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An Investigation of Chinese Graduate Student Understanding of Academic Integrity in U's Higher Education

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AN INVESTIGATION OF CHINESE GRADUATE STUDENT UNDERSTANDING OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY IN U.S. HIGHER EDUCATION

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For my family and friends
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

International students play a vital and increasing role in the internationalization of higher education in the United States. As their presence increases, policies and student services especially designed for international students will be important priorities for postsecondary administrators (Lamkin, 2001). Recently, the Institute of International Education published the 2012 *Open Doors*, reporting 764,495 international students were studying in the U.S. colleges and universities in 2011-12, a 5.7% increase over the previous year. Furthermore, out of the 20,625,000 students enrolled in U.S. institutions of higher education in 2011-12, 3.7% are international students (Institute of International Education, 2012). The majority of these students in 2011-12 came from China (25.4%), India (13.1%), South Korea (9.5%), and Saudi Arabia (4.5%) (Institute of International Education, 2012). Furthermore, 194,029 students in 2011-12 were from China, representing a 23.1% increase over the previous year (Institute of International Education, 2012). According to the Institute of International Education’s *Open Doors* report, China ranks as the top country to send its students to the United States.

While international students are welcomed for their contribution to the local economy and to the internationalization of the curriculum in the host institutions, it is recognized that in order for them to succeed in their academic study and for the host
nations to continue to attract students from overseas, key difficulties and problems facing international students must be addressed (Zhang & Mi, 2010, pp. 371-372). These students must meet the same challenges their U.S. peers face in college while in many cases also navigating new cultural terrain, a second (or third or fourth) language, and an educational system with different rules and expectations (Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence, 2005, p. 1). Indeed, many international students experience difficulties upon arrival in a foreign country, and they must adjust quickly to the environment in order to function, let alone succeed in their academic study (Zhang & Mi, 2010, p. 372).

Rigorous academic demands along with the challenges to adjust to a new culture may put international students at greater risk of academic failure than students in general (Li & Gasser, 2005, p. 562). More importantly perhaps, students from several Asian countries may have difficulty adjusting to Western dialogical practices in class such as questioning, criticizing, refuting, arguing, debating and persuading (Major, 2005, p. 85). Studies suggest that problems can arise from differences in the linguistically determined discourse of intercultural and interpersonal communication and the cultural distance of the communication patterns of the participants (Campbell & Li, 2008, p. 376). In order to “fit in” and acquire culturally appropriate skills, international students must first recognize that much of their existing knowledge and abilities, based on learning in their home culture, will not completely suffice (Savicki, Adams, Wilde, & Binder, n.d., p. 112). Therefore, while engaging in “cultural learning,” international students have to try to make academic adjustments in a new territory where there are different patterns of teacher-student interactions, classroom cultures, academic requirements and expectations
(Campbell & Li, 2008, pp. 376-377). Unfortunately, according to Chapman and Lupton (2004), academic dishonesty has received heightened attention due to the increasing number of students that appear to be cheating on examinations and papers (p. 425).

These researchers contend:

While it is often difficult for an instructor to understand and control student cheating when the student and faculty are from the same country, the task becomes exponentially difficult when instructors and students have significantly different cultural backgrounds and are from different countries. (p. 427)

As a result, many international students may have trouble understanding the meaning of academic integrity within the U.S. academic culture; and while they may know it in theory, they may not take it seriously.

According to the Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence, Intercultural Communication Center in its publication, Recognizing and Addressing Cultural Variations in the Classroom (2005), plagiarism may be defined very differently across nations, especially those in which less importance is placed on the Western concept that an idea can be “owned” (p. 13). In fact, in systems where the deferential incorporation of accumulated wisdom is stressed over intellectual property or the generation of new ideas, using words of experts without citing them may be more respectful and appropriate than using one’s own words. United States standards and expectations regarding plagiarism, therefore, may not be immediately evident to all students from across the world (p. 13).

Research has shown that 57.4% of both U.S. and international students surveyed in 2004 by Vandehey, Diekhoff and LaBeff (2007) admitted to cheating during their time at the university (p. 471). Additionally, Chapman and Lupton (2004) reported that more than
half of the American business students (55.4%) and approximately a third (30.2%) of the Hong Kong business students reported cheating at some point during their university studies (p. 429). Recent studies suggest that plagiarism may be more of an issue among international students due to faculty and administrators failure to consider cross cultural issues in learning (Handa & Power, 2005, pp. 65-66). When international students are accused of plagiarizing it is often either because it is assumed that these students have poor language skills or that they lack integrity (p. 67). Some international students have acknowledged further that plagiarism can also arise from external pressures to succeed or due to lack of time (Bamford & Sergiou, 2005). The failure by faculty and administrators to consider cross cultural issues in learning has led to varying views of plagiarism by international students. Therefore, a need exists to consider the previous learning experiences of international students in their home country in order to obtain a deeper understanding of how culture may enter into their understanding of academic dishonesty in western countries such as the U.S. (Handa & Power, 2005).

