

My Work in Academic Integrity 2020: Not All I Hoped it Would Be

Tod Denham, Thompson Rivers University Open Learning Division & BC Academic Integrity Network Coordinator

Keywords: academic integrity, academic integrity network, Canada, reflection, COVID-19

As I began to think about my work in Academic Integrity for 2020, I realized the year started out with so much promise, but in the end didn't turn out to be all I hoped it would be.

Reflecting on 2020, I quickly found myself being drawn back to 2019, which helped me put some perspective on 2020. 2019 was the year I was baptized, so to speak, into the world of academic integrity. It began in March of 2019 when I was given the opportunity to fill in for a colleague at the International Technology, Education and Development (INTED) Conference in Valencia, Spain. I presented her research on *Engagement of Online Faculty in the Academic Integrity Process*, and my journey into the world of academic integrity began. I returned from Spain with a new passion for academic integrity and was looking for opportunities everywhere to promote it.

In April of 2019, I attended the first ever Canadian Symposium on Academic Integrity at the University of Calgary. It was here where the flame that had been ignited in Spain was fanned into a full-on fire for academic integrity. I was inspired by so many colleagues at the Symposium, that without even having approval, I tentatively volunteered Thompson Rivers University as the host for the next Canadian Symposium on Academic Integrity in 2021. Approval was granted shortly after arriving home and so my immersion in the world of academic integrity continued. In May 2019, I was honoured to attend the Academic Integrity Inter-Institutional Meeting (AIIM) in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and it was here where I witnessed the creation of the Manitoba Academic Integrity Network (MAIN) and was allowed to be an honorary out-of-province liaison. I returned home from Manitoba determined to get something similar happening in BC.

In June of 2019, I was back in Europe, in Vilnius, Lithuania, this time at the European Network for Academic Integrity (ENAI) Annual Conference. I co-presented with my colleague who had done the research on *Engagement of Online Faculty in the Academic Integrity Process*. We had been invited to do so because someone from ENAI had attended my presentation in Spain. I returned home from this conference with an even greater passion for academic integrity. In October 2019, I helped TRU host the first ever BC Academic Integrity Day (BCAID) and it was at this day that the BC Academic Integrity Network (BCAIN) was born and I volunteered to be the coordinator. October 2019 also saw TRU participating for the first time in the International Day Against Contract Cheating, which turned out to be a very exciting and inspirational day. 2019 as a whole

was an amazing personal journey for me into the world of academic integrity, and the year ended with such high hopes for 2020.

My work in academic integrity started slowly in 2020, but I was extremely excited about all I was hoping to accomplish this year. I had big intentions for moving things forward with the BC Academic Integrity Network and of course intended to use the year to really promote and plan the Canadian Symposium for Academic Integrity that TRU would be hosting in June 2021. In February 2020, I ended up doing an impromptu webinar on *Academic Integrity in Online Exams*. It had started out with the intention of being a small online conversation that was to take place between myself and colleagues at the University of Calgary, but quickly morphed into a full-on webinar. The excitement from this was a good sign, or so I thought, for 2020 and my work in academic integrity. 2020 continued with me attending the International Center for Academic Integrity (ICAI) annual conference in Portland in early March, and it was there that I was again inspired by many colleagues, and I left the conference so encouraged - but that was all about to change.

The onset of the first wave of the COVID-19 worldwide pandemic hit with a vengeance shortly after I arrived home, and all of a sudden, my work in academic integrity took a back seat. I found myself overwhelmed with my job and in being honest with myself, I now realize that COVID-19 had dampened the academic integrity fire that once burned so bright. I continued and continue to play an active role in the Canadian academic integrity community and I do still have a passion for it, but when reflecting back over 2020, it simply did not turn out to be the year I had hoped for as far as my work in academic integrity is concerned.

2020 still had some highlights in academic integrity for me, such as the webinar in February and the conference in March that I mentioned above. The weekly online coast-to-coast *Integrity Hour* that I attend without fail is certainly a highlight for me. I was also privileged to be a panelist in Canada's contribution to the Twenty in 20 live event that took place as part of the ICAI International Day Against Contract Cheating.

These highlights of 2020 have helped me realize that my desire to be a positive force for academic integrity is still alive and well, and as 2020 approaches its end, I am filled with hope that 2021 will be a much better year for my work in academic integrity.