


# *Academic Integrity at NC State University*



Survey Results and Action Plan  
For Chancellor Marye Anne Fox

October 16, 2001

Division of Undergraduate Affairs and  
the Office of Student Conduct

# *Purpose of the Survey*

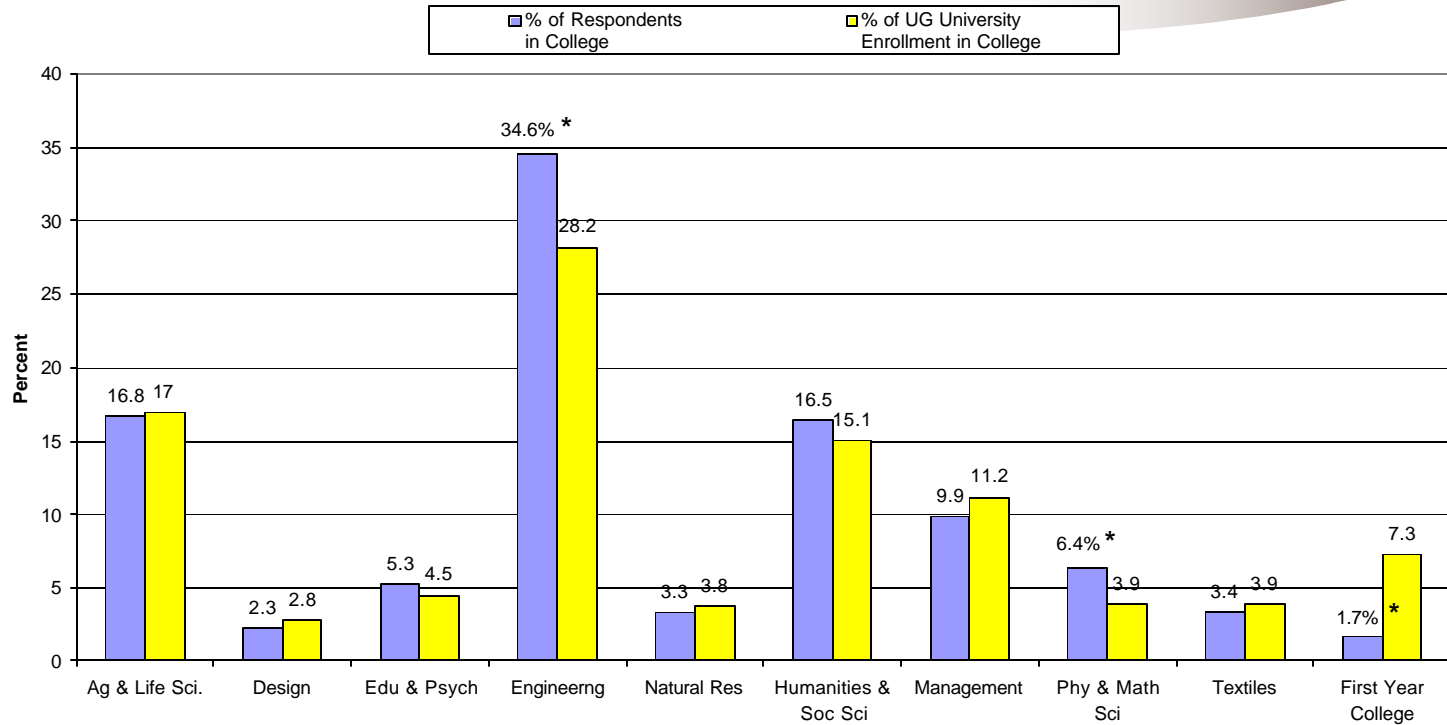
- To understand and articulate the behaviors, attitudes, and perceptions of students in respect to academic integrity at NC State
- To refine academic integrity educational programming for students and faculty

# *Methodology and Analyses*

- E-mailed web survey--random sample of 3,000 undergraduate students -- 30% return rate
- Simple descriptive analysis
- Pearson Correlation
- Stepwise Regression
- Open, Axial, and Selective Coding of qualitative responses

