

Discussing Academic Ethics

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The following scenarios and discussion questions can help facilitate conversations with students about academic ethics. These were originally prepared for use at the Ethics in Public Life Forum “Academic Integrity and the U-M Undergraduate Experience” held at U-M on November 9, 2005.

Directions:

Each of the following scenarios represents a question of academic ethics that you could face. In your small groups, choose a scenario to discuss. Discussion questions are below. If you finish with one, please continue on to the other two scenarios.

Scenarios:

- A. You are working as part of a group on an assignment that will lead to a group paper and presentation. After a month of working on individual tasks, you are meeting to assemble the final documents. As you read over the materials prepared by one of your teammates, you begin to wonder whether she prepared this material herself.
- B. In a discussion about strategies to succeed in school, your housemate mentions that he e-mails a draft of every paper he writes to his mother, who is a great editor. He recommends that you find someone who could do the same for you.
- C. One of your close friends missed an exam, falsely claiming he was sick. The make-up exam is Friday, and he has asked to borrow all your notes from the class to assist him in preparing for the make-up exam.

Scenario Discussion Questions:

- What are the dilemmas presented by each case? What makes them moral or ethical dilemmas?
- How would you resolve these dilemmas? What options would you consider? What considerations would inform your decision?
- What are the implications of your decision for you? For your classmates? For your instructor(s)? For the University?

General Discussion Question:

- What could U-M do to help students respond ethically to these and other questions of academic integrity?