The goal of this study was to examine issues related to academic integrity that faculty and administrators of U.S. institutions of higher education are facing in light of the increase in the numbers of Chinese graduate students enrolled at their respective institutions. Additionally, this study provides a better understanding regarding how differences in cultural values may impact the meaning of academic integrity by Chinese graduate students. Specific questions that guided this study are presented later in this chapter.
Cultural Norms and Academic Integrity within the United States

According to the Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence (2005), in U.S. classrooms the professor’s role is not only that of the expert, but also that of a coach, facilitator and discussion leader. Students are generally expected to ask questions, indicate areas of confusion, and ask for examples to support their understanding. In some cases, students are encouraged to debate their peers and challenge their professor’s ideas. Traditionally, a stronger emphasis can be found in U.S. education on individual performance than on group work. Students are encouraged to be competitive and assertive in order to illustrate their understanding of the topic. Additionally, U.S. classrooms are often informal: students do not rise when the professor enters the room; and students are often encouraged to address the professor by his or her first name (p. 6). The U.S. standards also require students to read under intense time constraints and synthesize information from various sources. The students’ comprehension relies on a broad cultural knowledge not only to understand the point the author is making, but also to understand the allusions, illustrations and analogies an author employs (p. 9). Coupled with these variations, students may approach reading, writing and library research differently, depending on their cultural background and prior learning experiences. United States standards and expectations may allow students to skim the material when reading the assignment in order to keep up with a heavy reading load (p. 10). Also, U.S. standards often require students to write in a variety of ways emphasizing personal expression, such as interpretive argument, personal opinion, and creative problem-solving, for which no correct answer may be apparent (p. 11).
Consequently, these cultural expectations may lead to misunderstandings about academic integrity by international students who study at U.S. institutions of higher education. However, the Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence (2005) contends:

attitudes towards cheating and plagiarism, as well as understandings of what constitutes each, appear to be in tremendous flux in the U.S. today, such that it is difficult to easily describe contemporary cultural mores concerning academic integrity. (p. 12)

Schmelkin, Gilbert, Spencer and Pincus (2008) state that one of the fundamental values of U.S. higher education is academic integrity (p. 587). Academic integrity refers to honesty and transparency in the ways in which knowledge is acquired and transmitted (Hayes & Introna, 2005, p. 213). Honesty is premised on high levels of trust between faculty and students and on ensuring that all students are treated fairly (pp. 213-214). The principle of academic integrity suggests that people can be trusted to complete their work according to articulated rules and cultural norms and not to deviate from those rules and norms to gain advantage over colleagues (Bertram Gallant, 2007, p. 391).

Additionally, academic integrity requires that all writers acknowledge the work of others and that action be taken if there is any wrongdoing (Hayes & Introna, 2005, pp. 213-214).

Examples of compromising academic integrity include copying from others during exams, taking crib sheets into exams, taking part in unpermitted collaboration in course work, submitting the same piece of course work more than once, and including other people’s words in a course work assessment without making them as being such. (p. 214)
However, no commonly accepted standard definition of what constitutes academic dishonesty or plagiarism appears to exist for that matter (Hayes & Introna, 2005; Schmelkin et al., 2008).

A common thread in recent research studies has consistently shown a rise in plagiarism and academic dishonesty on college campuses (Bertram Gallant, 2007; Bertram Gallant & Drinan, 2006; Durkin, 2008; Hard, Conway, & Moran, 2006). Also, few researchers have focused on the fundamental values of academic integrity and the need to connect institutional mission statements and everyday policies and practices that foster a climate of integrity.

**Differing Cultural Values among Asian Countries with Regard to Academic Integrity**

International students from East Asian cultures have been influenced by Confucian tradition and collectivism, and they speak languages unrelated to Indo-European languages; consequently, they may experience greater challenges in adjusting to the Western academic system than students from Western countries (Hung & Hyun, 2010, p. 341). In China and other Asian countries, learning and assessment typically focus on the content of a textbook (Hayes & Introna, 2005). A consequence of this is that when Chinese and other Asian students enter Western higher education, it is especially difficult for them to be critical about an author and to state their own opinions. Using another author’s words for Chinese students is a form of respect, and it is hard for these students to change this cultural practice (Pennycook, 1996). Therefore, students in Asian
countries would not be required to cite their sources when preparing a writing assignment as part of their coursework (Pennycook, 1996).

