

11 MOST EGREGIOUS EXAMPLES OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

BY **STAFF WRITERS** ([HTTP://WWW.ONLINECOLLEGES.NET/AUTHOR/ADMIN/](http://www.onlinecolleges.net/author/admin/))

Academic dishonesty is a serious concern on [college campuses](http://www.onlinecolleges.net/blog) (<http://www.onlinecolleges.net/blog>) and secondary schools around the U.S., as it seriously undermines the entire purpose of education. Not only does it reflect poorly on students, but the institutions to which they are enrolled as well. While cheating and lying in the classroom is nothing new, in recent years the lengths to which many college kids (and their teachers) are willing to go has shocked and surprised many. This often leads to a call for stricter penalties levied on those violating academic honor codes.

No matter where you stand on cheating or how you feel it should be combated in a school setting, there is no doubt that these cases we've collected here are some of the most outrageous examples in recent history. We'd like to hope these eventually mark a turning point in student behavior, but as education becomes even more competitive and expensive, cheating isn't likely to stop anytime soon.

1 [Southern University Grade Changing](http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=1809418) (<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=1809418>)



This Baton Rouge college was rocked by a huge academic dishonesty scandal in 2003, when it was revealed that 541 grades had been purposefully changed. Students, both former and current, had been paying a registrar's office worker for the past eight years to surreptitiously alter their transcripts. Estimates posit over 2,500 individual scores ended up affected. After the revelations, [10 guilty parties](http://bbs.clutchfans.net/archive/index.php/t-107493.html) (<http://bbs.clutchfans.net/archive/index.php/t-107493.html>) had their degrees from the school revoked, 27 more lost credits and the worker who helped them change their grades could be facing up

to 10 years in jail. What tipped school officials off? One of the cheating students tried applying to a graduate program there with credentials stating she had previously attended as an undergrad— a degree for which there were no records.

2 [United States Naval Academy Exam Copying](http://tech.mit.edu/V114/N24/cheating_24w.html) (http://tech.mit.edu/V114/N24/cheating_24w.html)



While you'd think all that structure and discipline would deter students from cheating, even military academies aren't immune from such scandals. In spring of 1994, it was discovered that 134 USNA seniors were involved in a cheating ring. A student obtained a copy of an electrical engineering exam and distributed it to his classmates — for a cost, of course. Others were caught bringing formulas and other information into the exam room. After a two-year investigation, 26 students were expelled and 62 more were found guilty of honor violations and given other, lesser punishments. The matter is still under

dispute, however, as many feel the school played favorites and unfairly punished those who came clean, while letting students who lied about their involvement off.

3 [University of Virginia Physics Cheating](http://www.csie.ntu.edu.tw/%7Elyuu/virginia.html) (<http://www.csie.ntu.edu.tw/%7Elyuu/virginia.html>)



Thomas Jefferson would be ashamed to have these students attending the school he founded, especially since the enrolled are bound to a strict honor code barring cheating, stealing and lying. Unfortunately, over 122 students couldn't stick to it, and in 2001 were discovered cheating on an introductory physics class' term papers. A student in the course alerted the professor to the issue (though only because he was bitter about his grade being lower) and subsequent investigation of the past few years' papers revealed 60 as exact duplicates. Unfortunately, this isn't the only [cheating scandal](#)

(<http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2005/06/30/uva>) to affect the school, as it was also discovered that over 30 economic graduate students had shared an answer key for a summer course.

4 [Indiana University Dental School Cheating](http://www.theindychannel.com/education/13275045/detail.html)
(<http://www.theindychannel.com/education/13275045/detail.html>)



Nearly half the second-years at IU School of Dentistry, a whopping 46, were involved in a cheating scandal in 2007. Either a student or a group of students gained access to protected files via a university computer and got a sneak peak at the exam, which was then shared with others in the class. Another enrollee, presumably appalled by the cheating, tipped off the professor. As punishment for cheating, several were expelled, others were suspended and the rest received letters of reprimand. Nearly all students were reinstated to the school or received lesser punishments after

appealing their case.

5 [Los Angeles Charter Schools Cheating Scandal](http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-0622-lausd-charter-20110622,0,4117222.story)
(<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-0622-lausd-charter-20110622,0,4117222.story>)



Six Los Angeles area charter schools were almost shut down for their involvement in a 2010 cheating scandal. The founder, John Allen, has been accused of ordering principals to break the seal on state standardized tests so that students could be quizzed on actual test questions before the formal examinations — ostensibly raising their scores considerably. The governing board of the charter schools suspended Allen and the principals who participated, but declined to fire any of them until an [L.A. Times](#)

(<http://articles.latimes.com/2011/feb/28/local/la-me-crescendo-20110228>) article publicly exposed the scandal. It was this decision that prompted the board to allow the schools to stay open, much to the relief of many LA parents and students.

