

Introduction/Background

University academic integrity policies and practices typically reflect much of the plagiarism research and literature (see McCabe, Treviño & Butterfield, 2001) in their concentration on students as the target audience. As Martin (2007, p. 1) notes, “[M]uch comment about academic integrity seems to be targeted at students”. This appears to assume the existence of a culture of academic honesty which is maintained and safeguarded by universities and academia, and into which the academic process aims to socialise students.

Much of the plagiarism literature analyses the circumstances of cases and the outcomes. At a broader level, structural and procedural mechanisms for deterring, detecting and managing plagiarism cases are considered. However, Shepherd (2007) concluded that, while much attention has been devoted to student academic integrity matters, disproportionately less meaningful enquiry has been conducted into the commercially-sensitive and politically-charged assumed culture of honesty of academics.

There is an established case history of high-profile plagiarism in academia. Arguably, foremost among these is that of Sir Cyril Burt, the ‘father of British psychology’. Despite recent movements to redeem his reputation, there remains a convincing body of evidence to claim that significant parts of Burt’s work contravened the basics of academic integrity. Some attempts to exonerate his reputation argue that he did not falsify his data knowingly; others point out examples of subsequent research which supported the conclusions he reached. This paper does not intend to engage with such debates or to contribute to the ‘Burt Affair’ in general: reference to it is simply to illustrate historical evidence at the highest level to challenge generalised assumptions about the culture of academic honesty.

The number of other reports of academic malpractice could seem to justify a belief that academic integrity might be “more honoured in the breach than the

observance" (Hamlet, Act I, Scene IV), and that the complaints from academia about student academic dishonesty amount to little more than a case of the pot calling the kettle black.

At the international level, one of the cases which attracted media attention was the 2005 scandal that rocked the global medical community when a leading stem-cell scientist at the Seoul National University admitted fabricating the results of the majority of stem-cell lines he claimed to have created. Although less sensational and not posing a threat to global medical health, many other international examples of 'academics behaving badly' have attracted significant coverage. A text authored by a Yale Law School professor contained substantial plagiarised sections; two Harvard law professors plagiarised in publications; a College Dean at the University of Missouri plagiarised by replicating another person's public speech; a major sociology journal had to retract a published article which had been plagiarised by the author, a sociology lecturer at City University, London; a Leeds University senior lecturer admitted plagiarising in a monograph publication; the Master's thesis of a Dean at Northern Illinois University contained plagiarism; the doctoral dissertation of the President of Southern Illinois University contained plagiarised sections; a professor at the University of Colorado plagiarised and falsified research; six professors and the Director of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences 'self-plagiarised' through re-publishing their own work in a number of different sources; a former Dean at Durham University was accused of plagiarising peers' work in his doctoral thesis; a prominent historian in the U.S.A. "admitted she 'borrowed some passages in her [1987] book' from several other sources" (Carroll, 2002 p. 17); and a senior lecturer at Wolverhampton University was dismissed for plagiarism. According to Baty and Marcus writing in the *Times Higher Education Supplement* (April 15th 2005), "[D]ozens more cases have emerged in the US". Carroll (2002, p. 13) believes that the known cases of plagiarism represent "only the tip of the iceberg."

Although not featuring strongly in internationally-publicised cases, Australian academia, the context of this paper, is not exempt from academic dishonesty. Probably the best-known case is that of a world-renowned medical researcher in fertility who was found to have falsified key data, exposing co-authors as well as

himself to accusations of academic malpractice. Also attracting international interest was the case of the Vice-Chancellor of Monash University and former Vice-Chancellor of the University of South Australia who resigned in 2002 in the face of revelations of past plagiarism and unresolved charges of academic integrity breaches.

Australian academic Martin (1984; 1989) has been persistent in analysing and commenting on a broad range of Australian academic dishonesty cases and in suggesting structures and processes for preventing or managing them. Cases he has cited include the withdrawal by the publishers of a plagiarised text by a professor and Dean at La Trobe University; protracted allegations of academic malpractice in the doctoral thesis of a University of Newcastle professor; fabrication by a Deakin University professor of the data underpinning publications; and plagiarism of a U.S.A. professor's work by an Australian academic in her doctoral thesis and associated publications.

