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Organizational Theory and Student Cheating: Explanation, Responses, and Strategies

Higher education literature is replete with empirical studies of patterns in self-reported cheating behaviors and with essays on the problem. Student cheating is increasingly recognized as a "corrosive problem" (Paldy, 1996) in educational organizations, yet there have been few efforts to provide leaders in higher education with the organizational insights to position higher education for sustained change in regard to this central issue. This article applies an organization-theoretic lens to the management of student academic cheating. We suggest that a new way of looking at the problem is necessary given its inherent complexity and the system in which it is situated. Explanations of student cheating have been offered, and partial institutional responses to the problem have been prescribed; however, strategic and intentional approaches to reducing student cheating have not tended to be theoretically grounded. We believe that by defining the territory between notions of culture and diffusion of best practices, we can inspire and inform organizational change.

Our effort begins with an exploration of the need to apply organizational theory to the problem of student cheating. We discuss the theoretical gaps in the research on student cheating, leading us to delineate the student cheating problem as an adaptive challenge (one that requires

learning and changes in attitudes, behaviors, or values) rather than a technical problem (one that can be solved in routine ways). We then review the student cheating research through an organization-theoretic lens. We suggest ways in which we can move from theory to strategy, creating a foundation for comprehensive, intentional approaches to organizational change that will reduce student cheating. This article seeks to instigate dialogue and action on the following questions: What do the student cheating problem and the management of it look like from an organization-theoretic framework? How can academic leaders use this framework to avoid reactive, piecemeal approaches and, instead, engage in strategic, intentional leadership?

Addressing the problem of student cheating through this approach is particularly important at this time. Although researchers have been able to prescribe a variety of ways to cope with the problem of student cheating, many have acknowledged that piecemeal approaches are not the most effective way to manage the problem (Alschuler & Blimling, 1995; Cole & McCabe, 1996; Davis, Grover, Becker, & McGregor, 1992; Hendershott, Drinan, & Cross, 2000; McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 2001; Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2001). Believing that student cheating required a broad and organized response, McCabe founded the Center for Academic Integrity (CAI) in 1993. Many others have noted that we need specific "ways to deal with the corrosive problem of campus cheating which undermines the integrity of the academic enterprise" (Paldy, 1996, p. 6). This broad and organized response could be characterized as an "academic integrity movement" that focuses on reducing student cheating and related forms of academic dishonesty through the promotion of values and best practices. Our proposition is that an organization-theoretic approach provides strategic and leadership possibilities that are beyond the diffusion of best practices as currently understood.

Addressing student cheating is a complex and dynamic challenge. Its dynamic attributes result from the turnover of students, gaps in faculty commitment, and preoccupation with more visible and contemporary problems such as hate crimes, sports corruption, or any of the many other issues demanding attention on our campuses. Student cheating is complex because there are several factors contributing to the problem, thus making it difficult to manage. Moreover, cheating and plagiarism appear to many to be such a perennial and durable issue in the cultures of our campuses that change may seem almost impossible. Even the institutions that are most successful at promoting academic integrity have had residual patterns of student cheating and other symptoms of integrity deficiencies. The fact that student cheating affects the core of the learning process itself tends to be so salient and embarrassing an issue in the academy that, ironically, it becomes easy to avoid if not completely ignore.

There is a need to address the problem and the management of student cheating with a fresh perspective and a comprehensive organizational lens. Strong theory should inform both explanation and planning. Organizational and leadership theories can supply perspective and sustained momentum in addressing one of the most central, and potentially most debilitating, issues in higher education.

The Need for Organizational Theory

Much of the existing research has focused on describing student cheating as experienced or perceived by students, faculty, and administrators. Few researchers have sought to explain student cheating from an organizational theory perspective. Because many of the prescriptions applied to the problem have been organizational in nature (e.g., changes to procedures and policies, invention of new symbols such as honor pledges, and attempts at cultural changes through implementation of honor codes), it seems surprising that the direct application of organizational theory for explanation and planning has been neglected. Applying organizational theory can refine the ways we view the problem and can move research and change management in a new direction that is less piecemeal than the current approach. Kibler (1993) had attempted to do this by offering a framework based on student development theory. While this framework steers us toward a new direction, the approach retains the focus on the student as the underlying cause of the cheating problem, neglecting the impact of broader organizational factors such as structures, systems, relationships, and governance. Applying organizational theory moves the unit of analysis from the individual to the larger system and provides a more robust framework for strategizing intentional organizational change.

