Academic Integrity Policy and Support Provisions: Are Ontario Colleges Setting International Students up for Success?

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Abstract

International students are critical to the academic, social and economic vitality of post-secondary institutions in Canada, yet their retention can be challenging. One challenge is international students' non-compliance with academic integrity policy, which can result in penalties leading to dropouts and expulsion. Unlike other external challenges, ensuring compliance with academic integrity policy is entirely within institutional jurisdiction, yet Canadian colleges and universities assume varying degrees of responsibility in this regard. Using colleges in Ontario, Canada as a case study, this paper explores the extent to which each of Ontario's 22 English-medium colleges provides its international students with easy access to intelligible academic integrity policy and pro-active training therewith. Using a mixed-methods approach, this research consists of content and document analysis, as well as descriptive statistics, to examine each college's academic integrity policy and support provisions (accessed online through Google searches). Colleges were ranked as exemplary, adequate, or in need of improvement along multiple dimensions, including acknowledging different cultural understandings and availability of translated material. Findings demonstrated that colleges could do much more to support international students (upon whose tuition fees they are so dependent) in the area of understanding academic integrity compliance.

Keywords

academic integrity, Canada, colleges, international students, Ontario. policy review

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Introduction

Before the Government of Canada announced a new cap on international students in January 2024 (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2024), international students were flocking to Ontario college campuses at ever-increasing rates. Between 2012 and 2021, international students' enrolment in Ontario colleges grew by a staggering 342%, while domestic enrolment decreased by 15% (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario [OAG], 2021). In the 2022-21 academic year, the tuition from international students totalled $1.7 billion, surpassing the $1.6 billion in government funding the Ministry of Colleges and Universities provided (OAG, 2021).

While growth is good for business, our institutions are seemingly underprepared to provide for the diverse needs of the international student population and to set them up for success (Back et al., 2020; Bista, 2019; Eaton & Burns, 2018; Mitchell, 2012; Sharma, 2018; Vickers, 2020; Wiederkehr et al., 2015). This is true across a variety of domains, including academic integrity. Canadian post-secondary institutions have, to varying degrees, failed to recognize the importance of pre-emptive, ongoing discourse regarding the multiple educational and cultural perspectives on the meaning of academic

integrity (Gibson, 2021a). From a Western perspective, academic integrity requires students to consider the fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage throughout their academic endeavours (International Center for Academic Integrity, 2021). Although these values are considered universal, there is sometimes a disconnect between Western approaches and cultural perceptions worldwide. These differing perspectives may play a role in a student's understanding of what constitutes dishonest academic activity (Akbar & Picard, 2020; Aljurf et al., 2020; Cutri et al., 2021; Eaton, 2022; McGregor et al., 2022; Sanni-Anibire et al., 2021; Shafaei et al., 2016).

International students have the unique challenge of navigating a new educational, linguistic, and cultural landscape, which can be overwhelming and confusing. Locating (and understanding) academic integrity policy and available academic supports at their chosen institution is likely a low priority given the heavy cognitive load they bear upon arrival. This is especially true if academic integrity matters were not featured prominently in their previous studies. In the absence of a concerted effort to make this information central to their academic orientation programs, post-secondary institutions

do a disservice to their international students. Hence, this study attempts to determine the extent to which such policies and supports are accessible (i.e., easily accessed) for those students who do search for them on institutional websites.

Present Research Focus

Following a mixed-methods approach, this research consists of a multiple-case study using content and document analysis, as well as descriptive statistics, to examine the academic integrity policy and support provisions at Ontario colleges. The province has 24 publicly funded colleges, 22 of which use English as the language of instruction, with the remaining 2 using French. For this study, we have chosen to gather data from the 22 English-medium colleges since research shows that the most significant proportion of international students wishing to study in French seek placement in Quebec post-secondary institutions (Mestres, 2022). We explore what provisions exist to support international learners in understanding academic integrity and whether differing cultural perspectives have been considered in the development of these supports. Additionally, we review the steps colleges in Ontario have taken to support this student population further based on regional enrolment. In short, we attempt to answer the following questions:

1. How accessible is the academic integrity policy for international students studying in Ontario colleges?

2. How do Ontario colleges support international students in understanding academic integrity?

3. How does the number of international students enrolled in colleges within specific regions influence those colleges' approach to academic integrity policy?

The Ontario College Landscape

Ontario is Canada's second-largest province, spanning over 1 million square kilometres (Government of Ontario, 2021). Colleges in Ontario cross an east-west distance of approximately 1,450 kilometres from Algonquin College in Ottawa to Confederation College in Thunder Bay (Google, n.d.-a) and a north-south distance of over 1,270 kilometres from Confederation College in Thunder Bay to St. Clair College in Windsor (Google, n.d.-b). Ontario colleges are divided into five distinct regions: Central East (Greater Toronto Area [GTA]), Central West (non-GTA), North, East, and Southwest (OAG, 2021). The current study will evaluate each region by considering their enrolment and proximity to large urban centres. Figure 1 illustrates the overall layout of colleges in Ontario.

Publicly funded colleges in Ontario comprise over 5,000 program options that fall into six fields of study (OAG, 2021; OCAS, 2022a): applied arts, technology, business, health sciences, human services, and hospitality and tourism. Ontario colleges also provide several pathways to education, including 1-year certificates, 1 to 2-year diploma programs, graduate certificates, and degree programs (OCAS, 2022b).

International Education in Ontario

Between 2000 and 2012, approximately 252,000 students arrived in Ontario to study, making it the primary destination in Canada for international students (Williams et al., 2015). Juxtaposed with more current numbers—104,937 international students for the 2020-2021 academic year alone (OAG, 2021)—it becomes evident that international recruitment is a clear objective for the college sector in Ontario.