Martin (1984; 1989) has also detailed the frustrations suffered and the 'deafness' encountered by 'whistle-blowers' in these cases. He has likened them to his own experiences in the publication process in which he perceived a general aversion towards engaging with the issues. He concluded that plagiarism was a taboo topic in academia (Martin, 1984), an 'undiscussable'. His summation was that "because it is much more widespread than normally acknowledged, publicity on this topic is assiduously avoided by academics" (Martin, 1989 p.99), thus explaining why "its occurrence has received scant attention in public forums and hardly any in the scholarly literature" (Martin, 1989, p. 95).

Cases such as those above have prompted numerous debates on varying aspects of the cultural and ethical complexities of academic integrity involving. Themes have included perpetrator explanations and rationalisation; organisational processes, procedures and structures for managing incidents; the technicalities of academic conventions; ethical dimensions of behaviour; commercial perspectives of intellectual property ownership; the influence of cultural contexts; and the power-responsibility relationships of organisational politics.

Scandalous academic dishonesty cases will always have media 'sexiness'. By contrast, relatively absent from the foregoing list and less appealing to 'outrage' are the low-level, incidents that can have massive impact on the 'victims' and eat holes in the fabric of a culture of honesty. As Zigmond and Fischer (2002, p. 229) put it, "equally deserving of our attention are the . . . little murders".

Methodology

The research underpinning this paper uses a narrative approach as it interprets a number of case studies. The basis of the case studies is one of self-selected convenience sampling since all arose from 'conversations' initiated by colleagues in Schools of Education at Australian universities. The researcher's role as an Academic Integrity Officer was the starting point for respondents raising unsolicited concerns about their own experiences as 'victims' of academic dishonesty. These informal initial discussions were developed into semi-structured interviews. Active listening 'echo' techniques were used during interviews and notes were compiled as an aide-de-memoire. Summaries of the interviews were then checked for accuracy with the interviewees before being analysed.

This interpretive approach used storytelling as the methodology through which sense was made of the interviewees' experiences. It was particularly apt because of the subjectivity and sensitivity of the topic which dealt with value-laden feelings emanating from interactions in the culture of the academic workplace. It was apparent from the outset that all aspects of the research necessitated a very delicate and empathic approach as the recounting of incidents was clearly a very emotional process.

In all of the case studies, names of people and universities and peripheral details of cases have been changed to preserve anonymity and to maintain focus on the academic malpractice.

In describing the cases, Australian university terminology is used so *course* refers to a subject in which study is completed within a defined period (usually a semester) while *program* refers to the total sequence of courses to be completed to fulfill award requirements.

The Case Studies

Typically, plagiarism cases take the form of falsification of data, direct copying, or over-close paraphrasing of another person's written work without due acknowledgement. The first two case studies provide examples of this sort of plagiarism but move beyond simple copying from public domain sources. Each case adds a particular 'twist' of complexity which leads to the presentation of victim impact. Both cases illustrate what appears to be an all-too familiar practice – *plagiarism through the abuse of positional privilege*.

Case 1

Helen, was enrolled part-time in a higher degree at Greystones University. She was encouraged by Bob, a Greystones University staff member, to use some of her coursework writing as a basis for publication in a journal for which he was an editor. She duly submitted a manuscript for double blind review but the paper was rejected. Disheartened, she did not pursue further publication sources.

Subsequently, a workmate, Julie, alerted Helen to the fact that the rejected paper had been included as a chapter in a monograph edited by Bob. He had claimed authorship of the chapter.

When confronted, Bob explained that he had tried to contact Helen before publication but had been unable to do so. Strict timelines meant that the publication had to proceed, so he thought it best to enter the chapter in his name in the hope that Helen would come forward. He offered no suggestion as to how her authorship might be acknowledged in the released publication other than through his verbal recognition in future references to the chapter.

Helen described her initial reaction as “disturbed” and “puzzled”.

