (SAHC)* under the heading, *What can be gained from membership and serving on panels?*, but there are no details provided in the University’s document, “A Culture of Honesty” (2007), about how large the student representative contingent should be. Likewise, at the University of Oregon (UO) student involvement in hearing proceedings is mentioned briefly in the *Student Conduct and Community Standards Process Flowchart from Complaint to Decision*, a document accompanying the policy document, but no specific student quota information is provided in the policy document itself or on the flowchart. The flowchart describes the Hearing Panel merely as an entity consisting “of four or five faculty, staff, and students.”

In general, the institutions may be said to bring in a disinterested student representation when the case goes through the formal process, which is typically a review and investigation at the college or the university level. The exception to this pattern is at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech), where, as the policy states, “the responsibility for the maintenance of the Honor System lies with each student” through student involvement in all aspects of the regulatory system. The Caltech policy explains such involvement thus:

The Honor system is enforced by two bodies: The Board of Control, comprised solely of students, and the Conduct Review Committee, comprised of students, faculty, and administrators. The Routing Group

decides to which of these bodies cases will be referred” (*Honor Code Handbook* 2012, 3).

The University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW) invites student participation in the selection of the Investigating Officer for individual student misconduct cases. This provision is explained in the University of Wisconsin System Administrative Code, Chapter UWS 14 (1989) in this way: “The chancellor of each institution, in consultation with faculty, academic staff, and student representatives, shall designate an investigating officer or officers for student academic misconduct” (10).

The student may appeal the disciplinary recommendation and sanctions imposed by the various hearing committees, and if this takes place, an academic honesty review for final resolution is conducted by high-ranking officers, such as the chancellor at UW or the President of the University, which is also true for UGA. Interestingly, at UGA, “the instructor may not appeal any decision of an Academic Honesty Panel or the Multiple Violations Review Board” (Academic Honesty Policy 2007, 11).

In terms of disciplinary sanctions or actions, the institutions have a wide range of options available to them, based on the severity of violations under consideration, from issuing a warning (oral or written), grade lowering or assigning a failing grade, disciplinary reprimand, through probation, suspension or expulsion from the university. Academic sanctions such as reduced grade or redo of an assignment or exam are typically the prerogative of the instructor (see the WUSTL or University of Iowa policies). The exception to this is the Texas A & M University, where both “the Instructor (autonomous) and Honor Council can assign appropriate academic (an F, 0 or probation) or educational sanctions (university or community service)” (section, 20.1.4.1 of the Honor Code).

At Texas A & M University, however, violations that might result in “separation from University,” including sanctions such as expulsion, dismissal, suspension, are forwarded to the Honor Council. At other institutions, such severe cases are also sent to appropriately ranking offices such as the department head, college dean and the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs (at the University at Buffalo), the offices of the Provost (at the University of Iowa), and the Dean of Students at UMass/Amherst. Unlike the many institutions in the study that have a two-level categorization of violations (i.e., academic/administrative sanctions versus college/university-wide sanctions), as discussed above, the University of South Florida-Tampa (USF) differentiates among four levels of violations and assigns sanctions for each level based on the severity of conduct. For example, this is how “Level One violations” are explained in the USF’s policy on academic integrity:

Level One violations may occur because of inexperience or lack of knowledge of principles of academic integrity on the part of persons committing the violation. These violations address incidents when intent is questionable and are likely to involve a small fraction of the total course work, are not extensive, and/or occur on a minor assignment.

Recommended sanctions for Level One violations are listed below:

- Reduction or no credit given for the original assignment.
- An assigned paper or research project on a relevant topic.
- A make-up assignment at a more difficult level than the original assignment.
- Required attendance in a non-credit workshop or seminar on ethics or related subjects.

(Regulation USF3.027, Section Academic Integrity of Students 2012, 6).