Institutions' Motivation to Recruit International Students

While institutions undoubtedly aim to diversify their student population and introduce a global perspective into their classrooms (Jafar & Legusov, 2020; El Masri & Khan, 2022), a significant motivating factor is a positive impact on the college's bottom line—their overall financial health. Cudmore (2005) noted the importance of this years ago, stating, "There can be no doubt that the internationalization of the CAATs [Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology], as largely manifested in the growth in international student enrolments, will continue to be of great importance to the institutions involved" (p. 55). To put the numbers in context, when Cudmore wrote this article, 5,856 international students were enrolled in Ontario colleges (OCAS, 2003, as cited in Cudmore, 2005). In 2021, that number was almost 105,000 students (despite a global pandemic), equating to an increase of over 1600% (OAG, 2021). The average tuition for international students is just over $14,300 per year, a stark contrast to domestic tuition, which averages approximately $3,200 per year (OAG, 2021). Interestingly, the Ministry of Colleges and Universities sets the tuition fees for domestic students, while the College Board of Governors has complete discretion over international student fees (OAG, 2021). In 2017-2018, international tuition revenue surpassed domestic tuition for the first time (OAG, 2021) and appears to have maintained that trajectory since.
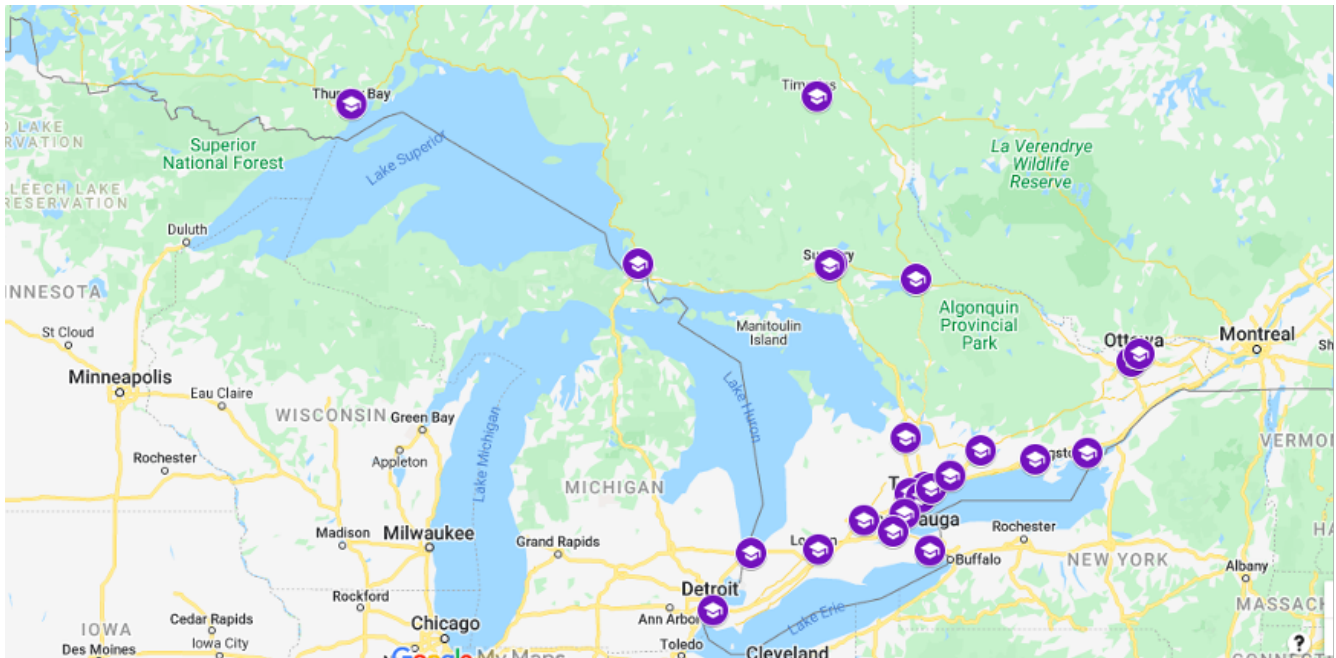
International Students in Ontario

In 2019, the Government of Canada outlined their five-year strategy for international education. One of their top priorities was to attract students from a broader range of countries as the vast majority until that time were from India and China (Government of Canada, 2019). As outlined in Figure 2, the breakdown of international students shows India and China in the lead, with India outweighing all other countries combined (apart from China). The dispersion of international students is similar in Ontario, with students from India comprising 62% of the province's international enrolment in 2021 (OAG, 2021).

Academic Integrity
Definitions

In its simplest form, *academic integrity* is "a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to six fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage" (International Center for Academic Integrity, 2021). In actuality, defining academic integrity requires input from multiple stakeholders around the globe and across a variety of disciplines, as

Figure 1. Map of Ontario with College Locations

Note: This map outlines locations for the 24 publicly funded colleges in Ontario (including the two French-language colleges). Map created with Google (n.d.-c).

Figure 2. International Students in Canada by Country of Origin (2021)
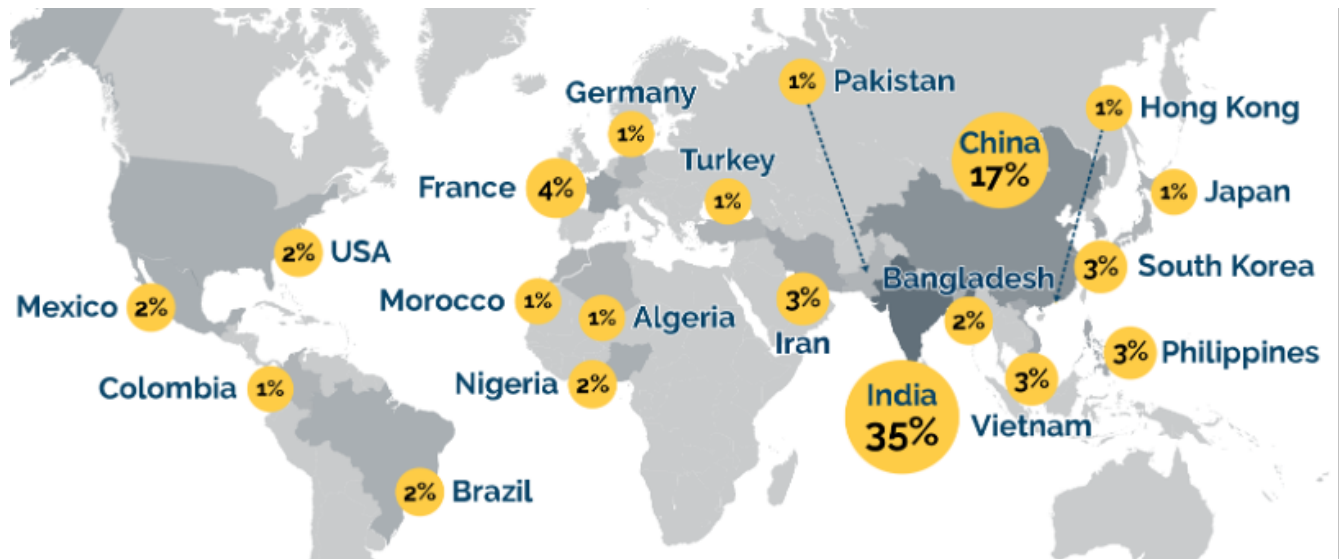
Note: This map demonstrates the number of international students studying in Canada in 2021 by their home country (Canadian Bureau for International Education, 2021, para. 2).

definitions and perceptions can change based on educational and cultural factors (Bretag, 2016). The literature describes breaching academic integrity as 'academic dishonesty' or 'academic misconduct.' Within these overarching terms are a variety of breaches that can take several forms but ultimately involve anything that provides a student an unfair academic advantage. See Table 1 for the types of academic misconduct found throughout the academic integrity policies of Ontario colleges.

