

PROTECTING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: STUDENT ASSESSMENT IN THE ONLINE ENVIRONMENT

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PANEL DISCUSSION

As state education budgets decrease with no corresponding decrease in enrollment, more schools are adding more on-line courses. On-line courses have the advantages of flexible scheduling, greater access for students, and, eventually, when development costs can average out over time, cost effectiveness. A significant disadvantage, however, is that lapses in academic integrity can lead to big problems with cheating, as happened to Florida State University in December 2007. National headlines trumpeted the problems with the academic integrity of an online course when it involved cheating by large numbers of students including more than two dozen FSU football players just before a bowl game.

The big question is how to protect academic integrity in the online environment without impinging upon faculty academic freedom. The four panelists all have experience teaching courses in online environments where professor and student do not meet face to face. The panel will discuss the issues and strategies for maintaining academic integrity in online classes when personal observation is difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. Some potential topics:

- Secure systems available
- Questions that identify students in mid-exam
- Timed exams
- Proctors or cameras
- Many test questions so each gets fewer points
- Few questions, submit after each answer
- Essay exams
- Special cautions with ESL students
- On-line thesis submission with draft sections