Organizational theory situates the student cheating problem in the context of the educational institution as a complex organization affected by people, time, and social forces. The educational institution is particularly complex because a number of different subgroups are central to its functioning. The innate tendency of such complex organizations is to survive. Thus, the organization is often caught in a cycle of reacting to subgroups and surrounding societal forces in order to cope. Reacting to the problem often comes as a result of misdiagnosing the situation as requiring routine problem solving. With respect to student cheating, this approach has resulted in the piecemeal application of best practices for controlling or preventing individual behavior or patterns of behavior. While such routine solutions may inhibit student cheating temporarily and situationally, they do not alter the underlying organizational factors that help to shape the behavior. Jendrek (1992) has referred to such

solutions as roadblocks or barriers to student cheating. People respond differently to roadblocks; although some people are halted by roadblocks, other people may simply push through the roadblocks, go over them, go around them, or destroy them. Applying roadblocks, in essence, is applying a "technical formulation to a nontechnical problem" (Heifetz, 1994, p. 75). Thus, Bolman and Deal (1997) suggested that "a better alternative is to probe more deeply to pinpoint what is *really* going on" (p. 29).

Complex organizations can respond generatively to subgroups and societal forces by focusing on the issues underlying the observable symptoms or behaviors (Senge, 1990). To respond generatively acknowledges the complexity of the issue and the impact of organizational behavior. Thus, in order to define the problem accurately and identify solutions, learning is required on the part of organizational members. In the case of student cheating, it requires us to look past individual behaviors and patterns of behaviors to the systemic, structural explanations for the patterns of behavior (Senge, 1990). In addition, this refined analysis requires educational leaders to examine organizational issues from a variety of perspectives and thus to be attentive to complexity and change.

The Nature of Student Cheating

The research field that examines the organizational issue of student cheating is relatively young. Bowers (1964) conducted one of the first large-scale studies of self-reported student cheating behavior amongst college students. McCabe et al. (2001) conducted the next major, similar study in the 1990–1991 academic year. Then, in the 1990s, there was a marked surge in the number of published studies that examined the issue of student cheating (e.g., Aaron, 1992; Alschuler & Blimling, 1995; Burnett, Rudolph, & Clifford, 1998; Cole & McCabe, 1996; Davis et al., 1992; Davis & Ludvigson, 1995; Genereux & McLeod, 1995; Jendrek, 1992; Kibler, 1993; Lipson & McGavern, 1993; McCabe & Drinan, 1999; McCabe & Trevino, 1996; Moffatt, 1990; Niels, 1996; Paldy, 1996; Wilcox & Ebbs, 1992). These studies typically have limited their examination of student cheating to three aspects: self-reported dishonest behaviors, personal characteristics of dishonest students, and correlations between organizational elements and self-reported cheating rates. Generally, the research has found 40–90% of postsecondary students admit to academically dishonest behaviors (Jendrek, 1992).

Explaining student cheating from an organization-theoretic view offers the best prospects for contextualizing the problem and suggesting

management strategies that are conducive to more systemic organizational change. Viewing the problem through this lens helps move educational leaders beyond reacting to vested interests to creating generative responses for change. It is

> always essential explicitly to analyze the structure of the relevant vested interest complex before coming to any judgment of the probable outcome of the incidence of forces making for change. These considerations will often yield the answer to the questions of why processes of change either fail to occur altogether or fail to have the outcomes which would be predicted on a commonsense basis. (Parsons, 1951, p. 493)

Vested Interests: Students

In the psychological research on student cheating, there is a consensus that individual characteristics determine whether students will engage in cheating behavior. For example, some researchers found that cheaters have external attributional biases that enable them to justify their student cheating, and non-cheaters have an internal attributional bias (Davis et al., 1992; Forsyth, Pope, & McMillan, 1985; Payne & Nantz, 1994)—that is, "cheaters excuse their cheating" (Davis et al., 1992, p. 19). Other researchers have found that students also have difficulty reporting on friends who cheat because they cannot reconcile friendship and loyalty with integrity (Drinan, 1999) and because they do not want to risk getting involved (Jendrek, 1992). If we apply developmental theories to the issue (see Kibler, 1993), we also know that traditional-age undergraduates generally lack self-authorship—the ability to construct one's own ideas, make informed decisions with and without others, act appropriately, and take responsibility for actions (Baxter Magolda, 1999). Such an internal belief system could allow for "a construction of the self—as author, maker, critiquer, and *re*maker of its experience, the self as a system or complex, regulative of its parts" (Kegan, 1994, p. 133); the difference is whether the student has an internal locus of control versus an external locus of control. Students who are not self-authorized may acknowledge the existence of institutional policies to prevent and punish student cheating, but they cannot use this knowledge and are unable to decide what to believe about the actions of their peers or themselves.