Faculty-Student Perceptions of Academic Integrity

Miron et al.'s (2021a) research indicates that assumptions are often made about student preparedness for higher education, including expectations around academic integrity. However, inaccurate assumptions can lead to misunderstandings and infractions. Furthermore, two studies in Ontario and Western Canada found that several policies overlooked terminology or had conflicting definitions of what constituted academically dishonest behaviours, possibly leading to confusion for both students and faculty (Stoesz et al., 2019; Stoesz & Eaton, 2022).

Cultural Perceptions

Shafaei et al.'s (2016) findings revealed that international students' attitudes toward acculturation significantly influenced their propensity toward ethical academic behaviour. Students who were more adjustment-centric, meaning they embraced the host country's academic norms and values, were more likely to adapt to the host country's ethical norms in an academic context. In contrast, attachment-centric students, meaning those who rely on their native approaches to ethics in academics, were less likely to adjust to the host country's academic standards.

Other studies state that sociocultural and religious factors contribute to the contextualization of academic integrity. Akbar & Picard (2020) outline how anti-West sentiment and Islamic faith and culture can result in a conflict with Western norms, making it difficult for Muslim students studying internationally. According to Aljurf et al. (2020), Arab students who engage in academic dishonesty may do so due to peer obligations, patriarchal pressure, shame avoidance, and a *Fahlawi* mindset. The word Fahlawi is "derived from Farsi [and] connotes a clever or quick-witted individual" (Aljurf et al., 2020, p. 1470). In Arab culture, this can be seen as an honourable trait as it requires intelligence and clear perception. A Fahlawi mindset views shortcuts (even academic integrity breaches) as necessary for students facing language barriers, due to the considerable investment of effort required for non-native English speakers to read and understand course materials.

Sanni-Anibire et al. (2021) point out that contrasting expectations around academic integrity across institutions and countries create uncertainty about appropriate versus inappropriate behaviours. Of the participants in their study (international students studying at Canadian post-secondary institutions), 20% could identify differences between their home and host countries' academic integrity expectations.

Language also plays an important role here, as academic expectations explained to students in a language other than their own need to be comprehended clearly. Even if a student has a firm grasp of English, the ability to understand the nuances of language used in policy should not be assumed (McGregor et al., 2022).

Research Methodology

This research uses a mixed-methods approach, following the example of previous researchers studying academic integrity policy in Canada (Miron et al., 2021b; Stoesz et al., 2019; Stoesz & Eaton, 2022) and abroad (Bretag et al., 2011).

Policy Retrieval

To assess each academic integrity policy equitably (i.e., considering how all stakeholders could locate such information), we used Google as the primary means of locating the colleges and their respective academic integrity policies. The number of colleges in Ontario was determined through the Ontario College Application Service website (OCAS, 2022c). Three colleges listed are specialized campuses that are divisions of other organizations; hence they were not included in this research. Likewise, and as stated previously, we have also omitted the two French-language colleges. With the omission of these campuses and colleges, 22 publicly funded colleges remain. To locate each institution's academic integrity policy and available support provisions, we used Google's search engine in three distinct ways:

1. We searched the college website name (e.g., Algonquin College) and looked through each drop-down menu to find anything related to academic integrity. We also reviewed the entire homepage to see if any mentions of academic integrity existed.

2. We searched Google for the college name **and** academic integrity (e.g., Algonquin College + academic integrity). We looked only at the first page of results in Google, as results past this point are generally unlikely to be useful (Shelton, 2017). In almost all cases, the academic integrity policies were obtainable within Google's first three links.

3. We searched the college name **and** international (e.g., Algonquin College + international). This search led to each college's international page, where we explored drop-down menus and reviewed all content.

In addition to the Google search, we did a keyword search using the "CTRL + F" function within each institution's academic integrity policy. Keywords included *educational*, *educative*, *training*, *support*, *module*, and *appeal*. Keywords helped to locate specific elements related to the research focus. This process was undertaken for each of the 22 colleges.

Table 1. Types of Academic Misconduct Found in Academic Integrity Policies in Ontario's Colleges

Type of Academic Integrity Infraction	Definition
Cheating	Encompasses many aspects of academic misconduct but usually indicates any use of unauthorized aid or collaboration when the requirement is independent (George Brown College, 2019)
Contract cheating	When a student's work is completed by a third party (Northern College, 2021)
Copyright infringement	Using copyright-protected work as your own (Fleming College, 2018)
Coercion	Bribing someone to gain an academic advantage (Sault College, 2020)
Collusion	Giving unauthorized assistance to another student (Sault College, 2020)
Fabrication	Altering data or information and stating it is legitimate (Cambrian College, 2018)
Facilitating academic misconduct	Knowingly allowing someone else to use your work (Georgian College, 2020)
Falsification of credentials	Submitting academic credentials that have been modified in some way (Mohawk College, 2008)
Impersonation	Impersonating another during any educational endeavour (Centennial College, 2015). In other parts of the world, impersonation is also called "ghostwriting" (Siaputra & Santosa, 2016)
Inappropriate use of technology	Any improper use of computer technology to gain an academic advantage (Mohawk College, 2008)
Multiple submission or self-plagiarism	Submitting the same assignment in more than one course (Fleming College, 2018)
Plagiarism	Using someone else's work as your own without providing proper referencing (Fanshawe College, 2019)
Procurement	Buying or selling academic work to submit as your own (St. Lawrence College, 2019)
Sabotage	An intentional act to limit another student's ability to complete an assignment (Fleming College, 2018)
Unethical use of AI	Use of artificial intelligence (AI) to generate content that intentionally masks plagiarism or alters a student's writing to the point of being unrecognizable; or submitting AI-generated content without being able to demonstrate comprehension (Algonquin College, 2021)

Multiple-Case Study, and Document and Content Analysis

Qualitative case studies can produce detailed descriptions of a single event or phenomenon (Bowen, 2009). It stands to reason then that the multiple-case study method provides a more comprehensive look, as it allows researchers to investigate various cases that are similar in nature. The multiple-case study method allowed the current data to be analyzed, compared, and contrasted (Baxter & Jack, 2008) within and across the Ontario college landscape.

