Academic Integrity Annual Report

Academic Year 2020 (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020)

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The Student Guide to Academic Integrity at Metropolitan State University states: "The integrity of the learning process is important in an educational context. Students must present their own original work to their teacher in order to demonstrate and improve their mastery of concepts and skills. Academic dishonesty undermines this relationship between learner and teacher that forms the foundation of higher learning" (p. 3).

The violations Metropolitan State University has identified include: Academic fraud, academic misconduct, cheating, collusion, double submission, fabrication, falsification, forgery, and plagiarism. Definitions of each of the violations can be found in the Student Guide to Academic Integrity (pages 9-11). Additionally, University Policy #2190 and University Procedure #219 provide specific information.
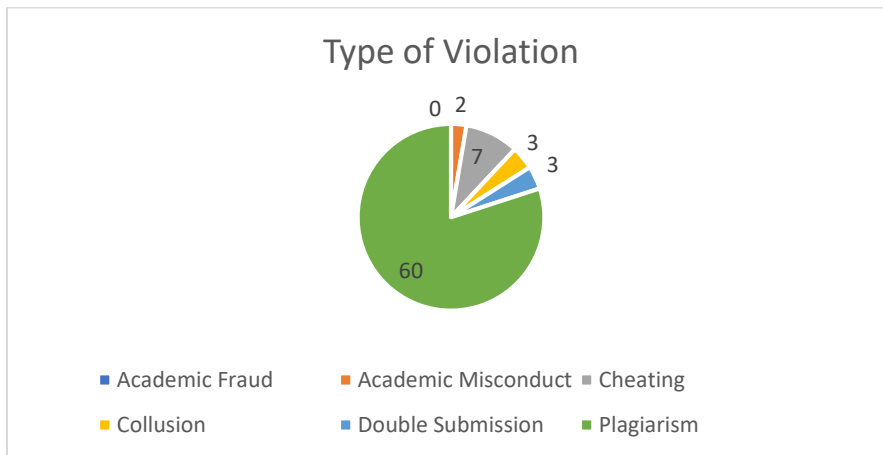
Violations

During the 2020 Fiscal Year, there were 72 total cases reported through the office of the Provost. It took an average of 5.01 calendar days to respond and issue violation letters and applicable sanctions. This response could have been decreased with some help by faculty:

- Submitting all documents in PDF formats
- Submitting the syllabus each time
- Submitting the supporting documentation to show the violation (ie: TurnItIn document, references to plagiarized materials, copies of exams, etc.)

Students can be submitted for one or more violations in the categories of academic fraud, academic misconduct, cheating, collusion, double submission, and plagiarism. The majority of cases (60 violations, 83.3%) were related to plagiarism. Of the 72 total cases (see Figure 1), 11 involved cases that had one or more violation categories at submission. The violations with two or more categories included a majority of plagiarism and collusion violations (6 violations, 54.5%) or cheating and collusion violations (4 cases, 36.4%).

Figure 1. Type of Academic Integrity Violation

Reasons for Differences in Violation Reporting to Sanction

Additionally, it is important to note that sometimes cases came in that were adjusted for the level of violation. In total, there were 55 requests at the first, 15 requests at the second, and 2 requests at the third-level (see Figure 2). No violations were processed at the third-level. The most common reason a violation would be processed at a higher level is because there were prior violations, which the submitting faculty member would not have known. Because it could be a second offense, it is then processed as a second-level violation. This happened 4 times in fiscal year 2020. Some common reasons why violations were processed at a lower level include:

- A single faculty member submitting multiple reports the same day wanting the second report to mean a second violation had occurred even though the student was not necessarily aware of the first nor had they received the opportunity to go through the academic integrity workshop
- Faculty members using the language of the second-level violations, "committing plagiarism that exceeds the first-level violation threshold (such as using unattributed sources more than once within a major paper or submitting an assignment written by someone else)"
  - Example: student copied and pasted a discussion post without citation- about 1% of the total grade of the class, and student had no prior offenses
  - Example: student colluded on final exam with another student, student had no prior offenses, and was worth only 10% of the total grade

While not incredibly common, 10 cases (13.89%) were processed at lower levels than originally submitted by the faculty members (see Figure 3).