Other researchers have explained how, when English is a student’s second language, he or she is placed under pressure by the increased amount of time it takes to write (Hayes & Introna, 2005, p. 215). Fear of failure, especially when students are funded by their family, their government, or a particular company, also places pressure on students to do well (O’Donoghue, 1996). Additionally, some researchers have found that international students may feel that they cannot improve on what is already written and prefer to use the original text rather than their own (Angelova & Riazanteseva, 1999; Hayes & Introna, 2005). However, some research studies have concluded that practices termed as plagiarism are often the outcome of many diverse and complex influences, especially for international students who find themselves in unfamiliar and difficult terrain (Hayes & Introna, 2005, p. 229).

More importantly perhaps, most students from Asian countries view exams as being purely memory tests (Hayes & Introna, 2005). For example, Hayes and Introna contend that an Indian student in their study mentioned that in his undergraduate examinations, higher marks were awarded when students simply reproduced lecture notes or course textbook passages verbatim than when they paraphrased them (p. 222). Similarly, Chinese students explained that one book was assigned for each course and exams were designed to allow students to demonstrate how well they had memorized the book (p. 222). However, Durkin (2008) contends research has shown that differences in academic expectations have resulted in misunderstanding and some confusion for both
Western lecturers and East Asian students studying in the West (p. 38). Durkin further states:

In the West, the practice of academic argumentation and debate is rooted in the Socratic-Aristotelian pursuit and discovery of “truth” through the disciplined process of critical thinking. Objective truth is sought through logical evaluation of the weaknesses and strengths of a theory, statement, or proposal and comparing and contrasting it with alternative views or explanations. (p. 42)

Lee (2009) states that Korean society, strongly influenced by the Confucian tradition, shares many similarities with other Asian societies, such as an emphasis on hierarchism, indirectness, formalism, and face-saving (p. 143). However, he argues Korean society has developed unique cultural features, including the concept of Chaemyon. Chaemyon, according to Lee, is defined as face-saving with respect to one’s status (p. 143). As a result, Chaemyon is evident in Korean classroom settings. For example,

These settings employ a formal, lecture-based approach in which discussions rarely occur. Being quiet in class, listening carefully, and taking precise notes are regarded as traits of a good student. Students can sometimes ask questions when invited by their instructor, but the purpose of these questions and answers generally is not to foster discussion but to confirm that students understand the content of the lecture. (p. 143)

**Theoretical Framework: Cultural Variability**

This study was primarily grounded in Hofstede’s (1991) theory related to cultural dimensions, a theory deeply rooted in establishing a systematic framework for assessing and differentiating the dimensions of national cultures (p. 13). According to this theoretical framing, by using a statistical analysis of the answers on questions about the
values of similar IBM employees in different countries Hofstede revealed common problems and solutions differing from country to country, in the following areas:

1. Social inequality, including the relationship with authority;
2. The relationship between the individual and the group;
3. Concepts of masculinity and femininity: the social implications of having been born as a boy or a girl;
4. Ways of dealing with uncertainty, relating to the control of aggression and the expression of emotions. (pp. 13-14)

These four main areas represent dimensions of cultures. A dimension, according to Hofstede (1991), is an aspect of a culture that can be measured relative to other cultures (p. 14). Additionally, these dimensions group together a number of phenomena in a society based on statistical relationships or trends for these phenomena to occur in combination, not on iron links (p. 14).

Although Hofstede is not the only theorist to define a cultural theory, the widespread citation of his work reflects its usefulness and trustworthiness. I also used the theory of organizational culture, which allows for a sociological perspective. All of these studies examine culture and its impact of defining/identifying the cultural dimensions described by Hofstede. Therefore, understanding these various cultural dimensions grounded my research and promoted an understanding of the issues that Chinese graduate students, faculty, and administrators are facing surrounding academic integrity; one must first understand the dynamics of culture and its effects on interpersonal communication. In addition, these theories provided the analytical lens to make meaning of the information that was gathered during the study.
Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions Theory

One of the most dominant theories when considering the dynamics of culture and its effects on interpersonal communication is Geert Hofstede’s (1991) culture dimensions theory. Hofstede’s focus was not on defining culture as refinement of the mind but rather on highlighting essential patterns of thinking, feeling and acting that are well-established by late childhood (p. 4). These cultural differences manifest themselves in a culture’s choice of symbols, heroes/heroines, rituals and values. However, Hofstede contends that as soon as certain patterns of thinking, feeling and acting have established themselves within a person’s mind, (s)he must unlearn these before being able to learn something different, and unlearning is more difficult than learning for the first time. (p. 4)