Note the direct reference to the issue of intent in this excerpt of the USF policy. The second institution that makes an explicit reference to intentionality when discussing the process and penalty phases is UMass/Amherst. At UMass/Amherst, the direct reference to intentionality appears in the section that describes the informal resolution phase, which involves a student and instructor conference procedures as reported below:

The instructor and student may agree that there was no intentional breach of the Academic Honesty Policy on the part of the student or that there were circumstances mitigating the seriousness of the offense. They may agree on an informal means of resolving the matter. Informal resolutions could include, for example, redoing an assignment, doing additional work, or a grade penalty (for either the assignment or the course). No student may be forced in any way to agree to a proposed informal resolution of an allegation of academic dishonesty. Informal resolutions of allegations of academic dishonesty may not be appealed. If a student wishes to contest an allegation of academic dishonesty rather than agree to an informal resolution, the instructor must issue a formal charge. (Academic Honesty Policy 2007, 3-4)

The two institutions differ slightly in the ways they position intentionality in assigning a light penalty. USF is willing to assign a light penalty (Level One of sanctions) for violations, based on benefit of doubt, that is, when intent is “questionable,” whereas UMass/Amherst requires that there be no doubt about intentionality for the informal settlement of the matter.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Taken together, our findings suggest that there is no specific agreement nor standard treatment of plagiarism for undergraduate work in US research-intensive institutions that we studied, and that these schools exhibit a great deal of variability as to the ways in which they

define, present, and implement plagiarism policies in their individual educational contexts. While this state of affairs may have resulted from the unique historicity of each university, and been enabled by the tenets of academic freedom, we note here the obvious utility of having a common set of academic standards for an increasingly transient student body (Monaghan and Attewell 2014). Many students transfer from one university to another in their college careers. The statistics cited in the literature review in this work (Freyer et al. 2013; McCabe 2005; Waithaka and Gitimu 2012) have shown that plagiarism has become an issue not only on the local level, but also at the national and international level. Having substantively divergent plagiarism policies at different universities in the US may result in confusion or be seen as weakening the ethical basis for the strict prohibition of plagiarism. A student from one university, faced with very different policies at an institution to which she has transferred, might reasonably believe that a university's prohibition of plagiarism is a matter of fungible perception only.

Nevertheless, the difficulty does not rest with a lack of firm policy at the studied institutions. The majority of the universities in our sample have overarching, detailed policies on plagiarism available online that may be viewed by students, faculty and administrators for guidance. As McCabe and Treviño (2004) observed, having university-wide policies on plagiarism not only “[h]elp[s] define and support campus-wide academic integrity standards” but also makes promoting and upholding such standards “a community-wide responsibility” (14). The pursuit of such a responsibility also led to several of the studied universities to connect the policy on plagiarism to an honor system. In doing so, they appeared to underscore what they deemed overall ethical and honorable academic behavior.

At the same time, we observed a wide variety of ethical and valuative stances on the part of the studied universities regarding plagiarism, to say nothing of what they defined as

plagiarism in the first place. Some universities saw plagiarism as unprofessional (e.g. NCSU). Others viewed it as morally or ethically suspect (e.g. Caltech). Still others took the instrumental view that committing plagiarism cheated others of intellectual growth (e.g. Harvard University). Moreover, different universities chose to use positive, negative, or neutral wording in their policy elucidations to accentuate honorable conduct or to play up acts of violation, or to use neutral language, pointedly avoiding normative commentary.

We note though that the honor codes that several institutions in our sample have in place are likely to assist them in reducing instances of plagiarism. Previous research (McCabe, Treviño and Butterfield, 2002) has shown the beneficial role of honor codes in decreasing dishonest behaviors. This is especially true when “students are given a significant role both in the judicial or hearing body on campus and in developing programs to inform other students about the purposes of the code, its major components, enforcement strategies, and so forth” (362-363).

The university policies reviewed in this study discuss student involvement in the sections that review the process and penalty procedures of their plagiarism policies. The institutions differ, however, as to the levels and stages of student involvement in these procedures. Some schools engage students in the formation of the formal review boards or hearing panels by inviting students to participate in the selection of the Investigating Officer for misconduct cases (e.g., the University of Wisconsin-Madison) or by accepting representatives elected by solely student-governed committees such as the Board of Control at Caltech; others appoint student representatives of the hearing panels after they solicit recommendations from faculty or judicial administrators such as Deans of Students (e.g., UMass/Amherst). The differences in quota of student representatives on the review panels, ranging from 1-3 students, in the individual

institutions, are perhaps another indicator of the varying degrees of student involvement in the adjudication process at these institutions.