# Profile of Respondents by College

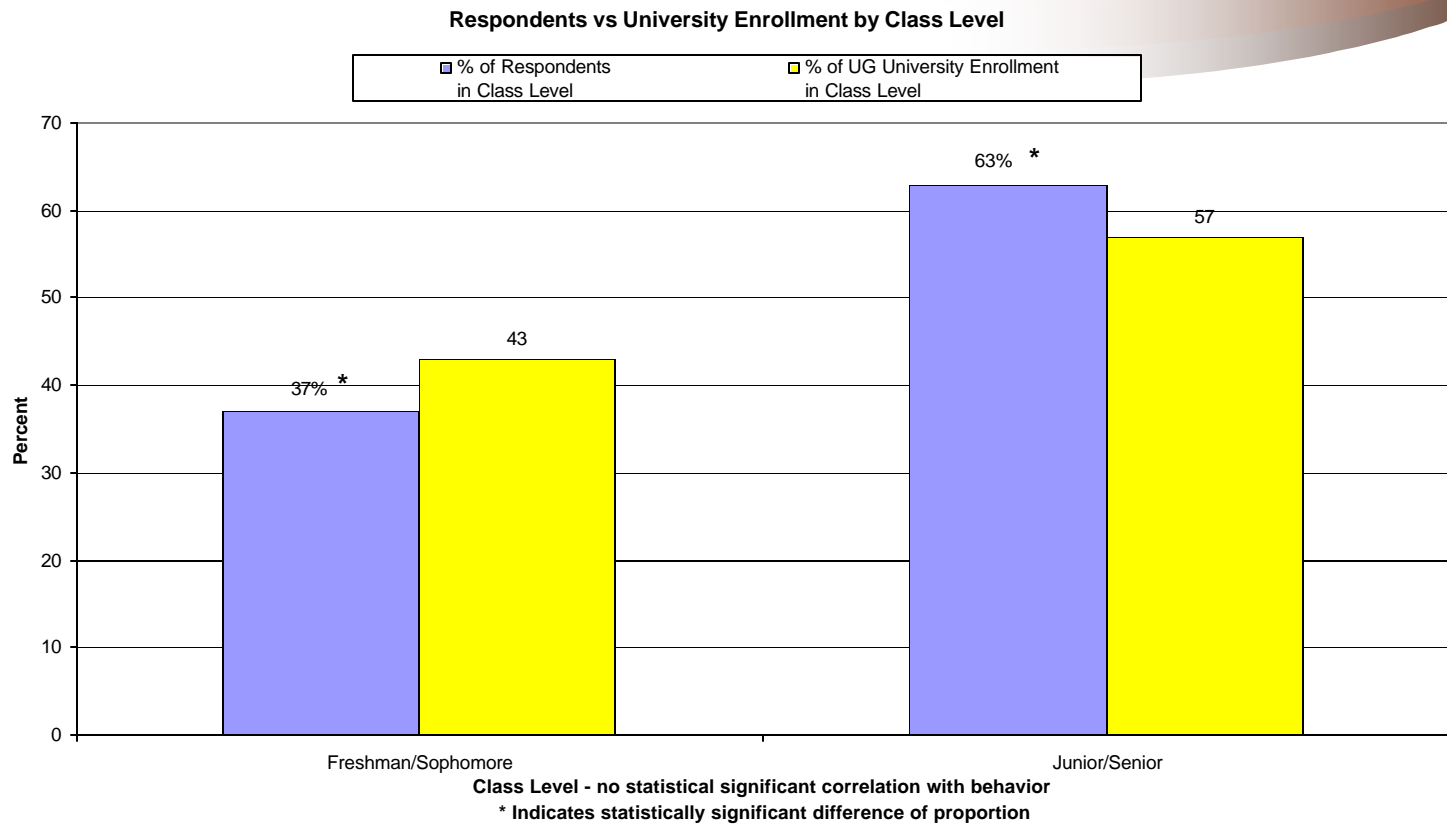
Respondents vs University Enrollment by College