Document and content analysis were essential in understanding each case, and in allowing for cross-referencing within the data collection. Bowen (2009) states that *document analysis* involves skimming, reading, and interpreting the documents in question, while *content analysis* involves arranging data into groups connected to the key research questions. Since a comprehensive assessment of relevant electronic documentation was necessary for this research, document and content analysis allowed for an in-depth examination. Since this research involved a multiple-case study method and content analysis, there were abundant qualitative data to be organized. Therefore, coding the academic integrity policy and available supports was necessary to understand and draw meaning from the raw data. To frame the research, we utilized Bretag et al.'s (2011) exploration of exemplary academic integrity policy. Their findings suggest that exemplary academic integrity policies include five distinct elements: *access*, *approach*, *re-*

sponsibility, *detail*, and *support*. We organized the findings into categories based on these elements and added an additional element reflecting the focus of this current research: *international considerations*. Table 2 provides the rationale Bretag et al. (2011) outlined for each element and the analysis criteria we developed to align with each element.

Once each policy was identified and retrieved, it was analyzed for each element discussed above. Contextual notes were recorded into a spreadsheet based on the indicators outlined within each element (Figure 3).

After compiling the raw data into point form notes, we returned to each policy and highlighted key areas corresponding to each element. We used various colours to characterize each element. Figure 4 demonstrates this process by showing the colour-coding method used to highlight the presence of each element within the academic integrity policy: *approach* (pink), *responsibility* (yellow), *detail* (blue), *support* (green) and *international considerations* (purple). The access element was not colour-coded since the analysis of accessibility consisted of a simple yes or no response to our criterion: the ability to access the policy within a maximum of one click away from the college's home page, as per Table 2 above.

Descriptive Statistics

Calculating the proportion of international students in each region required a quantitative lens. *Descriptive statistics* can

Table 2. Policy Elements and Corresponding Analysis Criteria

Element	Bretag et al. (2011) Criteria	Our Criteria
Access	Policy must be accessible to be effective	Policy is accessible through a maximum of one click away from the homepage
Approach	The approach to academic integrity must be an educative one, with a clear statement of institutional commitment to academic integrity	Use of positive, proactive language rather than a disproportionate focus on sanctions, disciplinary measures and appeals
Responsibility	Academic integrity policies should outline each stakeholder's responsibilities	Responsibilities are specified for students, faculty, administrators (at various levels), and appropriate support staff
Detail	Academic integrity policy must be detailed but in simple terms. It must explain how breaches are identified and appealed. Flow charts are advised to demonstrate how the policy is enacted	Policy is written using basic English and includes supplementary visual aids (e.g., flowcharts or tables). The details include the identification and appeal of breaches
Support	Proactive systems must be in place (e.g., modules, training, professional development) to facilitate faculty and student awareness and understanding of the academic integrity policy (Bretag et al., 2011)	Support provisions are clearly stated within the policy or stand alone resources are provided to facilitate understanding and awareness
International Considerations	Not considered	The international homepage has direct access to the academic integrity policy and training. The college acknowledges differing perspectives on academic integrity and provides policy translations in multiple languages.

Figure 3. Excerpt from Data Collection Notes (with College Names Redacted)

Note: This image demonstrates how policy aspects were recorded and notes were taken. Additionally, it outlines how the elements were initially colour-coded as exemplary (green), adequate (yellow) and needs improvement (red). For purposes or making our research findings inclusive of readers with visual impairments, we have provided the overall colour-coding for the institutions using a more accessible colour scheme: exemplary (white), adequate (grey) and needs improvement (black).

Figure 4. Colour Coding of Elements within Academic Integrity Policies

Note. Samples shown here are from Northern College (2021, p. 1) and St. Lawrence College (2019, p. 72). The colour-coding method used to highlight the presence of each element within the academic integrity policy was as follows: approach (pink), responsibility (yellow), detail (blue), support (green) and international considerations (purple). The access element was not colour-coded since the analysis of accessibility consisted of a simple yes or no response to our criterion.

provide the reader with precise information and help the researcher highlight possible relationships within the data collected (Schreiber, 2012). Discovering correlational trends is integral in educational research, and descriptive statistics aid in achieving this goal. Using measures of central tendency (i.e., the average number of international students at the regional and provincial level) and measures of dispersion (i.e., the proportion of international students in each region) provides transparent and measurable data. These calculations also allowed for a more comprehensive comparison between institutions. Spearman's rank correlation was also calculated to determine the relationship between the proportion of international students and the rating they received based on the academic integrity policy and support provisions for international and multilingual learners. From this data, meaningful inferences and correlations were drawn concerning the specific regions in Ontario, their international enrolment level, and the academic integrity policy and support they employ.

Findings

Overall Rankings

To outline the patterns observed across institutions, we devised an overall colour-coding system to denote policies and practices that were either *exemplary* (white), *adequate* (grey) or *needs improvement* (black). Each area outlined in Bretag et al.'s (2011) elements of academic integrity policy was researched and coded based on how many of the requirements were met (or missed) for each element (i.e., access, approach, responsibility, detail, support, and international considerations). Using the coding parameters outlined above, colleges were placed into categories based on their academic integrity policy and support provisions. Table 3 presents the rankings of the 22 Ontario colleges for each of Bretag et al.'s (2011) five elements, along with the sixth element we added, international considerations.

Based on the ratings above, each institution was assigned an overall ranking on its academic integrity policy and support provisions (see Figure 5 below). To score an overall *exemplary* ranking, we determined that institutions had to have at least four of the six elements in the white category. Institutions that had fewer than three white rankings but no more than

Table 3. Ontario College Rankings on Elements of Academic Integrity Policy and Support Provisions

College	Access	Approach	Responsibility	Detail	Supports	International Considerations
Algonquin	1	2	3	2	2	1
Cambrian	1	1	3	2	1	1
Canadore	1	1	2	1	1	1
Centennial	1	1	1	1	1	1
Conestoga	3	3	3	3	3	1
Confederation	1	3	2	2	2	3
Durham	1	2	3	2	3	1
Fanshawe	1	2	2	2	2	1
Fleming	1	3	3	3	2	1
George Brown	1	2	2	2	2	1
Georgian	1	2	3	2	2	1
Humber	1	1	2	2	2	2
Lambton	1	2	2	2	2	1
Loyalist	1	3	2	2	2	1
Mohawk	1	3	2	3	3	2
Niagara	1	2	2	2	3	3
Northern	1	3	3	3	3	3
Sault	1	1	2	2	2	1
Seneca	1	3	3	2	3	1
Sheridan	1	3	3	2	3	1
St. Clair	3	3	2	3	3	1
St. Lawrence	1	3	2	2	2	2

Note. White (3) is used for *exemplary*, grey (2) is used for *adequate*, and black (1) is used for *needs improvement*.

four black rankings were ranked as *adequate*. Institutions with more than four rankings in the black zone were ranked as *needs improvement*.