At the same time, faculty members need to remain interested and involved. While asking students to sign a pledge (e.g. at FSU) or to acknowledge that they have read and will abide by the university's *Honor Code* (e.g. at the University of Georgia) are examples of attempts at student "buy-in," allowing faculty members to apply honor pledges and plagiarism policies at their discretion in the initial stages supports academic freedom and faculty shared governance (but see McCabe, Butterfield and Treviño's 2012 dissent from this solution, *infra*).

The most important definitional differences we found were with regard to the topics of verbatim/non-verbatim plagiarism, intentionality, multiple submissions and collaboration (recall the definitions at UGA, NCSU and UMass/Amherst). The differences are not only in wording, but also in the meaning and constructs of these definitions.

Some schools consider multiple submissions of the same work to two or more different instructors or for two or more different courses or assignments as self-plagiarism; others do not; and some institutions proscribe multiple submissions under the auspices of plagiarism while others assign it a separate category within the group of academic violations (compare Harvard's policy with that of USF). While the problems of multiple submissions and collaboration are no doubt valid ones, we believe that little ethical angst is generated when a clear policy points out what is and is not permissible.

Perhaps the most undisputed prohibited practice in the plagiarism policies we studied is the seizure of significant amounts of material from another author wholesale and without quotation or attribution (often called cut-and-paste plagiarism). This is verbatim plagiarism and where it was described, we observed little difference in how this was defined by the different

institutions whose policies we examined (penalties were assessed very differently, however. Recall USF's four-level system of sanctions with the two-level categorization of sanctions at UMass/Amherst, for example).

The proscriptions against non-verbatim plagiarism were not as explicitly laid out. While many schools stated that taking the thoughts, ideas and concepts of an author without attribution was plagiarism, we note that it may be impossible to give clarity as to where the line lies between common knowledge and where the specificity of an idea calls for its attribution to a specific author. Harvard helpfully provides the example that a student stating that Frank Boas held the first chair in anthropology in the United States would be a case of common knowledge (though neither my co-author nor I was aware of this fact) and thus – at least at Harvard - no citation would be necessary.

We lay particular emphasis on the perplexing divergence among institutions as to intentionality. The various institutions we studied consider the role that intentionality plays in potential plagiarism cases very differently, with some institutions not distinguishing intentional from unintentional plagiarism (e.g. USF) and others considering only intentional, knowable or careless acts of behavior as plagiarism violations (e.g. Texas A&M University). The approach that an institution takes with regard to intentionality is perhaps ethically the most important one, because it is indicative of the basis upon which the university makes its prohibition; plagiarism is either a serious moral failing (intention is important) or it is the violation of important professional rules (intention is not important). As Park (2004) has asked, “How important is intentionality, because theft is a conscious act whereas plagiarism can be accidental (reflecting, for example, a lack of understanding or appreciation of proper ways of citing sources)?” (291).

Our research did not permit us to discover historically how and why the institutions we studied arrived at the policies they did, especially with respect to intentionality. Unlike with Congressional records, university plagiarism policies do not come with a full history of public debate as to how plagiarism should be assessed. The intentionality requirement of plagiarism is an important consideration – whether or not one believes it is relevant - especially as many professional writers whose writings have been criticized for plagiarism have seemed generally to argue that the attributional irregularities in their work were *unintentional* (e.g., historian Stephen E. Ambrose or historian Doris Kearns Goodwin whose stories were covered in 2002 respectively by Kirkpatrick in *The New York Times* and by *Associated Press*).

National academic bodies, with memberships across the institutions we studied, have addressed the problem of plagiarism, albeit in very general terms. For example, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP 1990) defines it as “taking over the ideas, methods, or written words of another, without acknowledgment and with the intention that they be credited as the work of the deceiver” (175). Two linguistic presences are notable in their remarks: the suggestion of the importance of intentionality, and the fact that it makes a plagiarist a “deceiver.” However, the AAUP stops short of suggesting guidelines applicable for all US universities, even though in other areas of policy, they certainly *do* make suggestions that they believe should appertain to every US institution (e.g. tenure, academic freedom). Certainly, almost all of the research-intensive universities in our sample have adopted guidelines – some in great detail - *but none are in perfect agreement with those of any other institution on the particulars of plagiarism*. In the usually adversarial relationship that a judicial proceeding against a student creates, the particulars become particularly important.