It is thought that university-age students are not self-authorized largely because of their stage of intellectual development. Most traditional-age university students are absolute or transitional knowers (Baxter Magolda, 1999). When students see knowledge as absolute (right or wrong), they see external authorities such as teachers and researchers as having a claim to the knowing of the answers. When students are transitional knowers, they see some knowledge as certain and

other knowledge as uncertain; they also tend to see the acquiring of knowledge as a result either of talking with others or of thinking. Whether students are absolute or transitional knowers, they still perceive learning as the acquisition of knowledge held by experts and formal authorities. Students in both stages of knowing may not necessarily see development of their own knowledge as the critical goal. Instead, they often believe in the need to prove that they know what the experts think, or they believe that their own opinions do not matter (Baxter Magolda, 1999). In this case, it is easy to see why students might engage in behaviors that are labeled dishonest by the institution: If students do not feel that they can generate their own knowledge, then they might believe that it would be redundant to cite knowledge sources or to promise to refrain from accepting assistance on papers and examinations. When the environment is populated by individuals who are at the same developmental stage, it can "lead to the construction and reproduction of certain 'social realities' in a student culture that define[s] cheating as more acceptable or less-serious misconduct than it was considered previously" (Payne & Nantz, 1994, p. 91).

Psychologically based research has provided insight into motivations while providing linkage to culture-based theoretical and empirical studies. While robust, psychological studies by themselves do not help to bridge explanation to planning. Cultural approaches, on the other hand, connect with organizational theory in a way that moves us closer to planning.

Vested Interests: Organizational Culture

Inspired in part by the works of Putnam, Payne and Nantz, Davis, and McCabe, the analysis of student cheating can utilize the concepts and theories of culture and civic culture. The concept of culture applied to sociopolitical analysis was widely promulgated by Almond and Verba in the 1960s (Almond & Verba, 1963). Despite criticism of its usefulness as an explanatory tool, the concept of culture has found resilience in the work of Putnam and in related discussions of instrumental communities. Applied to the student cheating problem, cultural analyses often follow a line of analysis such as that offered by Whitley and Keith-Spiegel (2001):

> [t]he nature and feel of the campus community environment—the campus ethos—is a powerful influence on individual student's attitudes toward cheating. If students perceive their campus as merely providing a means to an end—and as unjust, disjointed, laissez faire, impersonal, and without a core identity—deterrents to cheating may be very weak. (p. 336)

When individuals join in an institution, shared beliefs, common hidden assumptions, and external motivators all play a part in creating a

culture (Schein, 1992). Peer relationships and the student culture in universities offer important learning models and socialization cues for students (Payne & Nantz, 1994, p. 94). When developmental levels of students are coupled with the focus of their generation on what Putnam (2000) called "thick trust" (that between friends) rather than on "thin trust" (that based on community norms), then a culture that does not see student cheating as a problem requiring rectification is created. In fact, the "thick trust" culture encourages dishonest behavior because friends will not report on friends (Davis et al., 1992; Drinan, 1999). Dalton (1998) noted that "one of the most important reasons students ignore and even condone peer cheating is that they recognize the great pressure and competition that all students face and empathize with those who cheat as a coping mechanism" (p. 16).

Some researchers have acknowledged the influence of a shift in the purpose of the university as an institution. Whereas students historically may have attended higher education in order to learn for learning's sake, students now often perceive college or university as a stepping stone toward another end goal—a career, or more particularly, financial and status rewards (Astin, 1993; Dalton, 1998; Kaplan & Mable, 1998). Thus, "how they get that credential is often less important than simply getting it" (McCabe & Trevino, 1996, p. 29), and student cheating is easily rationalized as a necessary means to an ends (Dalton, 1998; Nonis & Swift, 2001). Thus in this sense, "cheating may be a normative (i.e., acceptable or at least condoned) means of achieving higher grades" (Michaels & Miethe, 1989, p. 881). This belief is evidenced in the language students use to describe a "cheating culture"—for example, education as a "game," and cheating as an "addiction" and an "easy way out" for resolving the requirement of work seen as irrelevant (Payne & Nantz, 1994).

This alternative view of higher education as a means to an end affects the willingness of faculty members to report student cheating. Researchers have found that faculty fear that they will damage a student's record and, thus, opportunities for further education and employment (Davis et al., 1992; Jendrek, 1989; Nuss, 1984). In addition, given perceptions of complicated disciplinary processes, confronting and reporting student cheating can appear time-consuming for faculty. These factors may lead faculty to ignore or side-step student cheating, which in turn can support a "cheating culture" because students perceive such faculty behavior as an indication that student cheating is acceptable (Davis et al., 1992; Kaplan & Mable, 1998; Stearns, 2001).