“When Julie told me she seemed really angry but I didn't know what to think. I know I felt very uneasy but I thought that, well, maybe this is the way it works. You know, he's a professor and everything so I guess he knows what to do.”

Helen was amazed at the intensity of Julie's anger and, although instinctively she felt that there was something wrong with the situation, she was also so uncertain about the protocols of academic life that she was prepared to accept her case as typical.

It was very much in a spirit of enquiry rather than complaint that Helen approached Bob. She found that he was "very nice about it" and she felt "satisfied" but still unsure about his promise to acknowledge her work in future. She said that if she were to complete her program of study, she would probably avoid any further work with him as she did not trust him to "do the right thing". Helen also commented that, although she knew that generalisations were inappropriate, the experience had given her "a jolt" about her regard for academics in general. She said that having since found out about academic integrity for staff, she was much more sceptical about their status than she had been.

Case 2

Penny, the Honours supervisor of student Hua, was on sabbatical leave from Scarland University for a considerable part of the first half of the academic year. In her absence, a colleague, Wendy, acted as supervisor and guided Hua through the research clarification and literature review stages. When Penny returned from leave she resumed supervision duties and met with Hua to review progress.

Within a few weeks, Wendy noticed a sabbatical leave article under Penny's authorship in the internal Scarland University newsletter. A substantial portion of the article was an almost exact copy of sections of a chapter from Hua's developing thesis. Wendy checked with Hua but found that she had no knowledge of it.

Hua's initial response to seeing the article was one of being "dumbstruck". She re-scanned the article at least twice before pointing out her work in it. She was visibly "shocked" and used exactly that description of her feelings. When she began to discuss the matter, her shock was replaced by an indignant, almost rhetorical puzzlement:

"What do you do about something like this? I mean, she's my supervisor. If we did something like this we'd be torn to shreds. Are supervisors allowed to do this?"

When the position was clarified for Hua, she immediately decided her options for action were “too scary”. She said she was convinced that taking any action might jeopardise her thesis. She was not even prepared to raise the matter with Penny as she felt that doing so might expose her to victimisation. Even though she regarded Penny as “not really that sort of person”, Hua was not prepared to take any chances. After discussing a change of supervisor, Hua still felt that she wanted to avoid any sort of uneasiness or embarrassment, so she chose to continue with Penny. She decided that she would “forget about it” unless it was essential to protect her. She also affirmed that she probably would not even raise it after graduation as it would be “too awkward” for her. However, she was determined that the “the word will get around”. At the end of the interview she said she was “simmering” and there was clear evidence of vengefulness.

Cases 3 – 7 which follow illustrate quite a different type of plagiarism and one that is more difficult to ascertain – the misappropriation of ideas – the unacknowledged use or arguably, theft, of intellectual property but not necessarily from published or even written sources. All of these cases illustrate *plagiarism through the abuse of collegial privilege* – the theft of ideas in the realm of academic teaching practices.

Case 3

At Scarland University, Winona has established and maintained a record of outstanding student evaluation of her final year undergraduate course LML401. Stuart and David passed the course as part of their undergraduate degree and were subsequently employed as post-graduate tutors in a second year undergraduate course PLG202 with a less positive reputation.

In the PLG202 course-preparation meetings with the substantive staff, Stuart and David reported on some of the successful techniques and visual aids that Winona had employed. The syllabus of PLG202 was subsequently re-orientated to include the content, techniques and aids which had proven to be successful in LML401.

The situation became evident when Stuart and David approached Winona in the coffee lounge to share with her the good news about the success of her approach when applied in PLG202.

Although she said that it was not the first time that she had experienced this sort of behaviour, Winona described her first reaction as “gutted”. She had “expected more” of her colleagues responsible for PLG202. However, she was still prepared to seek an indirect resolution of the problem. Interestingly, her focus was on the problem of syllabus content rather than on behaviour - she was more passionate about the reinstatement of original syllabus flow than the academic integrity matter. When queried about this, Winona said that:

“I’m at that time in my career where I’ve come to expect that this sort of thing might happen. I’m more interested in putting the problem right than getting locked into accusations and arguments with Sally. At the end of the day, I still have to work with her so I want to act properly even if she doesn’t.”