This lack of clear demarcation among the concepts and definitions concerning academic misconduct in the policies we reviewed may contribute to students' confusion as to what constitutes plagiarism. In fact, the recent study by Gullifer and Tyson (2014, 1215) reported that "confusion seems to reside with being able to discern from a range of academic behaviours [plagiarism, cheating, and collusion in their study] as opposed to knowing what plagiarism is."

What might then overarching deliberative bodies do, given confusion and lack of uniformity in the definitions given for plagiarism? Davis, Drinan, and Gallant (2009), who do not believe in the effectiveness of stringent sanctioning, recommend a two-pronged approach to dealing with student cheating: "moral [read ethical] development, primarily of students and teachers, and the institutionalization of integrity in educational organizations" (133). More specifically, these scholars propose four components of moral development education: "moral sensitivity, moral judgment, moral motivations, and moral behavior" (135).

What is important to the discussion here, however, is the fact that two components of the proposed program speak directly to the importance of having in place "a clearly written and fair policy that delineates what the community considers ethical and unethical conduct" (135). This is addressed under the component of moral sensitivity, and is defined as "interpreting the situation as one involving moral questions or dilemmas" (Davis, Drinan and Gallant 2009, 135). Also needed is "a clear ethical code or academic integrity policy [that] can help students know what the institution considers the ideal choice" (136), including the penalty procedures and consequences (costs). The latter mention of the school policy appears under the component of moral judgment, which is explained as "Of all possible choices for action, determining the ideal course" (136).

Davis, Drinan, and Gallant (2009) recognize that having published policy statements and academic codes might be more effective with students “at earlier stages of moral development,” rather than with students at higher levels of moral development, who might respond best to “higher order principles like fairness and equity” (137). However, even with this latter group of students, the policy or academic integrity codes can be mentioned as reference material for discussion with instructors. This is how Davis, Drinan, and Gallant (2009) explain the use of policies as valuable reference material: “discuss with students the ethical code as the duties with which they have agreed to abide while being members of the community and that acting in line with the code protects the institution against corruption and a bad reputation” (137).

While Davis, Drinan, and Gallant (2009) acknowledge the role of teachers in implementing the moral development program and make recommendations as to what teachers can do (e.g., talk to students about academic integrity, make the policy, procedures and costs available and clear, or teach citation and referencing of works of others), the interventions they propose are largely on the institutional level. McCabe, Butterfield, and Treviño (2012), on the other hand, offer more faculty directed and driven problem solutions to the problem of academic misconduct, which they mince no words in describing as cheating.

For McCabe, Butterfield and Treviño (2012), much depends on the faculty’s collective willingness to confront plagiarism and other academic misconduct head on. By this they mean a reduction in informal resolutions, such as meeting with the offending student, reducing his or her grade and in general handling the matter quietly. They point out a number of problems with this solution, including the fact that the academy will thus continue to be unaware of the full scope of the problem, because when informally handled, plagiarism rests, like an iceberg, with much of its extent invisible to administrators and researchers. Instead, McCabe, Butterfield and Treviño

(2012) urge faculty to first exhaustively indicate their policies in syllabi, in class discussions and elsewhere so that their intentions are clear. Second, if a clear-cut example of plagiarism or other academic dishonesty rears its head, they advise that the faculty member immediately report it up the chain via whatever judicial mechanism exists at the university. They note, of course, that much depends on administrators backing up faculty in these efforts, and their own survey results indicate that faculty are often unwilling to do this, because they perceive that the administration will not support them against angry students and parents.

The misgivings of faculty may have a basis in fact. If Brown, Weible and Olmosk (2010) are right, and only 5% of business school deans believe that plagiarism is a significant problem, the support faculty require for the tenacious pursuit of plagiarism claims may be lacking in a discipline that several scholars have averred is rife with plagiarism. McCabe, et al. (2012) state that “Those familiar with our work know that one consistent theme has been the general finding that business students self-report more cheating than their peers in most other disciplines, at both the undergraduate and graduate level” (156).