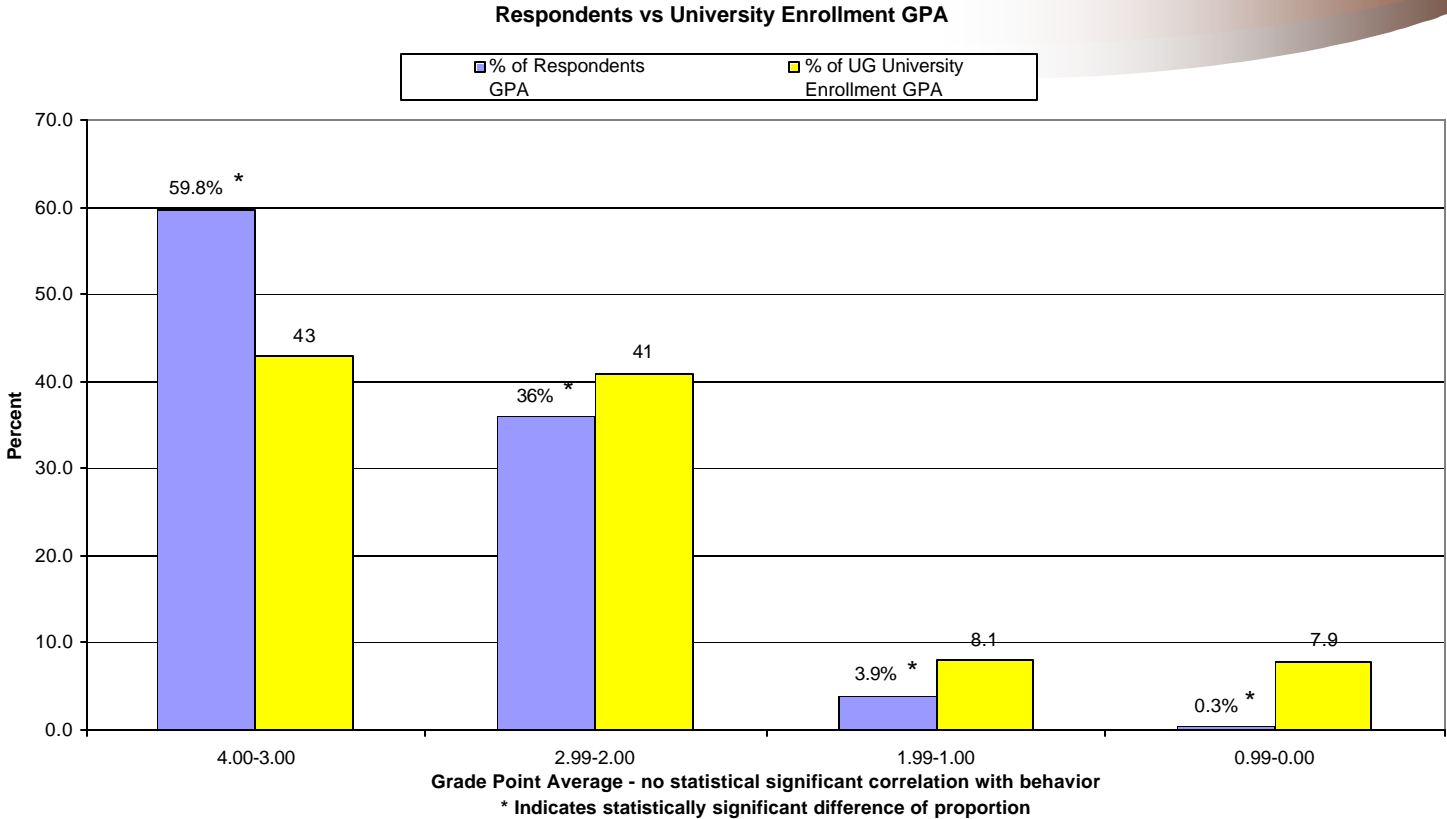
College - no statistical significant correlation with behavior