Figure 5. Overall Performance of Ontario Colleges on Academic Integrity and Support Provisions
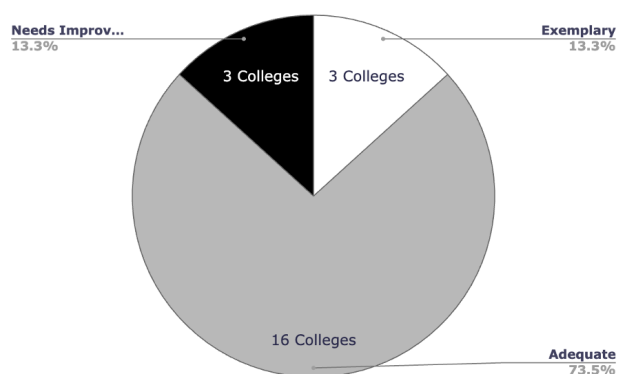
Note: This figure demonstrates the overall ranking for the 22 Ontario colleges based on Bretag et al.'s (2011) five elements of exemplary academic integrity policy and our addition of a sixth element, international considerations.

Access

As previously noted, Bretag et al. (2011) prioritize access as academic integrity policy is unlikely to be implemented effectively if it is not easily accessible. Stoesz et al. (2019) added that equitable and straightforward access to policy is necessary for all stakeholders (e.g., parents and current and prospective students). Therefore, *ease of access*, for this research, was defined by how readily available the academic integrity policy was on the college homepage.

This finding was one of the most surprising, given our assumption that access would be the simplest element to incorporate. However, 20 out of 22 colleges we studied did not make their academic integrity policy directly accessible on their college homepage (see Figure 6). Conestoga College (2019) and St. Clair College (2022) had indirect links on their homepages, meaning stakeholders have to open a separate drop-down menu to find academic integrity information. Nevertheless, since the policy could be accessed indirectly from their respective homepages, they were ranked as exemplary for the element of access. However, none of the 22 colleges had a direct link (i.e., an obvious, one-click pathway) to academic integrity policy on their college homepage.

Approach

The current research focused on how the policy incorporated educative (versus punitive) language and how institutions demonstrated a commitment to academic integrity in the policy and the availability of support. Figure 7 presents the Ontario colleges' rankings within the *exemplary*, *adequate*, and *needs improvement* (white, grey, black) schema for their approach to academic integrity and support provisions.

Figure 6. Ontario Colleges Ranking for Access Within Academic Integrity and Support Provisions
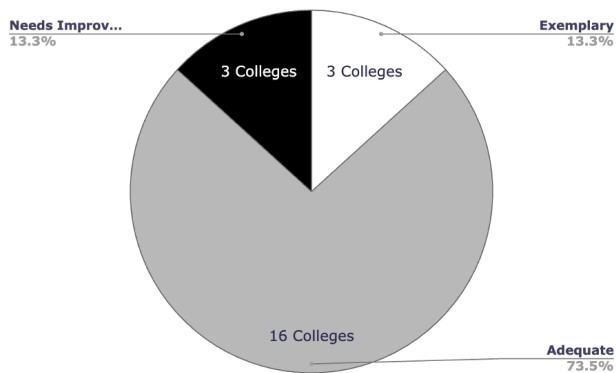
Figure 7. Ontario Colleges Ranking on Approach to Academic Integrity and Support Provisions
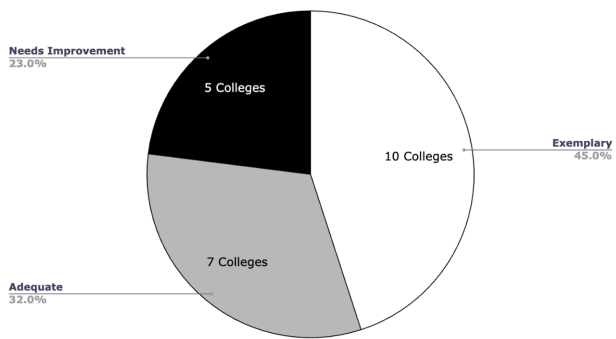
Ten colleges met the exemplary level requirements for approach. Statements within these policies (or supplemental information) were supportive and focused on educational rather than punitive measures. In addition, several institutions chose to use positive language in their policy title, such as Academic Honesty Policy (rather than many who used Academic Dishonesty or Academic Misconduct Policy), framing academic integrity as the standard rather than focusing on how breaches are dealt with. Moreover, some of these institutions used stand-alone web pages to contextualize academic integrity and their respective policies further.

Responsibility
Bretag et al. (2011) state that academic integrity policies should outline each stakeholder's responsibilities. In the current research, we looked for responsibilities for students, faculty, management (at various levels), and appropriate support staff to be included and outlined in a defined section of the policy. Figure 8 presents the Ontario colleges' rankings within the *exemplary*, *adequate*, and *needs improvement* (white, grey, black) schema for the responsibility around academic integrity and support provisions.

Figure 8. Ontario Colleges Ranking for Responsibility Within Academic Integrity and Support Provisions
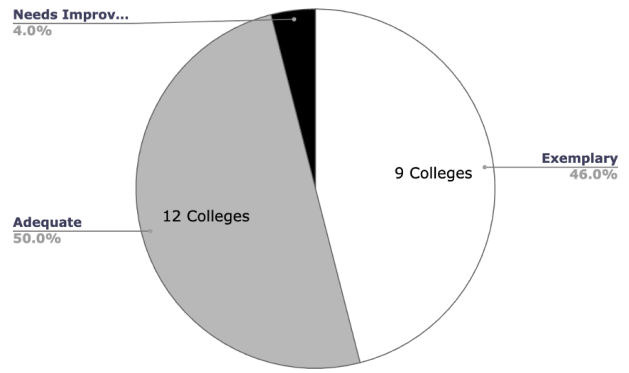
Ten colleges met the requirements outlined above and, in some cases, exceeded our specifications. Several of these institutions made clear, in easy-to-read language, the responsibilities of each stakeholder, and some included additional personnel who may need to be involved. It was also evident for the colleges deemed as exemplary in the *responsibility* element that the focus was on each stakeholder's commitment to acting with integrity rather than sanctioning powers.