As we have shown, schools vary considerably in whether intention should contribute to a finding of plagiarism. Of course, universities that choose to consider intentionality as relevant or irrelevant to a charge of plagiarism are free to do so, and an argument for the simplicity and clarity of either position can be marshalled. However, it is difficult to inculcate in students a supposedly universal ethical virtue if its nature is situational to a given university. Students regularly communicate with one another across what Friedman (2005) has referred to as an increasingly “flat” (5) world. They become aware of the facts on the ground at other institutions. It is altogether proper when academic bodies actively decide the whys and wherefores of plagiarism; however, it is our belief, following our discovery of the multiplicity of definitions

and examples that we have seen in a small sample of universities, that much, much more can be done to make plagiarism policies consistent, exhaustively described and informed by reasoning and the changing facts of how research is conducted today.

We therefore believe that American research universities have a unique opportunity to lead the way in this troubling area. If credible, broad-based academic bodies, such as the AAUP and AACU can begin the hard work of defining and exemplifying plagiarism in all of its manifestations, including disambiguating it from cheating, dealing with the thorny problems of intention, verbatim versus non-verbatim paraphrasing and the changing practices of research in the second decade of the 21st century, then tangible progress can be made to keep true cases of plagiarism rare.

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Table 1.108 Results for Basic = "RU/VH" Institutions by Carnegie Classification*

<u>Institution</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Control</u>
<u>Arizona State University</u>	Tempe, Arizona	Public
<u>Boston University</u>	Boston, Massachusetts	Private not-for-profit
<u>Brandeis University</u>	Waltham, Massachusetts	Private not-for-profit
<u>Brown University</u>	Providence, Rhode Island	Private not-for-profit
<u>California Institute of Technology</u>	Pasadena, California	Private not-for-profit
<u>Carnegie Mellon University</u>	Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania	Private not-for-profit
<u>Case Western Reserve University</u>	Cleveland, Ohio	Private not-for-profit
<u>Colorado State University</u>	Fort Collins, Colorado	Public
<u>Columbia University in the City of New York</u>	New York, New York	Private not-for-profit
<u>Cornell University</u>	Ithaca, New York	Private not-for-profit
<u>CUNY Graduate School and University Center</u>	New York, New York	Public
<u>Dartmouth College</u>	Hanover, New Hampshire	Private not-for-profit
<u>Duke University</u>	Durham, North Carolina	Private not-for-profit
<u>Emory University</u>	Atlanta, Georgia	Private not-for-profit
<u>Florida State University</u>	Tallahassee, Florida	Public
<u>George Washington University</u>	Washington, District of Columbia	Private not-for-profit
<u>Georgetown University</u>	Washington, District of Columbia	Private not-for-profit
<u>Georgia Institute of Technology- Main Campus</u>	Atlanta, Georgia	Public
<u>Georgia State University</u>	Atlanta, Georgia	Public
<u>Harvard University</u>	Cambridge, Massachusetts	Private not-for-profit
<u>Indiana University-Bloomington</u>	Bloomington, Indiana	Public
<u>Iowa State University</u>	Ames, Iowa	Public
<u>Johns Hopkins University</u>	Baltimore, Maryland	Private not-for-profit
<u>Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College</u>	Baton Rouge, Louisiana	Public
<u>Massachusetts Institute of Technology</u>	Cambridge, Massachusetts	Private not-for-profit
<u>Michigan State University</u>	East Lansing, Michigan	Public
<u>Mississippi State University</u>	Mississippi State, Mississippi	Public
<u>Montana State University</u>	Bozeman, Montana	Public
<u>New York University</u>	New York, New York	Private not-for-profit
<u>North Carolina State University</u>	Raleigh, North Carolina	Public