Winona identified one of the PLG202 substantive staff members, Sally, as being very ambitious and following a promotion plan that required evidence of successful teaching. Winona had no doubt that Sally knew she was “jumping the syllabus queue” since she had previously discussed with Winona the very topic and approach which had been ‘stolen’. Winona believed that the second substantive staff member was probably “oblivious”, while she referred to the postgraduate tutors as “innocents”. She described her feelings as “overwhelmingly disappointed” as she had expected better of Sally. She also felt “very annoyed” that she now carried the responsibility for resolving the matter diplomatically. She did not believe that there was anything to be gained by “going formal” but, sinisterly, commented that she had “a long memory.” At the end of the interview she described herself as “feeling quite distressed”.

Case 4

At another of the Scarland University campuses, experienced and highly-successful staff member, Dan, worked in a teaching team responsible for the design and delivery of a sequence of courses. Maria, a newer, less-experienced team member worked closely with Dan in the 3rd Year class before assuming responsibility for the 2nd Year class.

On several occasions as Dan passed Maria's 2nd Year classroom, he noted that she appeared to be replicating his 3rd Year course. At team meetings, rather than being confrontational, he provided very leading prompts for Maria to report any change of syllabus but she did not do so. His suspicions and fears were confirmed the following semester when his 3rd Year class continually objected that they had already covered the content, experienced the methods and explored the aids at 2nd Year.

Dan's reactions were very similar to those of Winona in the previous case study. Although he mentioned being surprised, he said it was "more of a disappointment type of surprise than a shock." He had also been the victim of previous similar incidents. He explained that Maria was a little unconfident in her own teaching and that she wanted, above all, to secure her status and begin a promotional pathway. He had "expected better of her" and was as disappointed in what he regarded as a "betrayal" of trust in their relationship more than a breach of academic practice. However, he did admit to being "extremely annoyed" at the impact on his teaching and the fact that he was exposed to the possibility of negative feedback for repetition of course material. He had to reformulate syllabus content very quickly and said he was "mightily pissed off" with this extra task. He intended making it clear in future course meetings that the syllabus was not to be changed without due process but he did not want the awkwardness of making it seem specific to Maria because he had to continue working with her.

Case 5

Case 5 is another version of plagiarism through the abuse of collegial privilege in the theft and transfer of ideas.

Dennis was employed at Beauchamp University on an hourly-paid basis. He was given a very thorough induction and continuous academic development support by Brian, an experienced, well-organised and thoroughly-prepared course co-ordinator. At the end of the semester, Dennis was appointed to teach in the same area at Greystones University. Brian discovered that the course he had designed, prepared and delivered had been copied in its entirety by Dennis in his work at Greystones.

Brian described his initial reaction as “furious – it’s nothing more than theft.” He explained the intensity of his anger as being more that his suspicions had been confirmed.

“I half-expected something like this. I had a feeling that he wasn’t the sort of person you could trust. I knew I shouldn’t have trusted him.”

Brian was adamant that he would not refer the matter to Beauchamp University as an intellectual property case because he felt that the publicity would reflect badly on him whatever the outcome. He was also uncertain of the outcome if the case became a legal matter.

“You can never tell what’s going to happen when the lawyers get involved. All I know is that even if I win I’ll lose, and if I lose that’s twice the problem. It’s too big a risk.”

Brian was determined to seek vengeful justice. He would use his professional network and his links with Beauchamp staff to ensure that Dennis’s behaviour was known. He would also do what he could “off the record” to ensure that Greystones never again offered Dennis employment.

Case 6

Cases 6 presents an extension of plagiarism through the abuse of collegial privilege in teaching practices. However, unlike Cases 3 - 5, on this occasion the specific and original teaching practice was purloined and used not in teaching but as an exclusive research and publication venture.