\* Indicates statistically significant difference of proportion

# Profile of Respondents by Classification



# Profile of Respondents by Current GPA



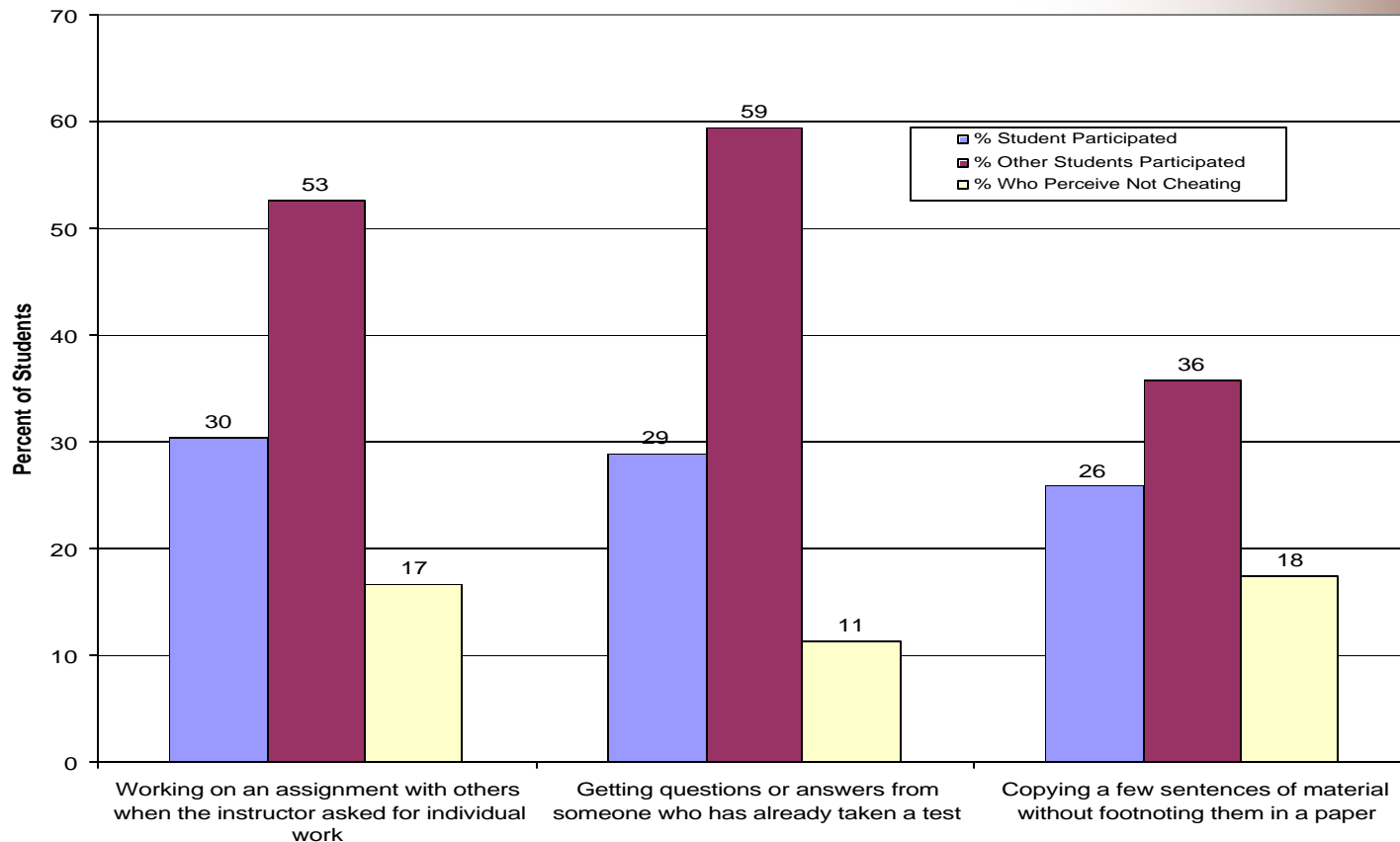
# *Students Reported Cheating*

- 67% of students who completed this section reported cheating at least once
  - ▣ National surveys report this number to average 75% in an academic year (McCabe et al.)
- 90% reported seeing others cheat at least once during the 2000-01 academic year
  - ▣ National surveys report this number to average 80% in an academic year (McCabe et al.)