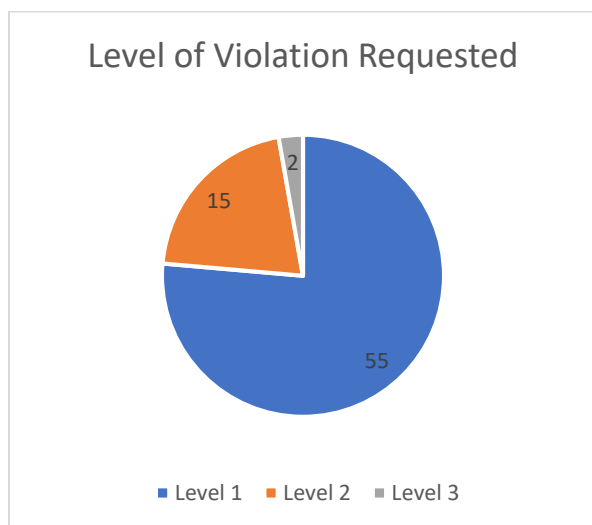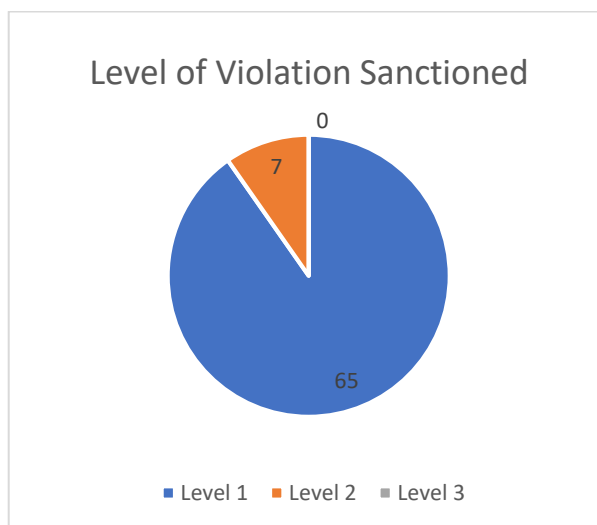| Figure 2. Level of Violation Requested	Figure 3. Level of Violation Sanctioned

Level of Violation Requested

Level 1: 55, Level 2: 15, Level 3: 2

■ Level 1 ■ Level 2 ■ Level 3

Level of Violation Sanctioned

Level 1: 65, Level 2: 7, Level 3: 0

■ Level 1 ■ Level 2 ■ Level 3

The Associate Provost for Student Success reviews each violation reported to assess the level of the violation and sanction the student appropriately. One of the common reasons for difference between the violation requested and the violation sanctioned is the interpretation of the language "committing plagiarism that exceeds the first-level violation threshold (e.g. using unattributed sources more than once within a major paper or submitting an assignment written by someone else)" (University Procedure #219). In an effort to maintain some level of equity among all potential violations across all disciplines and colleges, the Associate Provost has only assessed a first-time violation at this level when it exceeds at least 25% of the total grade for the course. At anything less than that, a student could still potentially pass the course with a satisfactory grade even if awarded a zero on the assignment that is part of the sanction for first-level violations.

Common Barriers to Understanding Academic Integrity Concepts

In reviewing cases from 2017- 2020, the Associate Provost found some common barriers that existed for students who had academic integrity violations reported. Those include:

- English as a second, third, or fourth language
- Multiple languages and differences in verbal and written language
- Cultural differences in how plagiarism is defined and interpreted

Additionally, based on the quizzes completed at the first-level academic integrity workshop, many some students seem to believe that every cases of possible integrity violation should be defined in policy or procedure.

Additional Challenges to Academic Integrity

Internally at Metroplitan State University, the Associate Provost has also noticed some trends with faculty reporting:

- Certain colleges or schools are more likely to report than others
- Certain violations have been elevated due to the language in the current procedure that states "willful violation of the ethical code of the profession for which the student is preparing" is a third-level violation" ([University Procedure #219](#))

When paired with one or more of the commong barriers to understanding for students, there is an elevated level of violations that can have longstanding impacts to students.