Detail
Bretag et al. (2011) state that an exemplary academic integrity policy must be detailed but not overwhelming and include information on various academic integrity breaches and how they are identified. They advise using simple language to explain misconduct and the appeal process. They also encourage flow charts to demonstrate how the policy is enacted. Figure 9 presents the Ontario colleges' rankings within the *exemplary*, *adequate*, and *needs improvement* (white, grey, black) schema for the detail within academic integrity and support provisions.

Figure 9. Ontario Colleges Ranking for Detail within Academic Integrity and Support Provisions
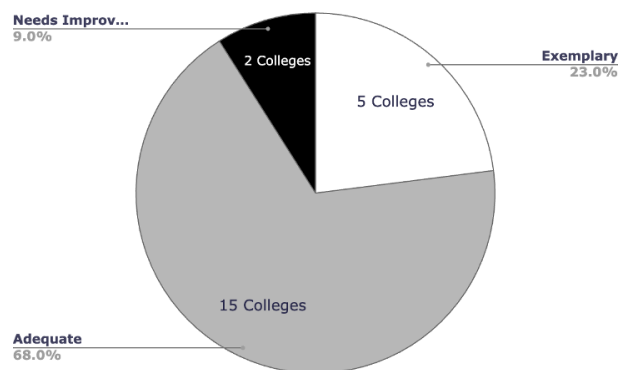
Five colleges met all the requirements of detail as outlined above. These institutions established clear definitions of nu-

merous infractions and gave specific information about the process of academic misconduct and how stakeholders should deliver sanctions.

Support

Bretag et al. (2011) assert that proactive systems must be in place (e.g., modules, training, and professional development) to facilitate faculty and student awareness and understanding of the academic integrity policy. They state that without "long-term, sustainable, and practical support resources, a policy will not be enacted, no matter how well it is articulated" (Bretag et al., 2011, p. 7). Figure 10 presents the Ontario colleges' rankings within the *exemplary*, *adequate*, and *needs improvement* (white, grey, black) schema for the support offered for academic integrity understanding.

Figure 10. Ontario Colleges Ranking for Support for Academic Integrity Understanding
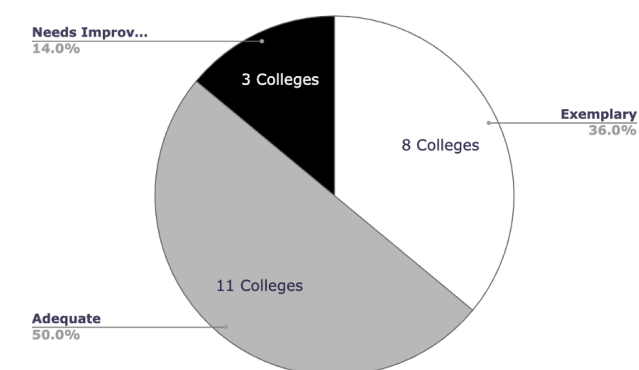
Eight colleges offered support provisions within their policy or, as an alternative, provided stand-alone resources to facilitate understanding and awareness.

International Considerations

With the growing globalization on college campuses, developing and assessing academic integrity policy through an anti-deficit lens is imperative. Taylor & Bicack (2019) note that longitudinal research has found that international students are at a higher risk of committing academic integrity infractions and acting unethically in their studies. With this in mind, we have added to Bretag et al.'s (2011) framework a sixth element that requires academic policy, procedure, and support to be accessible and intelligible to international students.

Access to Academic Integrity Policy on the International Home Page. No colleges provided direct access to the academic integrity policy on their international websites. One college did have an indirect link on their international website should students choose the correct path through available drop-down menus (i.e., student services→ academic support → academic integrity). This path leads students to a page providing access to policy documents; however, all documentation is from 2015 to 2016. While quite robust, this

information is not specific to academic integrity alone. Hence, all 22 colleges were ranked as in need of improvement.

Access to Support on the International Home Page. Most colleges were categorized as *needs improvement* in terms of access to support on the international home page (see Figure 11). One college (Northern) provided clear and direct access through their international webpage to available support and training around academic integrity understanding. While the link is named "pre-arrival modules" and does not directly state "academic integrity," the second module covers academic integrity policy, definitions, and sanctions and gives access to additional resources (e.g., links to documents and support services).

Figure 11. Access to Support on the International Home Page
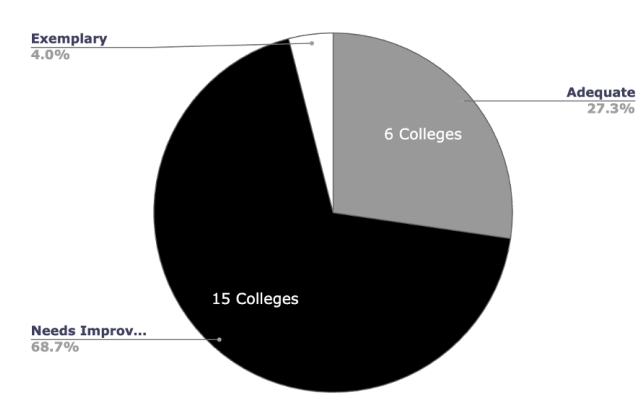
Three colleges provided indirect access to support and training offered. These institutions provided access through the drop-down menu on their respective international web pages, but none were easy to locate.

Three other colleges included information on support for international students but not within their respective international web pages. The remaining 15 colleges did not provide links to support international students within their web pages or Google search parameters.

Language within Policy to Acknowledge Differing Cultural Understandings. Two colleges (see Figure 12) directly referenced differing cultural perspectives regarding academic integrity, acknowledging that students from different spaces in the world may have different views of academic integrity. Mohawk College's (2008) academic integrity policy states that "students pursuing study in Canada from abroad may be accustomed to different standards and approaches toward academic honesty" (para. 16). They go on to note that in these situations, the faculty member should ensure the student's understanding of what constitutes academic integrity and that a first occurrence may be a simple warning if the faculty member feels the student did not understand they were committing academically dishonest behaviour. St. Lawrence College (2019) echoes these sentiments by "recogniz[ing] that the concepts of academic integrity vary across different

cultures and mak[ing] available training on Western definitions and concepts of academic integrity which students are expected to follow" (p. 72).