at Raleigh		
North Dakota State University-Main Campus	Fargo, North Dakota	Public
Northwestern University	Evanston, Illinois	Private not-for-profit
Ohio State University-Main Campus	Columbus, Ohio	Public
Oregon State University	Corvallis, Oregon	Public
Pennsylvania State University-Main Campus	University Park, Pennsylvania	Public
Princeton University	Princeton, New Jersey	Private not-for-profit
Purdue University-Main Campus	West Lafayette, Indiana	Public
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute	Troy, New York	Private not-for-profit
Rice University	Houston, Texas	Private not-for-profit
Rockefeller University	New York, New York	Private not-for-profit
Rutgers University-New Brunswick	New Brunswick, New Jersey	Public
Stanford University	Stanford, California	Private not-for-profit
Stony Brook University	Stony Brook, New York	Public
SUNY at Albany	Albany, New York	Public
Texas A & M University	College Station, Texas	Public
The University of Tennessee	Knoxville, Tennessee	Public
The University of Texas at Austin	Austin, Texas	Public
Tufts University	Medford, Massachusetts	Private not-for-profit
Tulane University of Louisiana	New Orleans, Louisiana	Private not-for-profit
University at Buffalo	Buffalo, New York	Public
Institution	Location	Control
University of Alabama at Birmingham	Birmingham, Alabama	Public
University of Alabama in Huntsville	Huntsville, Alabama	Public
University of Arizona	Tucson, Arizona	Public
University of Arkansas	Fayetteville, Arkansas	Public
University of California-Berkeley	Berkeley, California	Public
University of California-Davis	Davis, California	Public
University of California-Irvine	Irvine, California	Public
University of California-Los Angeles	Los Angeles, California	Public
University of California-Riverside	Riverside, California	Public

University of California-San Diego	La Jolla, California	Public
University of California-Santa Barbara	Santa Barbara, California	Public
University of California-Santa Cruz	Santa Cruz, California	Public
University of Central Florida	Orlando, Florida	Public
University of Chicago	Chicago, Illinois	Private not-for-profit
University of Cincinnati-Main Campus	Cincinnati, Ohio	Public
University of Colorado at Boulder	Boulder, Colorado	Public
University of Connecticut	Storrs, Connecticut	Public
University of Delaware	Newark, Delaware	Public
University of Florida	Gainesville, Florida	Public
University of Georgia	Athens, Georgia	Public
University of Hawaii at Manoa	Honolulu, Hawaii	Public
University of Houston	Houston, Texas	Public
University of Illinois at Chicago	Chicago, Illinois	Public
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	Champaign, Illinois	Public
University of Iowa	Iowa City, Iowa	Public
University of Kansas	Lawrence, Kansas	Public
University of Kentucky	Lexington, Kentucky	Public
University of Louisville	Louisville, Kentucky	Public
University of Maryland-College Park	College Park, Maryland	Public
University of Massachusetts Amherst	Amherst, Massachusetts	Public
University of Miami	Coral Gables, Florida	Private not-for-profit
University of Michigan-Ann Arbor	Ann Arbor, Michigan	Public
University of Minnesota-Twin Cities	Minneapolis, Minnesota	Public
University of Missouri-Columbia	Columbia, Missouri	Public
University of Nebraska-Lincoln	Lincoln, Nebraska	Public
University of New Mexico-Main Campus	Albuquerque, New Mexico	Public
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Chapel Hill, North Carolina	Public
University of Notre Dame	Notre Dame, Indiana	Private not-for-profit
University of Oklahoma	Norman, Oklahoma	Public

Norman Campus		
University of Oregon	Eugene, Oregon	Public
University of Pennsylvania	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	Private not-for-profit
University of Pittsburgh-Pittsburgh Campus	Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania	Public
University of Rochester	Rochester, New York	Private not-for-profit
University of South Carolina-Columbia	Columbia, South Carolina	Public
University of South Florida-Tampa	Tampa, Florida	Public
University of Southern California	Los Angeles, California	Private not-for-profit
University of Utah	Salt Lake City, Utah	Public
University of Virginia-Main Campus	Charlottesville, Virginia	Public
University of Washington-Seattle Campus	Seattle, Washington	Public
University of Wisconsin-Madison	Madison, Wisconsin	Public
Institution	Location	Control
Vanderbilt University	Nashville, Tennessee	Private not-for-profit
Virginia Commonwealth University	Richmond, Virginia	Public
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University	Blacksburg, Virginia	Public
Washington State University	Pullman, Washington	Public
Washington University in St Louis	Saint Louis, Missouri	Private not-for-profit
Wayne State University	Detroit, Michigan	Public
Yale University	New Haven, Connecticut	Private not-for-profit
Yeshiva University	New York, New York	Private not-for-profit

* Retrieved 11-13-2013 from

http://classifications.carnegiefoundation.org/lookup_listings/srp.php?clq={%22basic2005_ids%22%3A%2215%22}&limit=0,50

Table 2. "RU/VH" Carnegie classification sample and web-based university policy on plagiarism.