Another aspect of the institutional culture that underlies student cheating is the rewarding of competition, not self-authorship: "in a

system in which everyone is measured against everyone else, successes make failures, and failures make successes" (Kaplan & Mable, 1998, p. 27). The scarcity of available jobs, the dependency on financial aid, and requirements of admission into graduate school all pressure students to view surviving as a higher priority than thriving. The abundance of pressure on members of our academic community can create a campus milieu of "by whatever means necessary" (Dalton, 1998, p. 13). Faculty and administrators understand these pressures and may not want to confront them because of the negative atmosphere associated with confrontations. The rewards of competition and achievement seem much more positive than the perceived penalties in time, loss, conflict, and embarrassment. Faculty and administrator careers advance not by confronting cheating but by celebrating success. This tension between the reality of academic life and the ideals of higher education is one of the many spaces in which a generative response to student cheating could be created. Closing the gap between conflicting interests or differing values is key to organizational change (Heifetz, 1994).

Faculty and administrator interests at many institutions may also not lie in undergraduate teaching, where higher cheating rates are evidenced. Baxter Magolda (1999) commented that frequently "undergraduate education is delivered ineffectively, requires passive rather than active learning, [and] does not meaningfully engage students in learning" (p. 12). The dominant teaching manner within a university reflects an underlying message that may speak more loudly than specific academic integrity policies and procedures. A pursuit of active learning in and outside of the classroom generates respect for the process of learning and, in turn, reinforces academic integrity. Wilcox and Ebbs (1992) noted that "keeping the campus honest is not only about ethics and values in the classroom; it is also about character and civic virtue; responsibility to and for others during the academic experience in preparation for life-long social responsibility" (p. 70). Teaching for a culture of academic integrity requires that teaching "connects with the inward, living core of our students' lives" (Palmer, 1998, p. 31), the core being the individual's identity and integrity.

If there is little integrity perceived by the students in the culture of the institution, as manifested particularly in the behavior of faculty, then students with an external locus of control and undeveloped self-authorship are less likely to hold on to personal integrity and to resist opportunities for cheating in the face of challenges. Because faculty constitute the most visible role models for students in the academy, their "observance of the ideals established for the community" plays a critical role in the "the civic character" of the organization (Bruhn, Zajac,

Al-Kazemi, & Prescott, 2002, p. 481), especially in an American society that often seems to minimize active participation in communities. Putnam's work on participation in community in American society, for example, provides one key vantage point in developing and applying a more refined approach to dealing with student cheating.

Vested Interests: American Society

Putnam (2000) conducted a thorough review of the concept of community in American society in the 20th century, and he noted that participation in community-based, political, and religious organizations experienced a high in the 1950s and 1960s, and then a decline from the 1960s to the present day. Putnam described this pattern as intergenerational: As the generation who participated widely dies out, the generation who replaces them does not participate at the same level. Wuthnow (1998), an investigator of religious practices, noted the same pattern, which he called a shift from "dwelling-oriented spirituality" to "seeker-oriented spirituality." Both Putnam and Wuthnow believe that part of the explanation of this shift from "dwelling" to "seeking" belongs to the changes in individual ability and the resulting lack of need or dependence upon others to give the individual what is needed. Using Parsons (1951), one might attribute this seeking behavior to the dominant ethos in America, which is a combination of "universalism" and "achievement-orientation." Thus,

> across organizational settings, cheating has become a widely accepted means of achieving institutional rewards. Under a shrinking opportunity structure for educational or occupational advancement, cheating and other shortcuts may become normative adaptations to pressures to excel in a highly selective market. (Michaels & Miethe, 1989, p. 883)

The focus then is on process or the means toward particular goals rather than on a "final" goal that "is to be maintained in perpetuity" (Parsons, 1951, p. 108).

As individuals become more educated and more financially independent, they may experience less and less need for help from others or the larger community. Those communities that do exist are different in nature from our old communities—they are much more instrumental and less socially or personally affirming and supportive. Instrumental communities create an "egocentric climate" in which an "individual conscience takes precedence over the claims of the community" (Kaplan & Mable, 1998, p. 24) and exacerbate and complicate the tasks of reinforcing academic integrity on campuses.

Theories of culture and community have been of great use in explaining the persistence of student cheating and the deep structures that

inhibit change. By emphasizing culture and community, we can gain additional insights into the forces that may reinforce desirable values and behaviors. However, a preoccupation with culture and community can impede the development of strategic vision because it reminds us of the frustrations of attempting pervasive change. To combat such frustrations and provide a sense of optimism, organizations have been focused on providing a diverse reform agenda through the diffusion of best practices. (For more information on recommended academic integrity strategies, policies, procedures, and programs, see Burnett et al., 1998; Sabloff & Yeager, 1989; and Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2001). Yet a focus on the diffusion of best practices can neglect the complexity of the issue and the organizational context. We suggest that the territory between an understanding of culture and the diffusion of best practices can be explored through the lens of organizational theory, providing higher education leaders a strategic vision for change and a sense of optimism. The value added of organizational theory is its contribution to a more sophisticated, strategic, and nuanced approach to reducing student cheating.