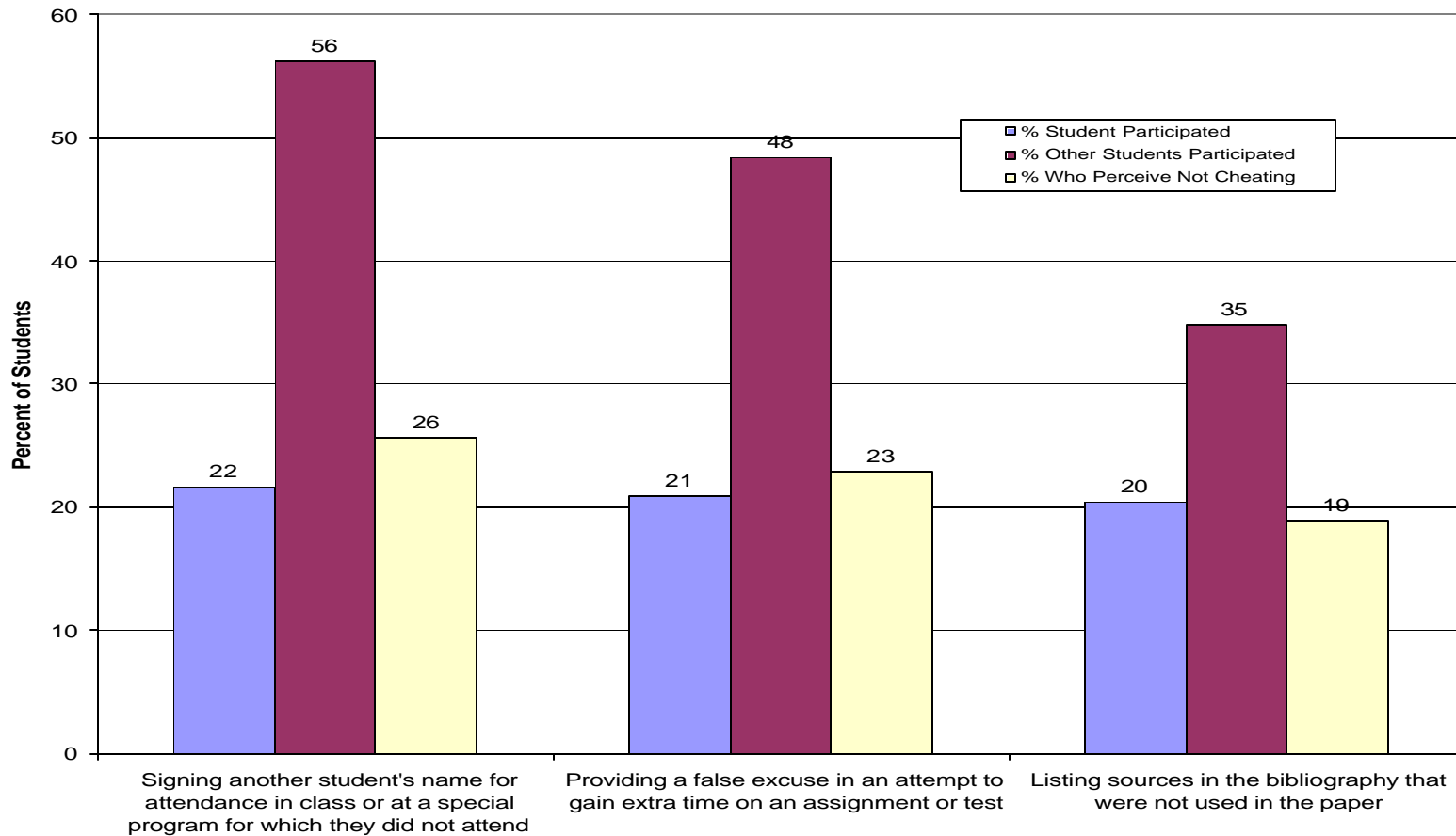
## *Possible Explanation of Numbers*

- Corresponding with national literature, the higher the student's GPA, the less likely s/he is to cheat. Our survey had a 59+% response rate from the 3.0 - 4.0 GPA range.
- Corresponding with national literature, older students tend to cheat less than younger students. Our survey had a 60+% response rate from juniors and seniors.
- Factors of self-reporting.

# *Most Frequent Types of Cheating*



# *Most Frequent Types of Cheating*



## *Three Themes Arose . . .*

- Disconnect between students' definition of cheating and their cheating behavior
- Desire for definition of cheating to be made clear and for consequences of cheating to be enforced
- Desire for reasons for cheating to be understood and taken into consideration when being sanctioned for their behavior

## *First Theme*



*There is a Disconnect Between the  
Definition of Cheating, Students'  
Classification of Their Own  
Behaviors, and Their Self-Reported  
Cheating Behavior*

# *Quantitative Findings*

- 61 % of students who completed this section reported their perception of at least one cheating behavior as “not cheating”
- National surveys report this number to average 52% for institutions similar to NC State (McCabe et al.)

# *Quantitative Findings*

- Of the students who reported they would never, under any circumstances, cheat-- 58.8% admitted to having cheated at least once in at least one of the ways specified on the survey.
- 40.7% of those 58.8% considered at least one of the cheating behaviors as “not cheating”.