Institution	Location	Control	Institutional Policy on Plagiarism
California Institute of Technology (CALTECH) http://www.Caltech.edu/	Pasadena, CA	Private not-for-profit	Honor Code Handbook: http://www.deans.Caltech.edu/documents/24-hch2012.pdf
Cornell University http://www.cornell.edu/	Ithaca, NY	Private not-for-profit	Code of Academic Integrity: http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/AIC.html
Florida State University (FSU) http://www.fsu.edu/	Tallahassee, FL	Public	Academic Honor Policy (n.d.): http://academichonor.fsu.edu/policy/policy.html
Harvard University http://www.harvard.edu/	Cambridge, MA	Private not-for-profit	Harvard Plagiarism Policy: http://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k70847&pageid=icb.page355322
Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) http://web.mit.edu/	Cambridge, MA	Private not-for-profit	Academic Misconduct and Dishonesty Policy: http://web.mit.edu/policies/10/10.2.html
North Carolina State University at Raleigh (NCSU) http://www.ncsu.edu/	Raleigh, NC	Public	Code of Student Conduct (7.4 Plagiarism): http://policies.ncsu.edu/policy/pol-11-35-01
Pennsylvania State University-Main Campus (Penn State) http://www.psu.edu/	University Park, Pennsylvania, PA	Public	Penn State Plagiarism Policies: http://tlt.psu.edu/plagiarism/links/penn-state-policies/ ;
Texas A&M University	College Station, TX	Public	Honor System Rules (20.1.2.3.5 Plagiarism): http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu/RulesAndProcedures/HonorSystemRules.aspx#defini

(Texas Aggie) http://www.tamu.edu/			<u>tions</u>
University at Buffalo (UB) http://www.buffalo.edu/	Buffalo, NY	Public	Academic Integrity Policies: http://undergrad-catalog.buffalo.edu/policies/course/integrity.shtml
University of California-Berkeley (UC Berkeley) http://berkeley.edu/index.html	Berkeley, CA	Public	Code of Conduct (2012): http://sa.berkeley.edu/code-of-conduct
University of California-San Diego (UCSD) http://www.ucsd.edu/	La Jolla, CA	Public	Policy on Integrity of Scholarship: http://senate.ucsd.edu/manual/Appendices/Appendix2.pdf
University of Cincinnati (UC) http://www.uc.edu/	Cincinnati, OH	Public	Student Code of Conduct: http://www.uc.edu/conduct/Code_of_Conduct.html
University of Georgia (UGA) http://uga.edu/	Athens, GA	Public	Academic Honesty Policy: https://ovpi.uga.edu/sites/default/files/uga-academic-honesty-policy-may-07.pdf
University of Iowa (UI) http://www.uiowa.edu/	Iowa City, Iowa, IA	Public	Code of Student Life: http://dos.uiowa.edu/policy-list/archives/2012-2013-policies-regulations-affecting-students-archived/student-responsibilities-2/code-of-student-life-2012-2013-academic-year-2/
University of Massachusetts Amherst (UMass/Amherst) http://www.umass.edu/	Amherst, MA	Public	Academic Honesty Policy: http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/
University of	Lincoln,	Public	Student Code of Conduct: http://stuafs.unl.edu/ja/code/three.shtml

Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) http://www.unl.edu/	Nebraska, NE		
University of Oregon (UO) http://uoregon.edu/	Eugene, Oregon, OR	Public	Academic Misconduct Policy: http://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/AcademicMisconduct/tabid/248/Default.aspx
University of South Florida-Tampa (USF) http://www.usf.edu/	Tampa, FL	Public	Academic Integrity of Students Regulation: http://generalcounsel.usf.edu/regulations/pdfs/regulation-usf3.027.pdf
University of Wisconsin-Madison (UWM) http://www.wisc.edu/	Madison, Wisconsin, WI	Public	Academic Integrity Statement (UWM Chapter 14): http://students.wisc.edu/doso/acadintegrity.html#bpo
Washington University in St Louis (WUSTL) http://www.wustl.edu/	Saint Louis, Missouri, MO	Private not- for-profit	Undergraduate Student Academic Integrity Policy http://studentconduct.wustl.edu/academic-integrity/policies-and-procedures/

Table 3. Elements of plagiarism as described by the research institutions.