Defining the Territory between Organizational Culture and Best Practices

We suggest the relevance of two theories for defining this territory in order to create a strategic, generative approach to the student cheating problem. Other organizational theories can and should be considered, but these two are good examples of how organization theory can help leaders navigate one of the most difficult issues in the academy. First, the organizational change theory of Bolman and Deal (1997) offers a comprehensive approach by directing attention to the four frames in which change should be considered: structural, human resources, political, and symbolic. Utilizing such a theory can help position educational organizations for change. Second, the political institutionalization theory of Huntington (1968) informs us that institutionalization requires organizational adaptability along with coherence, autonomy, and complexity in the face of change. Thus, Bolman and Deal's theory helps us to strategically coordinate and approach organizational change, whereas Huntington's institutionalization theory helps us to understand how to make change "stick."

Bolman and Deal and Huntington draw our attention to the political attributes of responding to the "corrosive problem" of student cheating. Political approaches comprehend the special tension that exists between "the way in which values are authoritatively allocated" (Easton, 1953, p. 136) and the danger of those values being corrupted (see Huntington, 1968). While institutional analysis is not uncommon in higher education

(see DiMaggio & Powell, 1991), explicitly political approaches that view higher education as a polity are relatively rare. By recovering a sense of the political and characterizing student cheating and its tolerance in the language of corruption, higher education leaders can position themselves away from lowest common denominator thinking and directly confront student cheating along with other strategic threats to higher education.

Bolman and Deal's Four-Frame Organizational Theory

The complex problem of student cheating should not be approached in a piecemeal fashion. Bolman and Deal (1997) remind us that there is a tendency to examine issues and organizations through one predominant mental model or lens. The habitual lens we use allows us to focus and to respond routinely to issues according to readily available scripts or schemas. Unfortunately, relying on one lens also restricts our ability to see the whole picture and to consider the complexity of the issue. Thus, Bolman and Deal (1997) suggest viewing organizations and issues through a four-frame model to move us "beyond narrow and mechanical thinking" (p. 16) to "a more expressive, artistic conception that encourages flexibility, creativity, and interpretation" (p. 17). Applying the four-frame model to the student cheating problem, we can begin to define the territory between organizational culture and best practices.

Bolman and Deal (1997) state that "the structure frame reflect[s] a belief in rationality and a faith that the right formal arrangements minimize problems and increase quality and performance" (p. 39). The structural frame dominates the landscape of best practices in managing the student cheating problem. Many educational organizations have added academic integrity committees and policies (Rudolph & Timm, 1998; Sabloff & Yaeger, 1989; Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2001), adjudication procedures (Cole & McCabe, 1996; Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2001), and administrative support, typically through student affairs professionals). Rudolph and Timm (1998) note that organizational structure can create "an institutional framework for promoting academic integrity" (p. 59). An overreliance on structural aspects, however, neglects other influences on organizational change.

The human resources frame focuses "on the relationships between organizations and people" (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 14) and the need for the development of new behaviors and practices. How, then, can students, faculty, and administrators become committed to academic integrity and motivated to reduce student cheating? Some of the best practices have included implementing a values-oriented curriculum (Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2001), offering direct academic integrity education to

both new students and cheating offenders (Rudolph & Timm, 1998; Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2001), and training faculty in the management and prevention of student cheating (Jendrek, 1989; Rudolph & Timm, 1998; Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2001). Without attention to the contextual environment, however, such approaches will not be able to sustain organizational change.

Utilizing the third frame, Bolman and Deal's (1997) theory again reminds us that organizations are political. The existence of different interests and perspectives causes conflict and competition for power, attention, and resources. In the case of student cheating, the unpredictability of student behavior and the conflicts between goals can cause high levels of ambiguity and uncertainty. Thus, it is critical from this perspective that coalitions are strategically formed to bring together members from across the interest groups. Student cheating research has demonstrated the importance of joint administrator, faculty, and student roles in planning and implementing an academic integrity system (Dalton, 1998; Hadden & Davies, 2002). Without such a "political community" (Huntington, 1968), university members will be more loyal to their subgroups than to the authority of the organization.