In a period of economic stringency, a workplace-orientated course at Greystones University needed staff to cover the semester absence of one of the usual team. The course, like others, was also faced with the need to reduce costs. An experienced and creative staff member, Alan, was drafted into the vacant position at very short notice.

The course syllabus was sufficiently flexible to allow Alan considerable negotiation space with his group of students. Alan liaised with his students and their host

workplaces to initiate a creative, innovative practice which utilised technology to reduce costs and improve quality. The course evaluation showed that the approach had received a markedly more positive response than other groups. Alan was asked to detail his approach to Louise, the course co-ordinator.

During the following semester, Alan was contacted by colleague Garry, a technology-specialist. Garry wanted to know about the technological applications in Alan's approach. Alan suggested the possibility of collaborative research into the approach. In considerable embarrassment, Garry expressed his surprise that Alan was not already involved in Louise's research project on the topic. Louise had co-opted Garry for his technological expertise (which she lacked) but had neither invited nor conferred with Alan. Furthermore, she had already submitted a successful internal research funding proposal based entirely on Alan's innovation but excluding him.

Alan described himself as being "furious" and "frustrated" initially. The anger was attributed to Louise's "downright dishonesty" while the frustration reflected his perception of being in an uncomfortable situation to which there was no easy solution and which would have long-term and widespread effects.

Later, he described feeling that his professionalism and creativity had been "violated" by Louise in her ambitious drive for recognition and promotion. He felt no animosity towards Garry whom he saw as an innocent victim of Louise's corruption. However, he did feel that his previous excellent relationship with Garry was now less comfortable.

Alan decided not to work directly in any way with Louise, to withdraw from aspects of the program where she operated, and to take every opportunity to "spread the word". He predicted that, although he would maintain public professionalism, privately his anger and retribution could smoulder for a long time. He asserted that there was "no point" in trying to resolve the matter as he stood to lose for being the 'whistle blower' regardless of the outcome. He said that "these things are better handled behind closed doors."

Case 7

Louise figures again in Case 6 as something of a serial abuser of collegial privilege but this time through the theft of ideas from a collegial focus group.

A number of Greystones University colleagues with a shared interest met regularly as a focus group. Interaction topics were broad-ranging and usually reading-based.

Discussion invariably spread beyond the immediacy of the reading. Alan's experience and creativity often provoked colleagues to think more carefully and more laterally.

In one such discussion, Alan detailed ideas and arguments about an aspect of the group's work that could effect a dramatic positive change. He reported the positive feedback he and another colleague, Sarah, had received from their experiences in using the suggested change in previous times at a different Greystones campus.

Within a relatively short time, Sarah contacted Alan to alert him to the fact that Louise had subsequently published a paper with a colleague from another university on exactly the work that Sarah and Alan had been using, claiming it to be innovative practice.

Sarah was "livid but not surprised" as she had come to expect this behaviour from Louise. Although a previous victim of Louise's, Alan said that he felt more shock than the previous time as he thought that she might have changed her behaviour. He had also expected that someone else might have confronted her in the meantime about her habitual theft of ideas.

Both Sarah and Alan said that, while they felt gratified that their ideas had been expanded and published, they could not condone the way in which this was done and the lack of acknowledgement or invitation to collaborate. Sarah and Alan both withdrew from the focus group but chose not to raise the matter with Louise.

There are two post-scripts to this case. Sarah's parting comment that "at least she won't steal from me anymore" rang hollow as, within a very short time, she found that Louise had plagiarised Sarah's pilot research project to form part of a successful large-scale research grant application.

The second post-script is that Alan had suffered similar experiences with two other staff members who had published under their own names after extensive input from him. In neither case did the staff members suggest a collaborative effort or acknowledge his ideas. In both cases he could only predict negative outcomes for himself so he did not pursue them formally.

Cases 8 and 9 broaden the focus from the immediate internal academic life to report on two academic integrity interactions with external organisations. These are included as examples of academic dishonesty beyond the immediacy of the home university.

Case 8

Donna is an experienced and highly-regarded teacher-educator with acknowledged expertise in the field of classroom management. Her input on the topic in her own course, other courses, and professional development activities, has consistently received outstanding positive evaluation.

