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Academic dishonesty increases

■ **CHEATING:** Last academic year, the University found 94 cases of dishonesty

By Tamyra Howser
Higher Education Reporter

When senior Chris Kanire was asked if he would ever take the opportunity to cheat on an exam or paper, the 22-year-old said no way.

"I admit that in high school I used cheat sheets, but I think the majority of students used them too," the political science major said. "In college, you have more of a sense of responsibility, especially [as you grow] older. With my major, cheating is hard to do because it's generally essay-based. [But] I have been tempted to cheat, although when it comes right down to it, I never would."

Recent polls indicate reported cases of academic dishonesty have increased. Across the nation, colleges and universities are getting serious about disciplining academic dishonesty.

Last year, the University had 94 cases of academic dishonesty, the highest reported number since 1981, said Elaine Green, student conduct coordinator and associate dean of student life. Other peaks occurred in 1993 to 1994, with about 85 cases reported and in 1985 to 1986, with nearly 75 cases.

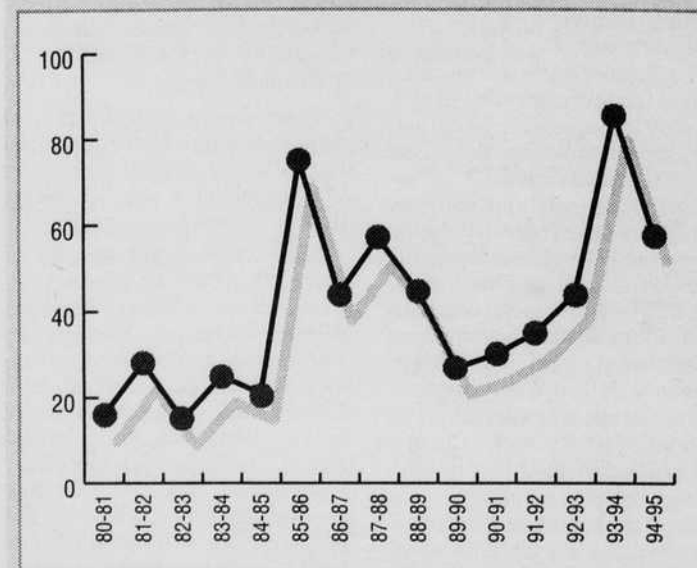
This is not just a University problem — it's a growing nationwide trend. More than 75 percent of 7,000 undergraduates admitted they had committed one or more acts of cheating, according to a survey conducted by the Center on Academic Integrity since 1990.

"I find that students who cheat the most are the ones barely making it academically," Green said. "The second highest are the highly motivated academic students who get in a jam and have to get their A."

When a student cheats and is caught, it means a definite F for the course, Green said. Major offenses, such as copying a whole

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Number of cases of academic dishonesty at the University from the 1980-81 school year to the 1994-95 school year



SOURCE: Office of Student Life

DENNIS BOLT/Emerald

test or paper, could result in suspension from the University.

Looking over at someone else's test or committing minor plagiarism, such as not citing sources, is considered a minor offense, Green said.

Students who commit a minor dishonesty act will either have to write a paper describing the problem or receive disciplinary probation, Green said.

Suspension usually doesn't occur unless a student commits two minor offenses. After the suspension period, the student is allowed back to the University.

Expulsion is very rare, Green said.

"We have a two strikes you're out plan," she said. "We hope the student learns from the consequences the first time and doesn't let it happen again. My goal is to prevent dishonesty."

Larger universities may see more cheating than smaller private schools because of class size, Green said.

"The class size makes a difference," she said. "Some professors are forced to give multiple-choice questions and are not able to monitor."

Access to the World Wide Web has opened a new dimension for students who cheat, Green said.

"We had one student last year who came in with a paper we were suspicious of," she said. "It took my secretary four minutes to find the same paper on the Web. We know the tricks too."

Academic honor codes that require all incoming students to sign a pledge not to cheat are a good idea, Green said. Schools such as Georgia Institute of Technology and University of Virginia, who enforce such pledges, tend to have fewer academic dishonesty cases. Although Green said it's important, the idea has not been considered yet.

Why do students resort to cheating?

"Because of laziness," said Dan Zettler, 27.

Zettler, a graduate teaching fellow for the political science department, said getting an A is easier than it was 10 years ago.

"Look at the evidence," he said. "It has been suggested that the grade curve makes it easier to get a high grade."

Anne Laskaya, director of composition in the English department, said students resort to cheating because of pressure and competition. But there are other reasons.

"I think it's really time management, individuals bumping against time and reaching for something easier," she said. "It's a really sad thing for students."



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