Plagiarism Element	Description
Definition	Where plagiarism and acts of plagiarism are defined by the institution
Examples	Where the institution provides illustrations, examples, or counterexamples of plagiaristic acts in its definition or examples of plagiarism
Value Judgment	Where or whether the institution uses language that implies a normative judgment, e.g. calling an act “detrimental,” “unfair,” or states that the proscribed conduct “takes advantage” of others. Such language is indicative of policies possessing an ethical or moral dimension regarding an act of plagiarism in its definition or examples of plagiarism
Intentionality	Where or whether the institution considers the intent and/or intentions of the committer of plagiarism as an enhancing factor for the act of plagiarism in its definition or examples of plagiarism
Verbatim Plagiarism	Where or whether the institution considers word for word copying in its definition or examples of plagiarism
Non-Verbatim Plagiarism	Where or whether the institution considers material that is taken from another but altered or paraphrased, e.g. basic ideas, themes, thoughts, theories, formulae, opinion, metaphor, etc. in its definition or examples of plagiarism
Source (Print)	Where or whether the institution considers non-digital textual communication, such as printed books, newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, brochures, flyers, printed monographs, printed term and research papers, etc. in its definition or examples of plagiarism
Source (Oral)	Where the institution considers spoken language or words from a live person or from a spoken word recording in its definition or examples of plagiarism
Source (Audiovisual)	Where the institution considers non-textual material, such as photographs, graphics, moving images, recorded audio, recorded video, film, drawings, maps and other artistic renderings in its definition or examples of plagiarism
Source (Internet)	Where or whether the institution considers material available on the World Wide Web or otherwise accessible on the Internet in its definition or examples of plagiarism. This includes both audiovisual and textual material
Multiple Submission	Where or whether the institution deals with the situation in which two or more substantially similar works are submitted by the same student author to fulfill the requirements for two or more different classes, or instructors whether simultaneously or not (so-called self-plagiarism) in its definition or examples

	of plagiarism
Unauthorized Collaboration	Where or whether the institution deals with a paper or other intellectual property completed with the assistance of a peer or group of peers without instructor permission, knowledge or specific instructions to do so in its definition or examples of plagiarism

Table 4. Plagiarism definitional/descriptive elements matrix.

Institution	Definition	Example	Value Judgment	Intent	Verbatim Plagiarism	Non-Verbatim Plagiarism	Print Source	Oral Source	Media Source	Internet Source	Multiple Submission	Unauthorized collaboration
California Institute of Technology (CALTECH)	x	x	x	x	x	x						x*
Cornell University	x	x	v	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x
Florida State University (FSU)	x	x			x	x	x		x	x	x*	x*
Harvard University	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x
Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)		x*		x*								x*
North Carolina State University at Raleigh (NCSU)	x	x	x		x	x	x	x			x/ x*	x/ x*
Pennsylvania State University-Main Campus	x/x*	x	x*	x	v	v					x*	x*
Texas A & M University	x	x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x*	x*
University at Buffalo (UB)	x	x			x	x					x*	
University of California-Berkeley-UC Berkeley)	x/v											
University of California-San Diego (UCSD)	x/v	x/v										
University of Cincinnati (UC)	x	x			x	x	x	x		x	x	x
University of Georgia (UGA)	x	x		x	x	x	x	x				
University of Iowa (UI)	x*/v	x*/v										
University of Massachusetts Amherst (UMass/Amherst)	x	x		x	x	x			x	x	x	
University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL)	x	x						x	x			
University of Oregon (UO)	x	x			x	x						
University of South Florida-Tampa (USF)	x	x		x	x	x					x*	
University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW)	x*	x*		x*	x*	x*					x*	x*
Washington University in St Louis(WUSTL)	x	x/ x*			x	x		x		x		x*

Legend: X- present in plagiarism definition, examples, or both; X*-discussed under a different rubric such as academic misconduct, dishonesty, cheating, academic integrity etc; V- element is vaguely stated or ambiguous.