## *Second Theme*



Desire for definition of cheating to be made clear and for consequences of cheating to be enforced

# *Qualitative Findings*

- Students believe cheating occurs at NC State but
  - sometimes students cheat and don't know they are cheating for several different reasons
  - students don't know what cheating is unless the instructor makes it clear what it is and makes the consequences for cheating clear

# *Qualitative Findings*

- Students want their instructors to “do something about the cheating”:
  - define what constitutes cheating for their courses and discipline,
  - clarify the consequences for cheating,
  - assign materials and homework that matter,
  - make up new tests each semester, and
  - have smaller classes.

# *Qualitative Findings*

- Students feel that sometimes instructors don't do anything about cheating because
  - the institution won't support them in their accusations of students;
  - the “red tape” of reporting students is too complicated to deal with;
  - the instructors don't have time to address cheating; or
  - the instructors are too lazy to address cheating.

## *Third Theme*



Students want their reasons for cheating to be understood and taken into consideration when being sanctioned for their behavior

# *Qualitative Findings*

- Students think that there are reasons that students cheat that should be taken into consideration when punishing students. Those reasons are
  - cheating because of performance pressure;
  - personal problems that make it difficult or impossible to study;
  - unrealistic expectations from instructors; and
  - meaningless or irrelevant assignments.

