EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICES FOR DEVELOPING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Mihai STANCIU[1], Alina SÎRGHIE[1], Florin Daniel LIPŞA[1], Carmen-Olguţa BREZULEANU[1]

e-mail : stanciuped@yahoo.fr

Abstract

The university represents a space of values and, on this basis, it becomes a creator of culture, innovation and civilization. That is why academic integrity has become a defining feature of university activity. Academic integrity considers the behavior of teaching staff, students and the entire academic community under the sign of: honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility (TEQSA, 2022, https://www.teqsa.gov.au/what-academic-integrity, accessed on 20.09.2022). Donald McCabe (1944-2016) is considered the "father" of research in this field. Important contributions to this issue were made by: Tracey Bretag (Australia), Cath Ellis (Australia), Sarah Elaine Eaton (Canada), Thomas Lancaster (Great Britain), Tomáš Foltýnek (Czech Republic) and Tricia Bertram Gallant (USA). Our communication aims to present some examples of international good practices regarding the promotion of academic integrity (Stanford, Oxford, Yale, Berkeley, MIT, Great Britain, Australia), which can also be used in the Romanian university environment. The approach we propose is a systemic, integrative and proactive one, to initiate the main actors of the university environment in the methodology of scientific research.

Key words: academic integrity, examples of good practice, scientific research methodology

Plato's dialogue "The myth of the cave" is enlightening in terms of axiology. People can only live under the sign of values: Paideia, Freedom, Truth, Idea (Eidos), which can only be interdependent (Stanciu M., 2018). They are the values that will show the person the way to the labyrinth of life. The education for values, according to Noica, means an opening enclosure. Through its vision and mission, the university is a space of values, it becomes a creator of culture, innovation and civilization. The development of universities in the world was based on several paradigms (Reisz R.D., 2018) (Brezuleanu C.O., ed., 2022).

Academic integrity has established itself as a defining feature of university activity. Academic integrity considers the behavior of teaching staff, students and the entire academic community under the sign of: honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility (TEQSA, 2022). One of the first studies on deceptive behavior was conducted by Hartshorne M., & May M.A. (1928), who administered eight types of deceptive behavior tests to approximately 11,000 children. Donald McCabe (1944-2016) is considered the "father" of research in this field. His research led to the establishment in 1992 of the International Center for Academic Integrity (ICAI). ICAI suggests a ten-step approach to developing academic integrity (Top Ten Ways, https://academicintegrity.org/resources/top-ten-ways). On 19.10.2022, ICAI will organize the International Day of Action Against Contract Cheating with the theme: *Addressing Contract Cheating and Beyond in the New Learning Environment* (https://academicintegrity.org/events-conferences/idoa-international-day-of-action-against-contract-cheating).

McCabe D.L. *et al* (1992) published the first multi-institutional study, which was conducted on 6096 students from 31 colleges and universities. Important contributions on this issue were made by: Tracey Bretag (Australia), Cath Ellis (Australia), Sarah Elaine Eaton (Canada), Thomas Lancaster (Great Britain), Tomáš Foltýnek (Czech Republic) and Tricia Bertram Gallant (USA).

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The purpose of this paper is to provide examples of good international practices regarding the promotion of academic integrity (Stanford, Oxford, Yale, Berkeley, MIT, Great Britain,

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[1] Iasi University of Life Sciences, Romania

Australia), which can also be used in the Romanian university environment. The approach we propose is a systemic, integrative and proactive one, leading to the initiation of the main actors of the university environment in the methodology of scientific research. As research methods we used the historical approach to the concept of "academic integrity" and the case study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

We witnessed, especially in the last decades of the 21st century, a process of massification of higher education. In the EU-27 there were 17.5 million tertiary education students in 2018 (EUROSTAT, 2020). Globally, the number of students increased from 137 million in 2013 to 220 million in 2021 and is expected to reach 300 million in 2030 (OECD, 2019) (World Bank, 2021).

Experimental research has shown an increase in cases of academic dishonesty, of plagiarism with the aim of passing exams specific to the university environment more easily and with good results (Walker J., 1998; Fly B. *et al*, 1997; Barrett D., 2011). Faced with this complex phenomenon of academic dishonesty, universities have been forced to take action.

In the USA, the first conceptions of academic integrity were influenced by British models, where moral values were transmitted through religious teachings (Fishman T.T., 2016). Research reports and the media have highlighted the presence of the phenomenon of academic dishonesty among American students. To mitigate the phenomenon, universities have initiated academic integrity courses and made efforts to develop a broader, integrative vision of the academic community with well-defined governance procedures. Also, instituting honor codes are a means of promoting academic integrity. Empirical research on the effectiveness of honor codes is lacking (McCabe D. L., Trevino L.K., 1993). These researchers initiated both quantitative (McCabe D.L., Trevino L.K., 1997) and qualitative (McCabe D.L., Trevino L.K., Butterfield, 1999) studies on the phenomenon of academic dishonesty. Also, at the US level, a research project was carried out on a period of 15 years in 99 campuses and which highlighted a reduction in dishonest phenomena in most of them (McCabe D.L., 2015).

Stanford University offers its students a well-defined academic conduct policy (the Honor Code, in effect since 1921) and a good collection of copyright and fair use resources (Stanford Copyright 2006).

The annual reports of the Executive Committee of Yale College (Yale 2005) indicate concern about a considerable number of cases of plagiarism each year. U.C. Berkeley also has clear policies and preventive procedures against academic dishonesty.