Figure 12. Language within Policy to Acknowledge Different Cultural Understandings
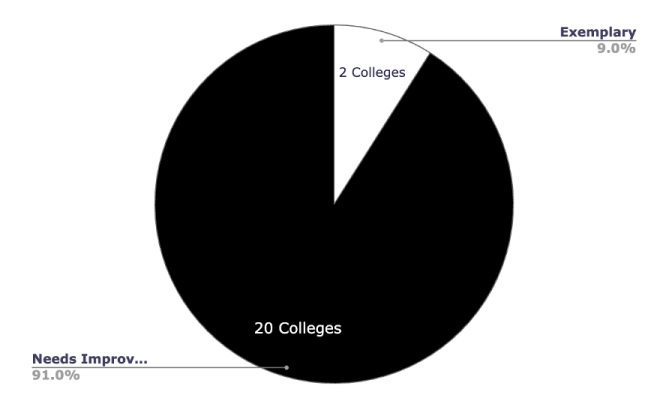
Availability of Translated Material. None of the 22 Ontario colleges had a translated policy accessible within our search parameters. While several colleges included translated materials on their international websites, none provided an academic integrity policy with an available translation. Hence, all 22 colleges were ranked as needing improvement in this area.

Regional Considerations

The OAG's (2021) report suggests that students who come from abroad to study choose larger urban college campuses, primarily in the Central Region of Ontario. This includes all GTA schools and those in nearby non-GTA areas (Kitchener, Hamilton, Barrie). However, many mid- and small-sized colleges also have high international student enrolment rates (OAG, 2021). Hence, we wondered whether the desirability of specific regions impacted the policy and support provisions the colleges provided and how the individual regional proportionality of international students related to the provincial average of 30.12%. See Table 4 for a breakdown of student population across regions.

Central Regions (Central East - GTA and Central West - Non-GTA)

In 2020, the GTA colleges (Centennial, Durham, George Brown, Humber, Seneca, Sheridan) had 39,093 international students on their campuses, excluding those who studied remotely due to the COVID-19 global pandemic (OAG, 2021). Domestic enrolment for these colleges was 116,896, which meant approximately 25% of students enrolled in the GTA colleges were international. While this is slightly below the provincial average, one could still expect that clear steps would be in place to provide accessible support around academic integrity. However, our research did not consistently demonstrate this, as none of the colleges in the GTA were ranked as exemplary in their academic integrity policy and support provisions.

In the non-GTA Central Region (Conestoga, Mohawk, Georgian, Niagara), international numbers sat around 29% of the total student population, placing this region on par with the provincial average. Conestoga College was the only college in the entire Central Region (GTA included) to receive an exemplary rating on its academic integrity policy and support provisions, and their numbers may suggest why. In 2020, 40% of the students enrolled at Conestoga were international students, among the highest percentages in Ontario.

East Region

The international student enrolment in the East Region was lower than in the rest of Ontario (22.6% international enrolment in 2020); nevertheless, in all cases, these institutions (Algonquin, Fleming, Loyalist, St. Lawrence College) rated as adequate in their academic integrity performance.

Southwest Region

Institutions in this region (Fanshawe, Lambton and St. Clair) met or exceeded the criteria for each of the six elements of academic integrity policy. The regional proportion of international students was approximately 42%; however, two colleges in this region, Lambton and St. Clair, both sat at 71% and 47% in 2020, respectively. These numbers may suggest why some measures have been implemented to ensure academic integrity support and understanding.

Northern Region

The results for the Northern Region of Ontario were surprising in a few ways. Colleges in this region (Cambrian, Canadore, Confederation, Northern, Sault) had an assortment of rankings with respect to their academic integrity policy and support provisions. We presumed Northern Ontario was unlikely to be a popular destination for international education, but our research showed otherwise.

The entire region had almost 54% international enrolment in 2020, earning them the highest regional proportion of international students. Northern College, located in Timmins, Ontario, was the only college in the exemplary category for international support provisions. Northern's domestic enrolment in 2020 was 1,143 students, while their international enrolment was 4,692, giving them the highest proportion of international students (80%) in Ontario (OAG, 2021).

Spearman's Rank Correlation

To determine whether a relationship existed between the number of international students enrolled in each region and the rating given through the current research, we implemented Spearman's rank correlation. First, using the information outlined above (see Table 4), we ranked each college based on the proportion of international students, from greatest to least, with 1 for the highest proportion, 2 for the next highest, and so on. Next, based on our evaluation of the academic integrity policy and support provisions at each college, we provided a rating of 1 for exemplary, 2 for adequate and 3 for needs improvement. These values were also ranked. Finally, we

Table 4. Ontario Regional Distribution of International Students in 2020

College*	Domestic*	International*	Total Students	International (%)
Provincial Totals	236,874	103,693	340,567	30.45
Central Region (GTA)	116,896	39,093	155,989	25.06
Seneca (Toronto)	26,077	10,863	36,940	29.41
Humber (Toronto)	24,837	5,606	30,443	18.41
George Brown (Toronto)	22,536	6,328	28,864	21.92
Sheridan (Oakville)	18,160	6,322	24,482	25.82
Centennial (Toronto)	11,731	8,328	20,059	41.52
Durham (Oshawa)	13,555	1,646	15,201	10.83
Central Region (Non-GTA)	46,231	19,195	65,426	29.34
Conestoga (Kitchener)	13,591	9,484	23,075	41.10
Mohawk (Hamilton)	13,755	3,288	17,043	19.29
Georgian (Barrie)	11,437	3,726	15,163	24.57
Niagara (Welland)	7,448	2,697	10,145	26.58
North Region	11,772	16,179	27,951	57.88
Cambrian (Sudbury)	3,508	4,541	8,049	56.42
Canadore (North Bay)	2,772	5,237	8,009	65.39
Northern (Timmins)	1,143	4,692	5,835	80.41
Confederation (Thunder Bay)	2,599	560	3,159	17.73
Sault (Sault Ste. Marie)	1,750	1,149	2,899	39.63
East Region	36,089	10,741	46,830	22.94
Algonquin (Ottawa)	21,699	3,384	25,083	13.49
SLC (Kingston, Brockville, Cornwall)	5,872	4,546	10,418	43.64
Fleming (Peterborough)	5,349	1,351	6,700	20.16
Loyalist (Belleville)	3,169	1,460	4,629	31.54
South-West Region	25,886	18,485	44,371	41.66
Fanshawe (London)	15,703	5,433	21,136	25.70
St Clair (Windsor)	7,599	6,739	14,338	47.00
Lambton (Sarnia)	2,584	6,313	8,897	70.96

Note. This table outlines the number of domestic and international students, proportion of international students, and the regional and provincial average of international students as of 2020. The proportion of international students and regional and provincial averages have been added to the original table for the purpose of this research. White coloured cells denote enrolment below the provincial average whereas black indicates enrolment above the provincial average.
* These columns were adapted from the Ontario Auditor General(OAG)'s Report (2021).

calculated the difference between the rankings for each variable, and that information was squared and totalled. This data was input into Spearman's rank correlation equation, as seen below. It was determined that there was a negative correlation of -0.62.

$$\rho = 1 - \frac{6 \sum d_i^2}{n(n^2 - 1)}$$

This negative correlation, although not perfect (i.e., -1), still demonstrates a general trend. In most cases, when the proportion of international students increases, the academic integrity and support provisions decrease. It appears to be counterintuitive to discover that, with few exceptions, colleges with a higher proportion of international students are less proficient at making academic integrity information and support available and accessible to those students.