The symbolic frame, according to Bolman and Deal (1997), "sees organizations as cultures, propelled more by rituals, ceremonies, stories, heroes, and myths than by rules, policies and managerial authority" (p. 14). Examining the problem through this lens focuses leadership on problems of commitment, motivation, ambiguity, uncertainty, and conflict. Creating academic integrity symbols to manage student cheating has been a widely used approach in educational institutions. Such symbols include academic integrity talk in university publications (Rudolph & Timm, 1998), a learner-oriented curriculum (Rudolph & Timm, 1998; Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2001), and, most emphasized, an honor or modified honor code (Cole & McCabe, 1996; McCabe & Trevino, 1996; Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2001). A code or principle to which community members can tether themselves can be extremely important, because it gives people something to relate to outside of themselves (Huntington, 1968). However, although an honor code is a clear statement about student cheating, most researchers agree that it is not sufficient in and of itself (e.g., Dalton, 1998; Jendrek, 1992; Whitley & Spiegel, 2001).

The problem of student cheating is naturally viewed in diverse ways given the lenses habitually used by various stakeholders. If this diversity is left unmediated, multiple realities are created, potentially leading to system fragmentation and stagnation. By viewing the student cheating problem through all four frames, a strategic response that considers and

honors the multiple dialogical realities can be generated. It is key for leaders to consider to what extent "motivation, technical constraints, uncertainty, scarcity, and conflict" (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 279) are impacting the student cheating problem in their particular organization, and then to apply the four-frame model in order to generate a comprehensive, holistic approach.

Huntington's Political Institutionalization Theory

Huntington's (1968) theory complements the work of Bolman and Deal by anticipating an end product of a change process: institutionalization. Huntington also uses a fourfold analysis that emphasizes the criteria of adaptability, autonomy, complexity, and coherence. Attention to these four criteria will ensure that the change "sticks," becoming a part of the fabric of the organization. To that end, integrity is internalized by members rather than seen as an external command for behavioral control. Attention to these four criteria, then, helps cement academic integrity into the norms and values of individuals, groups, and the organization.

Institutions must be able to respond to a variety of challenges and yet retain coherence. An emphasis on academic integrity captures the notion of coherence since integrity comprises the ability to respond to many threats to the higher education institution, such as research dishonesty, fraud, and reduction of public trust. Thus, integrity must be seen, espoused, and enforced throughout the institution's functioning, including public statements, business affairs, athletics, and research (Niels, 1996; Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2001). The institution and its leadership must ensure that they are "honorable in all [their] processes, policies, and interactions" (Niels, 1996, p. 39), and that they are not just espousing honor. Huntington's discussion of coherence as a criterion for institutionalization directs us to the need to guarantee that the academic integrity system is connected to the adaptability of the larger institution of higher education both on given campuses and in its national manifestation. Indeed, academic integrity becomes a metaphor for successful institutionalization that responds to student cheating as well as to other challenges to higher education.

If the academic integrity system is adaptable and complex, then it is able to respond to new challenges associated with student cheating and other forms of dishonesty. The system operates as a fabric at the core of the institution, not as a simple additive procedure. This is important because simple systems can disintegrate in the face of growth and other challenges. On the other hand, "more complex traditional systems are more likely to adapt to these new demands" (Huntington, 1968, p.18). Then, the system becomes

more than simply an instrument to achieve certain purposes. Instead its leaders and members come to value it for its own sake, and it develops a life of its own quite apart from the specific functions it may perform at any given time. The [system] triumphs over its function. (Huntington, 1968, p. 15)

Failure to adapt is described by Huntington (1968) in the language of corruption defined in terms of coordinated and disciplined behavior that "deviates from accepted norms in order to serve private ends" (Huntington, 1968, p. 59). Social forces can overwhelm the institution and lead to incoherence. While higher education may seem adept at responding to the increased velocity of change and to changing demographics, corruption can occur in a variety of ways that can magnify threats. The complexity of higher education does enhance its institutionalization but cannot guarantee it if coherence is lacking. Corruption at first may appear to protect an institution by permitting it to adapt, but corruption erodes adaptability over time, diminishes coherence, and threatens the autonomy of higher education.

From Theory to Strategy

Combining Bolman and Deal's (1997) approach to change with Huntington's (1968) theory of institutionalization can inform newer, bolder, and more coherent strategies. Utilizing these theories expands perspectives of student cheating beyond the individual student to the institution of higher education within American society. The risks of leadership are high because the problem of student cheating is durable, and the proposed strategies may not result in immediate and tangible outcomes. But the risks of limited and tentative perspectives may be higher, as growing evidence indicates that the increasing sophistication of technology magnifies opportunities for student cheating (Goldsmith, 1998) and may accelerate already disturbing cheating rates.

Six strategies for leading the institutionalization of academic integrity in response to the student cheating problem can be derived from the combined theories of Bolman and Deal (1997) and Huntington (1968). These six strategies are (a) acknowledging cheating as corruption, (b) embracing vulnerability, (c) highlighting expectations and mutual interests, (d) thinking nationally, acting locally, (e) building the presidential platform, and (f) avoiding blind alleys.

