

Editorial: Academic integrity gaining increased attention in Canada

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Abstract

We introduce the second issue of our first volume, highlighting the lead article from Amanda McKenzie and offering commentary on how academic integrity issues have gained attention in the national media this year.

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In issue we lead with an article from Amanda McKenzie, who offers her perspective on “Academic integrity across the Canadian landscape”. McKenzie’s insights are informed by her deep professional experience as the Director, Quality Assurance (Academic Programs) at the University of Waterloo and also from her leadership service with the International Center for Academic Integrity, where she has been instrumental in facilitating the development of the Canadian Consortium over the past several years.

This is a pivotal time to be engaged in academic integrity work in Canada, as we draw more awareness to integrity on a national level. Not only are more institutions pledging their commitment to take part in the International Day of Action Against Contract Cheating (ICAI, 2018), but stories about plagiarism, cheating and other violations of academic integrity have gained prominence in Canadian News this year.

The University of Regina found itself in the news this year a number of times with regards to violations of integrity in its faculty of Arts (Leo, 2018a) and Engineering (Leo, 2018b). This resulted in a public statement by the university’s president (Latimer, 2018) and institutional changes to how exams are invigilated (Leo, 2018c). A further repercussion of these incidents and media attention was evident at the K-12 level when some of Saskatchewan’s in Regina and Saskatoon outlined their academic integrity policies for CBC news (CBC, 2018a).

The new academic year started with a news story about a judge upholding the University of Calgary’s right to rescind a (now former) student’s master’s degree due to plagiarism (CBC, 2018b). Another story from Alberta about the same time, came from a small local media outlet in Edmonton, describing MacEwan University’s move towards using restorative justice approaches to tackle plagiarism (Johnson, 2018).

Individually these news stories may not seem to be terribly important, but viewed together, it points towards a growing interest about academic integrity across provinces at various levels of education. Canada has remained largely inconspicuous in terms of media attention relating to academic integrity, but the number news stories in 2018 relating to cheating, plagiarism and other issues related to integrity seem to suggest that may be changing.

As we reflect on this year and look towards 2019, we note that it is an exciting time to be working in the field of academic integrity as a practitioner, professional, student or scholar. Our field is gaining momentum and in doing so, we are building more awareness, shared resources and perhaps most importantly, we are connecting and collaborating on more levels and in more ways than ever before.

We conclude our editorial by thanking all those who have contributed to our two issues in our first year. We have learned from your contributions and we are proud to have you as contributors.

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