# *Honor Code Update*

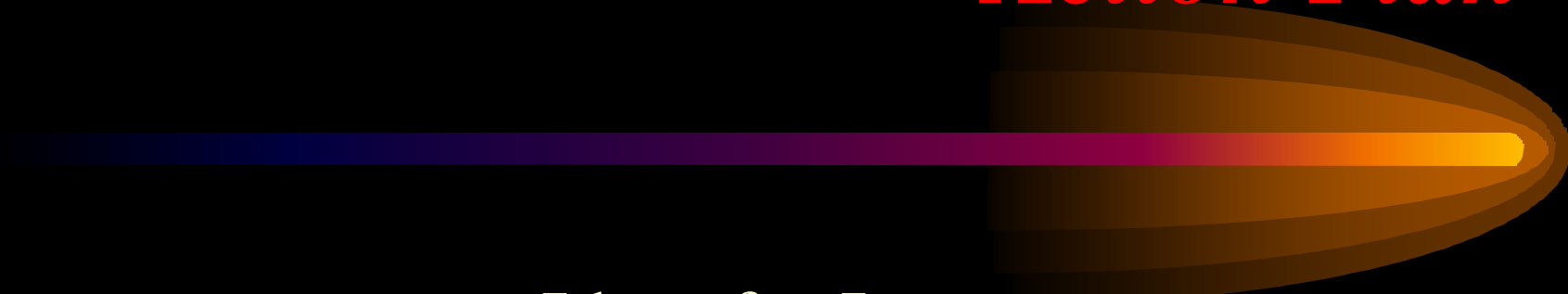
- 9.9% of the students responding to this survey agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that “Other students believe students should be punished for not reporting cheating when they know it has occurred.”
- 13.6 % agreed or strongly agreed with the statement as it applied to themselves.

# *Honor Code Update*

- Traditional Honor Code systems have four key elements: a required honor pledge, student involvement in the process, unproctored exams, and a requirement to report violations (Cole and Kiss, 2000).
- “Modified” Honor Codes, becoming increasingly popular at large institutions, consist of selected Traditional Honor Code elements (McCabe and Pavela, 2000).
- The NC State Code of Student Conduct meets the “Modified” Honor Code criteria. The elements of the NC State Code that are consistent with the traditional Honor Code are student involvement in the process and the use of an honor pledge (optional).
- The follow institutions have Modified Honor Codes comparable to NC State’s current Code: University of Maryland at College Park, University of California-Davis, University of Georgia, University of Tennessee, and Kansas State University(McCabe and Pavela, 2000) .

*Action Plan*

Ideas for Improvement



# *Do Policies Regarding Sanctions for Cheating Align with Students' Perceptions?*

- Students want to know that sanctions and their perceptions of the level of “seriousness” for the behavior match.
  - ▮ Students participated in writing the sanctions.
  - ▮ Sanctions do depend on circumstances (except for double infractions).

# *What Are We Doing to Educate Students about Policy and Sanctions?*

- New Student Orientation
  - ▲ brochures in packets, pointed out by Orientation Counselors
  - ▲ address by Paul Cousins, Office of Student Conduct
  - ▲ address by individual college deans and advisers

# *What are we doing? (cont'd.)*

- Office of Student Conduct
  - ☉ presentations and brochures at New Student Orientation (co-produced with the Division of Undergraduate Affairs)
  - ☉ presentations for classes
  - ☉ presentations for faculty meetings
  - ☉ presentation for athletes (fall 2001)
  - ☉ posters in classrooms
  - ☉ extensive website on academic integrity

# *How Can We Improve?*

- Student Engagement & Participation
  - Promote a student poster contest for updated classroom poster campaign
  - Offer OSC presentations for student organizations
  - Solicit ideas from Chancellor's Liaison Committee

# *How Can We Improve? (cont'd)*

- Faculty Engagement
  - find ways to walk faculty through the process
  - encourage faculty to commit to upholding academic integrity with students
    - address Faculty Senate
    - present at New Faculty Orientation

# *How can we improve? (cont'd.)*

- Administrative Engagement
  - letter from Chancellor Fox to all incoming students as part of acceptance or other mailings from Admissions
  - OSC presents at faculty meetings for departmental discussion and support
  - present to the Staff Senate

## *How can we improve? (cont'd)*

- host a week of special attention to academic integrity (guest speakers, debates, mock trials, etc.)
- OSC writes a special column for the *Technician* and/or an electronic newsletter on academic integrity
- OSC provides special packages for faculty to present in their classrooms
- NSO incorporates academic integrity in virtual orientation design



*Suggestions?*