Acknowledging Cheating as Corruption

Higher education leaders seeking to create new strategies for change must first acknowledge systemic cheating as a reality that is corrosive to the underlying values of higher education. Student cheating is not

simply about morally underdeveloped students but an organizational and societal system that is affected by and that supports dishonest behavior. The symbols that we value most highly about higher education are threatened by systemic and persistent student cheating. Notions of independent thinking, intellectual property, the struggle of original thought, and academic freedom are all at risk should dishonesty prevail over integrity. Acknowledging student cheating as corruption rather than as simple misbehavior will generate strategies that are less about managing cheating and more about institutionalizing academic integrity. This willingness to direct attention to the negative and address student cheating within the current system is the essential precondition to strategic planning.

Embracing Vulnerability

People look to authority figures for direction, protection, and order. When attention is directed to the negative, expectations can be frustrated, and the authority figure risks position and reputation in the process (Heifetz, 1994). However, the vulnerability associated with this action is necessary since such an expansive view helps to create a state of urgency that is "medium to high all the time" (Kotter, 1996, p. 162), thereby minimizing the space in which corruption can fester. Leaders must embrace this vulnerability but limit its impact by consistently reminding organizational members of the centrality of integrity to the mission of the organization and the related need for accountability. Directing members' attention to the dangers of ignoring a set of problems that are corrosive to the basic mission of education can help to create movement and progress where there might otherwise be paralysis or a reliance on technical solutions.

Highlighting Expectations and Mutual Interests

In the case of student cheating, research has found that (a) faculty have low expectations of the validity of academic integrity systems (Jendrek, 1989); (b) students have low expectations of faculty in managing cheating (Stearns, 2001); and (c) faculty and administration have low standards for student conduct (Davis & Ludvigson, 1995). Such low expectations and standards can paralyze organizational change since they reveal a gap between what is espoused and what is practiced. A moral consensus and sharing of mutual interests are then difficult. If students, faculty, and administrators have ideals and interests that are not reciprocated, then the system will fall to the lowest common denominator of diminished expectations. It could be argued that these low expectations and standards are more authentic because unfulfilled higher

expectations could contribute to a sense of hypocrisy or frustration. Lowering expectations is not the answer because the mission of higher education is jeopardized by the corruption associated with student cheating. Public accountability is also rising, making it difficult to keep the "secret" of cheating a secret much longer.

For a reduction in student cheating to happen, to institutionalize academic integrity, the standards and expectations of the organization and its members must be raised and a compelling vision communicated. Higher education leaders should explicitly communicate the nature and importance of integrity, and they must do this using all four of Bolman and Deal's (1997) frames. More importantly, their communications must be matched by actions that demonstrate raised expectations and standards for all members of the organization. It is our belief that the majority of members in an educational organization value integrity over dishonesty and share a mutual interest in learning and acquiring knowledge. However, this moral consensus and mutual interest can be diminished by the pressing external social forces that call for productivity, efficiency, revenue, and results. If higher education leaders highlight the values of integrity and learning by communicating them throughout the institution's functioning, they then must support these values explicitly in human resources, organizational politics, symbols, and structures. This is far more than appointing a committee to investigate an honor code. Applying Huntington's (1968) argument, it must extend beyond honor or integrity in students' academic work to a system-wide renewal of integrity. Thus, codes of honor or integrity should not simply apply to student conduct; they should be considered one facet of integrity systems within the organization.

Thinking Nationally, Acting Locally

The moral consensus of integrity and mutual interests of learning and knowledge are not organization specific. Rather, they are values fundamental to the institution of higher education in America. Because each educational organization is situated within this system, we share many of the same mediating forces and pressures. Thus, it is at this national level where thinking about the problem of student cheating should also occur. The Center for Academic Integrity (CAI) is one body that is attempting to bring this dialogue to the national level. However, larger and influential national associations and accrediting bodies must join in this thinking and dialogue. It is at this level where there must be a public call for change in order to heighten the level of awareness of the breaches in integrity represented by student cheating. National associations, ranking bodies, and accrediting organizations must start seeking information on

institutional integrity by assessing individual organizations on their measured progress. At a local level, organizational leaders can begin to offer this information in their accreditation self-studies, highlight this information publicly, and raise the issue in meetings and conferences for higher education leaders. Former Duke University president Nannerl Keohane noted in a *Chronicle of Higher Education* article in 2003 that "the president ought to make his or her voice heard when the basic goals of the university are at stake" (Keohane, 2003, p. 1), and she practiced this principle while in her presidency, reporting publicly on the results of a dishonesty assessment survey conducted at Duke in 1999–2000. Acting locally while thinking nationally may be one way in which presidents and other higher education leaders can move the problem of student cheating to the forefront of the educational dialogue.