Concern about student behaviour in schools prompted the funding of a state-wide teacher development project. Donna contacted the departmental project team to discuss possibilities for collaboration. In the subsequent meeting, the departmental representative asked Donna to present details of her approach. Donna provided a broader conceptual framework which she had developed and used for a number of years.

The key departmental publication from the project incorporated Donna's conceptual framework as the basis for all sections of the publication but did not acknowledge its creator. When contacted, the department confirmed that the meeting had occurred and that the conceptual framework and other material had been presented. However, it denied plagiarism and refuted Donna's intellectual property ownership despite being unable to cite any other source for the material.

Donna's initial response to the inclusion of her framework in the publication had been pride and pleasure. However, when she realised that such an obvious replication of her work was not acknowledged, she "couldn't believe it." She became increasingly "churned up". Donna reported fluctuating between incredulity and

outrage. At first she was almost forgiving of what might have been a technical oversight, but the department's denial and refutation left her feeling "violated" professionally even though she knew that she was the victim. The incident caused Donna to suffer disturbed sleep and depression. In an attempt to help, an associate had reassured Donna not to worry because:

"it's well known that that's the politics in there. They'll take whatever they can from anyone without a second thought."

Donna has decided to let as many people as possible know of the incident and to assert publicly that she created the conceptual framework. She has also warned colleagues about the need to protect their intellectual property when working with the department. She avoids any contact with the department which she feels has "betrayed the profession's standards" and abused her trust. Although this has the potential to affect her career adversely, she is prepared to accept that rather than "demeaning collaboration with untrustworthy people."

Case 9

The final case study concerns Tara, a Greystones University Ph.D. candidate with an assiduous eye for detail. Her area of study was one in which there was very limited literature. She accessed the Ph.D. thesis of a Beauchamp University staff member who, along with the thesis and several associated publications, was lauded on the Beauchamp University web page. Tara identified extensive plagiarism in the thesis and publications.

After consultation, Tara decided that she would alert Beauchamp University. An early response from the University 'system' was clearly an attempt at damage control, advising Tara that the University was obligated to reveal her name in its enquiries and asking if she still wished to pursue the matter.

Tara had entered the world of the 'whistle-blower' but, despite severe misgivings, decided that her commitment to academic integrity was such that she must continue. The subsequent response from the relevant Dean at the University was much more conciliatory, supporting Tara's concern, acting to maintain her

anonymity and promising to examine the matter. Tara was eventually advised that her perception of plagiarism was accurate and that the Ph.D. had been rescinded.

Tara described her initial reaction to discovering the plagiarism as “really jittery”, a nervous and not particularly pleasant excitement. She expressed disbelief that an academic would plagiarise in a Ph.D. thesis, that a university would fail to detect it, and that the perpetrator would escalate the breach in publications. She also felt offended that the perpetrator’s actions, through a sort of guilt by association, somehow reflected on her and other Ph.D. candidates.

Tara experienced strong anxiety and self-doubt at Beauchamp University’s initial response warning that her anonymity could be at risk. She felt very “exposed” as a ‘whistle blower’, vulnerable to the threat of the unknown. She wrestled with the tensions between her commitment to academic honesty and the unknown perceived threat. Tara sought support in her decisions and actions, particularly given the number of times she was advised to “pretend you didn’t notice it” and that “this sort of thing happens all the time”.

Discussion

If these case studies, drawn from a very small sample of Australian university life, are at all representative, then they support the claim that publicly-reported cases of plagiarism by academics are, indeed, the tip of the iceberg. Plagiarism, especially the unacknowledged, use of colleagues’ ideas and work, appears commonplace. It seems to be embedded in the ‘private world’ of everyday academic culture even though the ‘public face’ presents quite a different image. It manifests itself in types that might appear to be low-level but which always impact negatively on victims and can be highly destructive of the academic culture.

