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## THE IMPACT OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY ON BUSINESS SIMULATION AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

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## ABSTRACT

The issue of academic dishonesty with respect to business simulations and experiential learning activities has received little attention. The faculty cannot ignore the potential for academic dishonesty in these activities. The authors' advice is to take some basic precautions to reduce the likelihood of academic dishonesty, and have fun.

## INTRODUCTION

While most educators have been sensitized to the ways in which students act dishonestly in traditional classroom settings, the issue of academic dishonesty with respect to business simulations and experiential learning activities needs to be addressed.

## ACADEMIC DISHONESTY IN BUSINESS SIMULATIONS AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

There are a number of ways students might act dishonestly when business simulations and experiential learning activities are used as a supplement to a business course. The list provided here is a starting point to make educators aware of the many diverse ways students can circumvent the system.

1. Obtaining information from previous players.
2. Collaboration among groups.
3. Free riding/lack of participation.
4. Overplaying the game.
5. Obtaining privileged information
6. Plagiarizing.
7. Making up information.
8. Paper chase types of problems.

## THE IMPACT OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY ON BUSINESS SIMULATIONS AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Academic dishonesty can create a number of serious problems and undermine the benefits associated with business simulations and experiential learning activities. The following list is a sampling of the potential problems.

1. Those students engaging in academic dishonesty may gain an unfair advantage
2. The dishonest activities might change the results of the activity
3. Participants may become disgruntled if they believe their performance was reduced because someone else acted dishonestly.
4. The amount of learning is reduces for all students.

## TIPS TO REDUCE ACADEMIC DISHONESTY IN BUSINESS SIMULATIONS AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

The following list of tips is a starting point to make educators aware of the types of activities that can be used to reduce academic dishonesty.

Academic honesty forms. A good starting point for experiential activities is to develop an academic honesty form to be signed by each student. The form should contain the definition of academic dishonesty used by your university, the process to be used to discipline offenders, and consequences of such actions.

Peer group evaluations. The easiest way to evaluate the amount of participation by each student is to use confidential peer evaluations using some type of summated rating.

Evaluate the process. A large percentage of the grade associated with the experiential activity should be based on process measures such as presentations and individual reports pertaining to the rationale behind specific decisions, recommendations, and/or activities.

Become an expert on the topic of or your experiential learning activity. This will make it more difficult for students to plagiarize and make up information about the topic. In addition, the student's perception of the faculty member's ability to detect falsified information and other dishonest activities is increased.

Follow up. The faculty member must follow up on student activities. This includes verifying interviews, survey data, cites, and secondary data along documenting that the prescribed work has been accomplished.

No self serve. The faculty member must develop a secure way disseminate and receive information from the students.

Make information accessible for all students. Paper chase problems can reduced by identifying key pieces of information and placing them on reserve in the library.

Provide all the students with inside information. Business simulations and experiential learning activities are employed as a means of translating concepts learned in class to real world type settings. As such, the initial task of the instructor is to teach the students the basics prior to the activity. In this way, unfair advantages from inside information are reduced or eliminated since all the students have the key information.

Make the activity competitive. Making the simulation or experiential projects competitive has one important benefit. The groups are much more likely to monitor each other's behavior and act as whistleblowers.

Instructor meetings. Regular meetings with the students pertaining to the business simulation or experiential learning activity allows the faculty member another opportunity to evaluate the process as it evolves.

## CONCLUSION

If the faculty member is not committed to providing an environment conducive to academic honesty, the decision to implement a business simulation or experiential learning activity should be reconsidered.