Building the Presidential Platform

Nannerl Keohane is an example of a university president who took a stand on the importance of integrity in the university. She did this both internally through the campus newspaper and externally through press releases and the *Duke University Alumni Magazine*. She also did this symbolically by extending a home to the Center for Academic Integrity and supporting a university-wide assessment of dishonesty, a revision of the honor code into a community standard, and the formation of an Academic Integrity Council to lead organizational change. Former President Keohane built a presidential platform on honor and integrity by stating that it was a "personal commitment of mine, and a very strong priority" (Duke Dialogue, 2000, p. 1). This approach is risky because it does require the president to point to the negative symbols that will help members learn more about their institution. As Keohane (2003) noted, "in some situations a president may be bound in conscience to speak out, even if most people on campus take the opposite view" (p. 2). In order to be effective, the president's platform should stand foundationally on the acknowledgement of cheating as corruption and the need to highlight our moral consensus of integrity and mutual interests of learning and knowledge. A precarious value (Selznick, 1957) such as integrity requires the "authoritative allocation" (Easton, 1953) that only those at the level of presidents, boards, and accrediting associations can provide or validate. Although taking a moral stance is difficult and increases one's vulnerability, it must be used to create momentum on the issue. Otherwise, as Keohane pointed out:

> We're kind of betwixt and between, and when one is in a betwixt-and-between situation, it is very often an unstable equilibrium. I happen to believe that is true at Duke today, that if we don't take concerted efforts together to

focus on commitment to honor, there are many pressures that may lead us to backslide and to move away from even the positions where we are today. (Duke Dialogue, 2000, p. 2)

Avoiding Blind Alleys

The theory of Bolman and Deal (1997) helps to contextualize the problem of student cheating and to discover the nuances and requirements particular to individual organizations. Such an approach should help educational leaders avoid two related blind alleys: (a) overemphasis on honor codes and (b) the allure of culture. Honor codes cannot serve as the panacea for deficiencies in integrity because integrity cannot be institutionalized by symbolic activity alone. Although the "establishment of an honor code is the clearest statement that a college or university can make that it values and is committed to academic integrity" (Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2001, p.339), most researchers agree that it is not sufficient in and of itself (e.g., Dalton, 1998; Jendrek, 1992; Whitley & Spiegel, 2001). The common practice then advocated has been to create a campus culture or ethos of integrity (Alschuler & Blimling, 1995; Dalton, 1998; Hendershott et al., 2000; Rudolph & Timm, 1998; Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2001). This advice may be valid, but it may confound reform. Campuses can be swept up in the design of honor codes and the discussion of culture change. As Kotter (1996) reminds us, culture is "difficult to challenge or even discuss" (p. 151) because a large number of people are unconsciously habituated to its norms and values. Frustrations with the magnitude of the problem, once it has been diagnosed on a given campus, can lead to regression and cynicism, making progress unlikely. Consciousness of the two "blind alleys" provides a key sensibility in devising sophisticated strategies; there is no "magic bullet" in honor codes, and a preoccupation with campus culture can be so overwhelming or amorphous that paralysis can ensue.

Conclusions

We have outlined the potential applicability of organizational theory for understanding student cheating and a shaping of the range of institutional responses to student cheating. The theories of Bolman and Deal (1997) and Huntington (1968) enabled us to create a fresh agenda for strategic organizational change not focused narrowly on the reduction of student cheating but on the institutionalization of academic integrity. Integrity is so essential to the adaptability and coherence of higher education that its dilution or absence would have almost unimaginable consequences to the future of higher education.

We have argued for six change strategies that call for leadership at the highest levels of the educational organization and the institution of higher education. The perspective from the presidential platform does not substitute, however, for the diffusion of best practices among faculty and student affairs professionals. The six strategies provide a nuanced and organizationally sophisticated approach that shapes and validates a community of integrity and learning while avoiding the fatalism of a "cheating culture." To build on the theory, empirical research should be conducted within the universities and colleges that are addressing the problem of student cheating. The integration of such research into accreditation self-studies can be a key opportunity, particularly since integrity is mentioned as a value in most accreditation standards.

Institutionalizing academic integrity is "not a matter of sheer organizational survival; it is rather the policy, the mission, the special capability—in a word, the identity of the group that is at stake" (Selznick, 1957, p. 132). Higher education institutions have proven adept at the development and elaboration of organizational theory to the worlds of business and science and to aspects of the academy itself. It is time to turn that acumen to the central matter of academic integrity.

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