U.C. Berkeley also has clear policies and preventive procedures against academic dishonesty (Campus Policies, Berkeley Honore Code, Code of Student Conduct, Academic Integrity Through Course Design).

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) has well-defined policies and procedures for managing academic misconduct (Academic Integrity at MIT). Teachers are encouraged to educate students about acceptable academic behavior. MIT's Center for Writing and Communication (MIT Writing 2006) provides a platform to improve writing skills and explains various aspects of plagiarism.

In Europe, the UK is probably ahead of other countries in taking collective action against plagiarism. Most universities have online guides and tutorials available for students and researchers, helping them understand academic integrity and improve their writing skills. The UK higher education community has taken collective action by forming the JISC Plagiarism Advisory Service (JISC 2006), providing all UK institutes with access to an online plagiarism detection service (Cambridge, Oxford).

Oxford Brookes was the first institution in the UK to develop and implement a system of specialist officers to deal with students who did not comply with university regulations on academic conduct (Carroll J., 2005). Academic Integrity courses are also held (The Oxford Brookes Academic Integrity course), suggestions are given to avoid plagiarism.

Impact of Policies for Plagiarism in Higher Education across Europe (IPPHEAE) (2010-2013) was part-funded by the European Union under Erasmus, Lifelong Learning Programme, Modernisation of Higher Education. The project aims were to:

- Identify what was being done to combat plagiarism in HE institutions across Europe;
- Capture case studies showing examples of good practice;
- Evaluate new interventions for preventing or detecting plagiarism;
- Recommend methods for discouraging plagiarism and for detecting and dealing with plagiarism cases effectively and consistently;
- Help to uphold and improve standards and quality in Higher Education institutions across Europe and beyond (http://plagiarism.cz/ippheae/).

There was for the first time when a survey was conducted at the level of European Union. The student survey tracked four indicators:

1) Training: Do students receive training about academic writing and plagiarism?

2) Policies and procedures for handling plagiarism;

3) Have respondents experienced plagiarism;

4) Judgement on plagiarism.

Almost 5000 responses were received, but in some cases there were few responses (Hungary, Luxembourg, Sweden and Italy) or there are countries that did not respond (Belgium and the Netherlands). Regarding the implementation of training on plagiarism, Austria, Greece, Great Britain and Finland recorded scores of over 75%; on the opposite side were Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Poland, with a percentage less than 30%. Romania registered a percentage of 45%. Regarding the recognition of their own plagiarism, the highest percentages obtained by students that they had plagiarized were over 50% (Lithuania, Greece and Romania). More than 50% of students had this experience in their institutions (Slovakia, Lithuania, Latvia, Czech Republic and Greece). Regarding possible cases of plagiarism among teachers, the highest percentages were in Latvia, Lithuania, Greece and Malta, and the lowest percentages were recorded in Ireland, Romania, Spain, Great Britain and the Czech Republic. One of the findings of the study is that anti-plagiarism policies and procedures are common in some countries and rare in others. Many differences are related to the history and culture of some countries (Foltýnek T., Glendinning I., 2015).

Another example of good practice is the establishment in Geneva (18 June 2016) of the Institute of Research and Action on Fraud and Plagiarism in Academia (https://irafpa.org/en/). IRAFPA organized Proceedings of the 2nd International Colloquium for Research and Action on Academic Integrity, University of Coimbra, June 17-18, 2022.

It was established at the European level - European Network for Academic Integrity (ENAI), which is an association gathering educational institutions and individuals interested in maintaining and promoting academic integrity (https://academicintegrity.eu/wp/).

The Australian higher education legal framework consists of the following :

a) Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Act 2011. Established Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) is Australia's independent national quality assurance and regulatory agency for higher education (https://www.teqsa.gov.au/what-we-do).

b) Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (HES Framework). Applies to all higher education providers.

c) Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act). Applies to providers offering courses to students in Australia on student visas.

d) National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code 2018). A set of nationally consistent standards that protect international students.

On 4 September 2020, Australian Government amendments to the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Act 2011 came into force, making it an offense to provide or promote commercial academic cheating services, sometimes known as "contract cheating", services in higher education.

TEQSA supports providers to support academic integrity and address academic cheating, including by developing educational materials and sharing information about approaches to this issue, as well as working with providers and other stakeholders to support the implementation of these new laws (TEQSA, 2022).

TEQSA has published reports, materials on academic integrity: Academic integrity in the creative arts (20 June 2022); Toolkit to support quality assurance agencies to address academic integrity and contract cheating (17 July 2020); Guidance Note: Academic Integrity (28 March 2019); Report on student academic integrity and allegations of contract cheating by university students (12 March 2015).

CONCLUSIONS

Faced with the global problems of the contemporary world, universities must rethink their vision and mission (Bologna, 16.09.2022). "Universities acknowledge that they have a responsibility to engage with and respond to the aspirations and challenges of the world and to the communities they serve, to benefit humanity and contribute to sustainability." (Magna Charta Universitatum 2020).

There is a need for international and national institutions to develop and implement public policies regarding the promotion of academic integrity.

At the level of Romania, in-depth studies are needed regarding the behaviors of xxxx.

The vision we propose is an integrative one, which addresses all these issues (academic integrity, teaching centered on students' needs,

improving the assessment process, emphasizing formative assessment, introducing teachers and students to the methodology of scientific knowledge, stimulating participation in scientific and technological creation and innovation).

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