Editorial Volume 8(1)

I am pleased to welcome readers to Volume 8(1) of the *International Journal for Educational Integrity.*

Academic integrity has been in the headlines in Australia this year, with the national Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT) calling for commissioned projects on academic integrity for the first time. The last issue of the IJEI included refereed papers from the 5th *Asia Pacific Conference on Educational Integrity* (Perth, Australia) and highlighted the work of an Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) funded project, *Australian academic integrity standards: Aligning policy and practice in Australian universities*. The preliminary results of that project have resulted in the OLT providing $299,000 for an additional 12 month project entitled, *Embedding and extending exemplary academic integrity policy and support frameworks across the higher education sector.*

The new project will begin in December 2012, and aims to extend and embed the five core elements of exemplary academic integrity policy identified by the ALTC project – access, approach, responsibility, detail and support – across the Australian higher education sector. Central to these elements is a commitment by providers to fostering a culture of academic integrity. As support is crucial to enact exemplary policy, the OLT project will develop resources accessible to both public and private higher education providers to embed these elements. Two critical areas identified by the ALTC project will be addressed in the new project. First, support systems will be developed for vulnerable student groups including international English as an Additional Language (EAL) students, and educationally 'less prepared' students who struggle to understand the concept of academic integrity without assistance. Second, the lessons about exemplary academic integrity policy and support frameworks will be extended to include higher degree by research (HDR) students.

It is apparent that policy makers at the highest levels, and across the various education sectors, are beginning to put academic integrity at the centre of teaching and learning. This, of course, is excellent news for all of us working in this important field.

The current issue of the journal, like every issue published to date, includes commentary, research and recommendations for good practice from around the globe. The issue opens with an invited piece by Eric Duff Wrobbel from Southern Illinois University in the USA, which many of our North American readers may recall was in the news for, of all things, plagiarising the definition of plagiarism in their new plagiarism policy! Wrobbel takes a light-hearted approach to responding to the scandal, and conducts three informal studies which he shares with our readers. Of interest to Australian researchers on the ALTC project who are currently grappling with definitions of academic integrity, Wrobbel conducted a workshop with colleagues to come up with an original definition of plagiarism and found the task to be almost impossible. I think you will find Wrobbel's contribution both engaging and informative.

Steve Williams, Margaret Tanner, Jim Beard and Georgia Hale, all from the University of Arkansas, USA, provide the first refereed paper in this issue. Williams and colleagues conducted a survey of 46 faculty members and 562 undergraduates. They found that 74% of faculty members believed academic misconduct had recently

occurred in their classes, and this paralleled the 67% of undergraduates who admitted to academic misconduct in the past year. Not surprisingly, those students who admitted to having cheated viewed cheating as being significantly less serious than those who had not cheated. Williams et al provide some useful recommendations for addressing academic integrity issues on campus which are well supported by other researchers and practitioners working in this area.

Lucia Zivcakova, Eileen Wood, Mark Baetz and Domenica De Pasquale, all from Wilfrid Laurier University in Canada, also explored university teaching staff perceptions of academic integrity. The authors used an innovative methodology of interviewing staff following their observation of their students engaged in a 45-minute interactive presentation on academic integrity. They then conducted a qualitative analysis of faculty members' perceptions, beliefs and instructional concerns regarding academic integrity in their classrooms. Key findings from the analysis suggest that faculty members perceived themselves to be confident in their own understanding of what constitutes academic integrity; however, there were inconsistencies regarding whether their students had the requisite knowledge to make appropriate decisions. Only half of the faculty found that the presentation content enhanced their own knowledge of academic integrity. Faculty identified several methods they use to safeguard against academic misconduct, and identified the importance of both faculty and the institution providing a consistent and clear model to promote academic integrity in students.

The final two refereed papers in this issue come from the United Kingdom. Neil Wellman and Julian Fallon (Cardiff Metropolitan University) report the preliminary findings of an action research project designed to address academic misconduct amongst postgraduate students in an international MBA programme. A two-pronged approach was implemented, beginning with a zero-tolerance policy requiring that all MBA assignments be submitted to the *Turnitin* text matching software and penalties resulting from any identified misconduct be widely publicised. The second, crucial element of the approach was a strengthening of the induction and study skills elements of the programme. In keeping with generally agreed best practice, the authors conclude that the dual strategy of prevention and cure was effective, resulting in an overall reduction in the rate of academic misconduct.

Sharon McCulloch from Lancaster University provides the final paper in the issue. McCulloch makes the compelling case that although much of the research into source use by international students has tended to focus on issues of plagiarism, there has recently been recognition that their difficulties may be more pedagogical than moral. McCulloch reports on a small case study involving a group of Japanese postgraduate students. Analysis of five Pre-Master's dissertations written by these students, as well as interviews conducted with the writers, revealed that they varied in their ability to handle source material effectively. In many cases, their use of source material appeared to be symptomatic of weak authorial stance and apparent lack of a clear argument. Based on these findings, the study concludes with the recommendation that instruction on the use of source material focus to a greater extent on its rhetorical function in constructing knowledge.

All the papers in this issue aim to share research findings with the clear intention of improving practice in all levels of the educative process, beginning with undergraduate students and extending to postgraduate scholars and teaching staff. I trust you will enjoy reading these articles and sharing the lessons with your colleagues.

Tracey Bretag, Editor.