Discussion

This research yielded several interesting findings: a) few institutions appear to have prioritized accessible academic integrity information; b) language used in policy is not inclusive to all learners; c) academic integrity policy is not easily accessible to international students, with few exceptions; and d) as international enrolment increases, access and support for academic integrity decrease (with few exceptions). These findings have resulted in our recommendations below for college administrators, registrars, and recruiters.

Ease of Access (and Accessibility)

Ease of access should be one of the most manageable elements since a readily identifiable link is all that is needed to meet this requirement. Throughout our search of Ontario college websites, we often could not easily locate relevant information. Given that we, the authors, are native-English-speaking post-secondary instructors actively looking for academic integrity policies and procedures, it seems reasonable to assume that other stakeholders would be similarly unsuccessful. It would seem plausible that regions with a larger population of international students would ensure their policies are accessible and available to this demographic; however, this was not always the case.

Providing obvious access within the college and international home page can alert students to the information's importance. With information being disseminated widely by post-secondary institutions for recruitment purposes, access to academic integrity policy and training should be provided with the same proficiency.

Within the current research, several institutions provided translated materials to their international population; however, this was predominantly for marketing and recruitment, not policy. For academic integrity, a concept that may have different meanings in different parts of the world, colleges are advised to create easily accessible, translated versions of policy to distribute to international learners.

Policy Language

The language in the policy information was not inclusive of all students for 20 of 22 colleges. Only two colleges made note of differing cultural and educational perspectives. Institutions must take a more inclusive approach to their academic integrity policy and support provisions, recognizing differing perspectives and languages and embedding them into policy and procedures. Our institutions must be knowledgeable of the experiences, expectations and academic practices of students from other countries. Absorbing the cultural capital (Reyes & Duran, 2021) that international students have to offer while simultaneously offering space to learn and build new academic practices can further support their success (Cutri et al., 2021) and extend the richness of our diverse campuses.

Education and Support for International Students

Any institution can implement a variety of supportive options to encourage student understanding of academic integrity. However, this is futile unless the support comes before the infraction. Growing research demonstrates the effectiveness of explicit prior learning (e.g., peer-to-peer programming, educational modules, and seminars) in bolstering academic integrity understanding (Cullen, 2022). As with access to policy, access to this training should be as simple as clicking a link. Additionally, like other necessary documentation, completing ongoing academic integrity-based training could become a mandatory component of a student's orientation and progression through their program of study and be documented on their student record (Gibson, 2021b).

Planning for Enrolment

Per the OAG's (2021) report, Ontario colleges have relied heavily on the tuition of international students, which has proved problematic. The newly imposed cap on international students in January 2024 threatens to derail program budgets, freeze hiring, and increase the number of contract instructors who earn significantly less than tenured faculty members. When international students are viewed as essential to maintaining the financial stability of a college, the driving force behind recruitment can become revenue generation, rather than consideration of the student's academic preparedness or potential for success. Here is where colleges risk failing these students.

In regions with a higher proportion of international students, parameters must be in place to support these students on various levels, but colleges must prioritize academic integrity training. Information must be provided to students in orientation materials or as part of the onboarding process and throughout their program of study.

Strengths and Limitations

This study contributes to the nascent discourse on academic integrity that focuses on the experiences of international students in Canada as only recently have scholars begun to consider this perspective (Eaton, 2022; Sanni-Anibire et al., 2021).

As our institutions become increasingly diverse, this research lends weight to calls for academia to commit to a greater focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion considerations in policy creation and implementation (Mugo & Puplampu, 2022).

We should be clear, however, that no institutions were contacted directly. Only information publicly accessible on the college websites was included in this research, meaning that information distributed within institutions' confines would be missed. However, as Bretag et al. (2011) note, all stakeholders (e.g., students, parents, and faculty) should have access to the academic integrity policy as a requirement of exemplary academic integrity practice. We would also note that international students should have access to this policy as part of an informed decision about the institutions they are considering.

Next, the enrolment numbers referred to throughout this research are from the 2020-2021 school year. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, enrolment numbers may be skewed as this was not a typical school year. Many international students who were supposed to be on campus may not have been permitted to attend in person and, as such, were studying remotely and, therefore, potentially not considered in the enrolment data.

Finally, several academic integrity policies we located were outdated or slated for review in the coming months. It is possible that institutions may be in the process of implementing changes to reflect their shifting demographic; however, most documents were created within the last four years, with only a few falling beyond that time frame.

Conclusion

Dependence on international enrolment is unlikely to diminish, and post-secondary institutions are scrambling to develop new graduate programs as only undergraduate programs were affected by the January 2024 cap. Thus, institutions remain responsible for supporting these students' retention and success. While there is no doubt that support for these students is available, a more collaborative, equitable and inclusive approach is needed (El Masri & Khan, 2022). In many cases, families of international students have made tremendous sacrifices to provide their children with a Western education (Hune-Brown, 2021), and those sacrifices are often made with the expectation of a return on their investment in the form of a higher standard of living, an opportunity to emigrate, or simply provisions for other family members.

Support for academic integrity is crucial given that infractions can have dire and far-reaching consequences. Ongoing training and discourse around academic integrity from various perspectives require the focus of multiple stakeholders, including administration, management, faculty, and domestic and international students. Ultimately, creating a unified approach to academic integrity policy and training across Ontario institutions will help ease confusion and misunderstanding for students and faculty alike.

Failure to understand the details of academic integrity policy currently falls on the shoulders of international students, whereas we propose that post-secondary institutions view it as their responsibility to explain what compliance entails proactivity. We suggest that these institutions need to shift their perspective by focusing inwardly, seeing themselves as "at-risk" of failing the students rather than the students being "at-risk" of failure (Patton Davis & Museus, 2019).

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