Demographics

As noted in the diagrams below, the violations reported through the [Academic Integrity Violation Report](#) are a majority undergraduate (see Figure 4). 64 (88.89%) were undergraduate students. 6 (8.33%) were graduate students. 2 (2.78%) were doctoral sutdents. 44 (61.1%) were female, and 28 (38.9%) were male (as identified by ISRS) (see Figure 5).
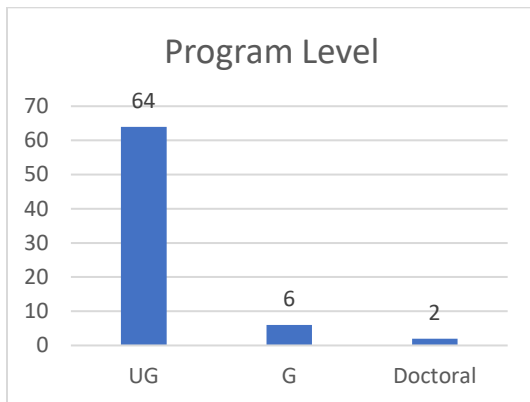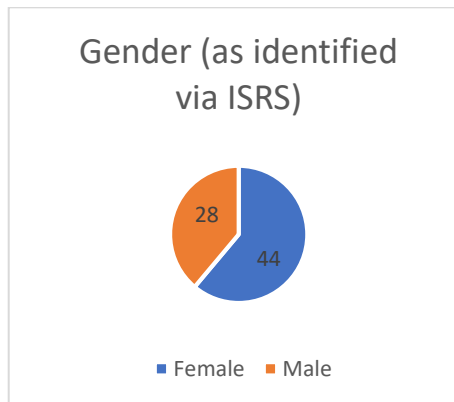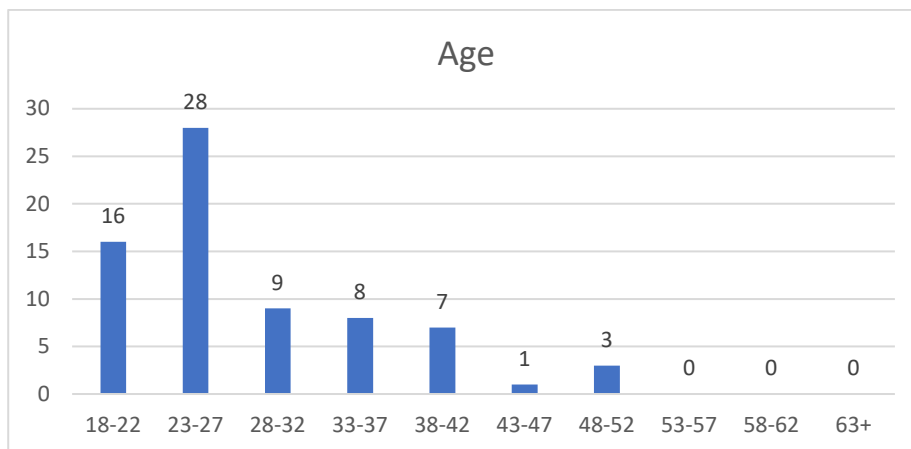
Figure 4. Program Level.   Figure 5. Gender.

Age ranges for those with violations were between 16-52 years old (see Figure 6), with a vast majority being under the age of 33 (73.6%).

Figure 6. Age

The distribution of cases (see Figure 7) among students from different races was a majority of Black or African American (35 students, 48.6% of total cases) or Asian (22 students, 30.6% of total cases). White students represented only 18.1% (13) of total cases. There was also 1 student of Hispanic decent and 1 of American Indian or Alaska Native.

Figure 7. Race.
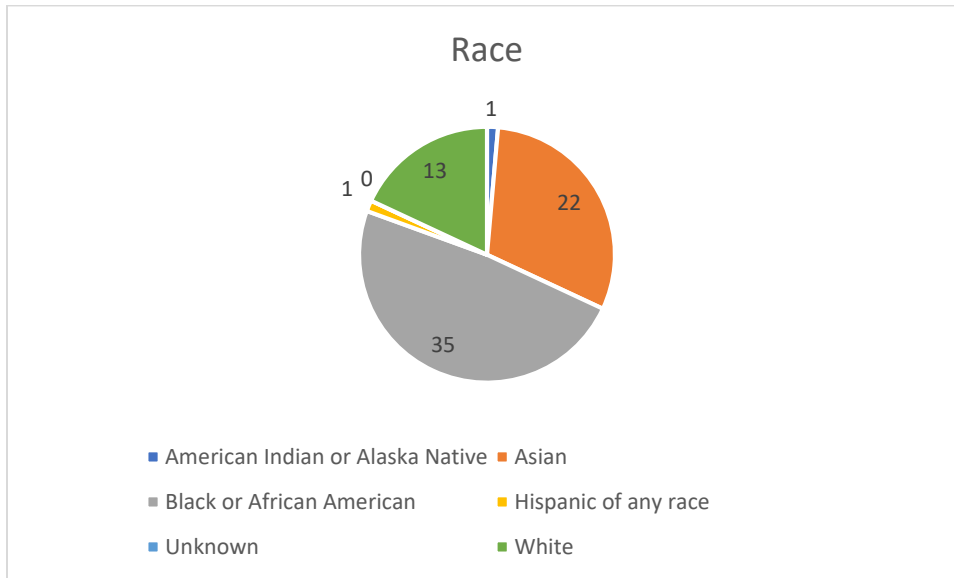
Future Considerations

In future iterations of this report, the Associate Provost for Student Success would like to be able to make comparisons of these categories to the total population at Metropolitan State University.

- College or School (perhaps even down to the departmental level)
- International Student Services coding
- Center for Accessibility Resources coding
- Further breakdown for Black or African American and Asian, whenever those updates become available in ISRS
- Success rates of the academic integrity workshops (scores and number of attempts to achieve a passing score of 80% or greater)

Additionally, policy and procedure revisions should include an informal process to resolve integrity violations (much like the grade appeals process).

If you have suggestions for additional analysis, please reach out to Associate Provost Bobbie Anderson at roberta.anderson@metrostate.edu.