6 [Atlanta Teachers Change Test Answers](http://news.yahoo.com/americas-biggest-teacher-principal-cheating-scandal-unfolds-atlanta-213734183.html) (<http://news.yahoo.com/americas-biggest-teacher-principal-cheating-scandal-unfolds-atlanta-213734183.html>)



This cheating scandal shocked the education community, as it is the largest one involving American teachers and principals to date. Over 178 education professionals in the Atlanta Public School district are accused of changing student answers on standardized tests to help raise their scores. Additionally, it is alleged that the schools punished whistle-blowers and worked to hide any wrongdoing over the past few years. The scandal has tarnished the reputation of Superintendent Beverly Hall, who was named Superintendent of the Year in 2009 largely because of the improved testing scores now

believed invalid. Sadly, the school is part of a growing trend, as teachers and administrators struggle to raise test scores and get additional school funding and support. Programs relying too heavily on test scores as an indicator of success frequently leave them feeling as if they have little choice.

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- 7 [Duke School of Business Students Lack Ethics](http://www.businessweek.com/bschools/content/apr2007/bs20070430_110466.htm)
(http://www.businessweek.com/bschools/content/apr2007/bs20070430_110466.htm)



Apparently shady business dealings don't just happen in back alleys and board rooms, but classrooms as well. In 2007, Duke discovered that 34 first-year MBA students were cheating on an open-book, take-home exam (the students decided to work on it collectively rather than individually, as was required by the course). The professor noted the similarities in test answers and similar inconsistencies earlier in the year, eventually uncovering the cheating. Nine students were expelled, another 15 were suspended and nine others failed the course. These students aren't

alone, however, as 56% of business school enrollees admitted to cheating one or more times in the past academic year — a troubling stat for any MBA program out there.

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- 8 [Revere High School Honors Cheating](http://www.cheatingculture.com/academic-dishonesty/tag/student-cheating?currentPage=3)
(<http://www.cheatingculture.com/academic-dishonesty/tag/student-cheating?currentPage=3>)



Think the smartest kids in school don't cheat? Think again. Those highly competitive students often feel even more driven to dishonesty, and that's just what happened in a Massachusetts high school physics class. Students took pictures of the exam with a cell phone prior to the scheduled date, which were then forwarded to others in the class along with an answer key. About the only thing it helped was creating a disproportionate amount of good grades and assurance that the cheaters all made similar errors. The issue was discovered by an online grading system, and it was later revealed that the

majority of the guilty were in the top 10% of their class. Of the 320 students who took the exam, 60 were found to have cheated. The guilty got a zero on the exam and will be barred from participating in any academic honors events during their senior year.

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- 9 [West Virginia University Fake Degree Scandal](http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2008/04/28/wvu)
(<http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2008/04/28/wvu>)



Sometimes cheating goes beyond copying test answers and changing grades. That was the case with this 2008 scandal at WVU. The school's dean and provost awarded a degree to the West Virginia governor's daughter — apparently without checking (or caring) to see if she actually earned the requisite credits. Heather Bresch, then the COO of Mylan, Inc., was 22 credits shy of the required course hours for the MBA (<http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/08125/879034-298.stm>) she was awarded. When a local paper called to verify the degree with the school and were told she never

graduated, a massive cover-up ensued, with falsification of records and misleading public statements regarding her qualifications. The provost resigned due to his role in the scandal, and has since apologized for putting WVU in a negative light.

10 [University of Minnesota Paper Writing for Athletes](http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/basketball/college/news/1999/03/23/gopher_scandal/)
(http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/basketball/college/news/1999/03/23/gopher_scandal/)



This scandal wasn't the first time student athletes and athletic departments have been accused of cheating, and it more than likely won't be the last. The 1999 University of Minnesota basketball season was brought to a halt by the revelation that an academic counseling office manager wrote over 400 papers for 20 different students during the past six years. The incident grew even worse when three other tutors also revealed they had been coerced or pressured into writing papers for basketball players as well. Coach Clem Haskins originally denied the claims, stating he has no knowledge or involvement,

but it was later discovered that he paid over \$3,000 for the paper writing services. He resigned in the wake of the scandal (and additional revelations that he had committed mail fraud, covered up sexual harassment and put pressure on professors to inflate grades), and the players accused of using paper-writing services were suspended.

11 [University of Central Florida Exam Cheating](http://abcnews.go.com/Business/widespread-cheating-scandal-prompts-florida-professor-issues-ultimatum/story?id=11737137)
(<http://abcnews.go.com/Business/widespread-cheating-scandal-prompts-florida-professor-issues-ultimatum/story?id=11737137>)



Professor Richard Quinn knew something wasn't right in his strategic management course after students' test scores were a grade and a half higher than they had ever been before. His suspicions were confirmed when a student anonymously tipped him off. The cheating came as a surprise to many in the class as well as the professor, as the exam room was equipped with anti-cheating cameras — the type found in casinos, even — to help stop just this kind of thing. Apparently, students had gotten a hold of an answer key and circulated it quite widely before the exam. Professor Quinn was furious with

students and told them via a videotaped lecture that the guilty could complete the course only if they confessed and took an ethics course. All others would face the consequences from the university, possibly including expulsion. Even worse for the honest members of the class, all were required to retake the midterm exam — even if no evidence against them had been found — as incentive for the cheaters to come forward. All in all, nearly 200 students — a full one third, in fact — were found to have cheated. Many claim they weren't being dishonest at all and merely thought they were using legitimate study materials to prepare. You can see their defense [here](http://www.urlesque.com/2010/11/22/cheating-university-of-florida-students-defend-themselves-and) (<http://www.urlesque.com/2010/11/22/cheating-university-of-florida-students-defend-themselves-and>).

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