In the advice given to the victims in these cases, there is evidence of cultural tolerance of academic dishonesty – “Ignore it, you can’t win” (Donna); “That’s just the way she is” (of Louise); “Pretend you didn’t notice it” (Tara). Even experienced academics chose to tolerate it in their decisions not to confront it. This attitude provides one insight into how plagiarism by academics can mangle behind a cultural veneer of honesty. The propensity to hide or ignore incidents is abetted by

the perceived cost of exposing them. 'Threat' looms large and strongly in the perceptions of the victims. Processes that require surrender of anonymity escalate this. Even in power-equivalent relationships, the spectre of 'ripple effect' discomfort in future relationships with colleagues curtails victims' willingness to confront perpetrators with whom they share a workplace. Victims recognise that perpetrators have breached the code of academic integrity, but they appear to be convinced that reporting them, although being the "right thing to do" (Dan), carries more disadvantages than advantages.

The reactions of the victims in these case studies varied in type, intensity and duration, but emotional turmoil was common to all cases. Following the typical initial response of disbelief and, sometimes, self-doubt, several victims recounted intense negative feelings such as fury and violation. For some, these were immediate; for others, strong negatives such as vengeance emerged later. Some victims regarded incidents as personal insults; others, at times, almost discounted them as normal occurrences, perhaps as an avoidance technique masquerading as benign forgiveness. After all, if perpetrators' actions can be 'explained', then they can almost be excused, thus removing the impetus for confrontation. University policy offers student breaches no such rationalistic leniency.

Another commonality in the cases is the iniquitous prospect of 'whistle-blowing' – seen by victims as having much more potential for harm than good and thus, not usually an option to be pursued. The harm is of two sorts, the prospect of a potentially enervating process, and the fearful uncertainty about outcomes regardless of the proof of the alleged act. The perception of potential harm is exacerbated when a privilege of position factor exists in which there is a perceived imbalance in status and power between the perpetrator and the victim. This is clearly evident in relationships where the perpetrator has the positional power to affect the victim's future, such as in assessing work or capability, but it can also influence inter-academic dynamics depending on the sphere of influence of the individuals.

Without exception, trust and expectations of honesty, arguably the basis of the academic enterprise, were immediate casualties. Wherever practically possible,

victims disassociated themselves from perpetrators and usually went 'underground'. Deliberate revenge strategies using informal networks to 'out' the perpetrators were mooted in place of formal process. These flowed on into a corrosion of professional interaction and a conscious workplace distancing. In some cases this meant that staff members removed themselves to work individually, not trusting or sharing with colleagues. Donna was determined to take this line even though she realised that it could mean further cost to her career.

The cases illustrate how academic malpractice can promote the emergence of a disintegrated and dysfunctional culture in which individual tensions and the associated micro-politics militate against the synergy of collegiality. Sub-surface cultural currents in which grudges, mistrust and even personal vendettas lurk, are unlikely to promote an honest and robust academic culture. At a time when teamwork, joint enterprise, partnerships and collegiality are core parts of the rhetoric of university research and teaching, experiences with academic dishonesty create a destructive contra-flow.

Conclusion

These illustrative case studies have been selected from a much larger catalogue. They address an aspect of academic malpractice that is relatively unrepresented in the research and literature and which is deserving of much broader and deeper research – the impact on the 'victims' and on the contextual culture. Academic malpractice emerges as much more of a pervasive, ingrained, 'undiscussable' presence than a culture of honesty assumes.

Ultimately, an academic culture of honesty begins and ends with the integrity of academics. The pressure to publish, to attract positive teaching evaluations and to secure research funding does not reduce or negate the personal responsibility of each academic when making decisions about academic honesty.

Although the limitations are acknowledged of such a small scale sample in terms of generalisability and representivity, these case studies suggest that the rhetoric of academic honesty might, in practice, be a case of the proverbial 'Do as I say, not as I do', reflecting Martin's (2007, p. 21) observation that "[M]ost people subscribe to

high principles, but living up to them is another matter.” In other words, the cases question the core assumption of a culture of academic honesty and query whether the incongruence in the scrutiny of students and the practices of academic staff might be little more than a case of the pot calling the kettle black.

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