

Editorial

Contract Cheating in Canada

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Abstract

We present the second issue of the fourth volume of the Canadian Perspectives on Academic Integrity (CPAI). This issue consists of an invited historical article about contract cheating and the proceedings from the second Canadian Symposium on Academic Integrity (CSAI) 2021 hosted virtually by Thompson Rivers University, Kamloops, British Columbia, Canada.

Keywords: Canada, contract cheating, history

Contract Cheating in Canada

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to thwart Canadian post-secondary institutions plans for in-person courses, 2022 promises more of the same challenges to the promotion of academic integrity and prevention of academic misconduct experienced in 2021. Contract cheating is a particular concern for educators, the prevalence of which has been exacerbated by remote learning and assessments. In her 2021 Canadian Society for the Study of Higher Education (CSSHE) conference keynote, Dr. Sarah E. Eaton rung the alarm bell on contract cheating on Canadian campuses. Using Australian prevalence estimates (Curtis & Clare, 2017), Eaton calculated that 75,000 postsecondary students in Canada have engaged in contract cheating.

To help fight cynicism with action, Eaton (2021) identified several steps that educators, researchers, and practitioners within the Canadian academic integrity community can pursue to help combat contract cheating. We share two of these strategies. First, regional organizations (AICO, n.d.; ACAI, n.d.) are pushing for legislation against contract cheating in Canada, which has been motivated by the passing of such legislation in Australia and most recently in the UK (Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Amendment (Prohibiting Academic Cheating Services) Bill 2019, 2020; Higher Education Cheating Services Prohibition Bill, 2021). Second are the activities occurring locally, regionally, and internationally. In October 2021, many of Canada's postsecondary institutions in Alberta, British Columbia, and Manitoba adopted a common Academic Integrity Week to promote learning with integrity and bring awareness to issues that threaten the value of degrees. The International Center for Academic Integrity's International Day of Action (IDoA) against Contract Cheating continues to bolster individual efforts and connect academic integrity champions from around the world. An important aspect of IDoA and

Academic Integrity Week is the involvement of students as key ambassadors of learning with integrity.

Contract cheating is a key theme in Volume 4, Issue 2. We are excited to feature the first of three articles by invited contributor, Dr. Geoff E. Buerger (2002) who documented early activities of the essay mill industry including activities occurring in Canada. These articles can serve as a resource to help encourage discussions about contract cheating with students and faculty. We are also pleased to share the proceedings of the second Canadian Symposium of Academic Integrity (CSAI) 2021. This bi-annual event was hosted virtually by Thompson Rivers University, Kamloops, British Columbia, Canada. CSAI consisted of 49 presentations from practitioners and researchers from Canada and around the world. Contract cheating, remote teaching, learning, and assessments, and policy reviews are just some of the fascinating topics featured at the event.

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