His five dimensions of culture are: (1.) power-distance index; (2.) collectivism vs. individualism; (3.) femininity vs. masculinity; (4.) uncertainty avoidance; and (5.) Confucian dynamism. Three of these dimensions are especially important to this study because they provide insight into how international students from China may approach specific issues related to academic integrity in U.S. institutions of higher education. These dimensions are “Power-Distance Index,” “Collectivism vs. Individualism,” and “Confucian Dynamism” (long- vs. short-term orientation) (Hofstede, 1991). Thus, these concepts served as this study’s conceptual framework which will enable the reader to understand how cultural values may affect the meaning of academic integrity. Each concept is described below.


**Power-Distance Index**

The dimension of “Power-Distance Index,” addresses the degree to which a culture distributes institutional and organizational power. The consequences of power-distance are most evident in family customs, the relationships between students and teachers, the young and the elderly, language systems and organizational practices (Hofstede, 1991). As a result, individuals from China, according to G. Hoefstede, G.J. Hofstede and M. Minkov (2010), were indexed at 80, out of a possible score of 100 (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, p. 57). In high power-distance index countries, those less powerful accept power relations that are more autocratic and paternalistic. Subordinates acknowledge the power of others simply based on where they are situated in certain formal, hierarchical positions. As such, the power-distance index Hofstede defines does not reflect an objective difference in power distribution, but rather the way people perceive power differences (p. 27). Consequently, international graduate students from these countries may struggle with an academic environment where they are encouraged to challenge their professor (a more powerful person) or compose a writing assignment where they are required to think independently. This is supported by Major’s (2005) research in which international students from several Asian countries had difficulty adjusting to Western dialog practices in class such as questioning, criticizing, refuting, arguing, debating, and persuading (p. 85).

**Collectivism vs. Individualism**

In Hofstede’s dimension “Collectivism vs. Individualism,” individuals who are in more of a collectivistic culture tend to be group-oriented, impose a large psychological
distance between in-group and out-group members and in-group members are expected to have unquestioning loyalty to their group. In conflict situations, members of the collectivistic cultures are likely to use avoidance, intermediaries, or other face-saving techniques (Hofstede, 1991). On the other hand, individuals in individualistic cultures do not perceive a large psychological distance between in-group and out-group members. They value self-expression, see speaking out as a means of resolving problems, and are likely to use confrontational strategies when dealing with interpersonal problems (Hofstede, 1991). Hofstede (1991) and Hofstede & Bond (1984) identify through their research that Chinese natives tend to have more of a collective culture and conversely, U.S. natives tend to adopt more of an individualistic culture.

Confucian-Dynamism

Hofstede’s (1991) third dimension, “Confucian-Dynamism” (long- vs. short-term orientation) was important to this study because it helps to explain the culture variability between Western and Asian cultures. He defines long-term orientation as fostering of pragmatic virtues oriented toward future rewards (p. 261). Hofstede also defines short-term orientation as fostering of virtues related to the past and present (p. 263). Values associated with long-term orientation include adaptation of traditions to a modern context, willingness to subordinate oneself for a purpose, thrift, and concern with respecting the demands of virtue. However, values associated with short-term orientation are founded in Confucian teachings and include respect for traditions, concern with “face” and respect for social and status obligations regardless of cost (Hofstede, 1991, p. 173). This dimension, according to Hofstede, refers to selective promotion of a particular
set of ethics found in Confucian teachings. According to Hofstede, Confucius’ teachings are lessons in practical ethics without any religious content. He contends that there are four key principles of Confucian teaching:

1. The stability of society is based on unequal relationships between people. The *wu lun*, or five basic relationships are ruler-subject, father-son, older brother-younger brother, husband-wife, and senior friend-junior friend. These relationships are based on mutual and complementary obligations.

2. The family is the prototype of all social organizations. A person is not primarily an individual; rather, he or she is a member of a family. Children should learn to restrain themselves, to overcome their individuality so as to maintain the harmony in the family. Harmony is found in the maintenance of everybody’s face in the sense of dignity, self-respect, and prestige. Social relations should be conducted in such a way that everybody’s face is maintained.

3. Virtuous behavior towards others consists of not treating others as one would not like to be treated oneself.

4. Virtue with regard to one’s tasks in life consists of trying to acquire skills and education, working hard, not spending more than necessary, being patient, and persevering. (p. 165)

Therefore, these particular teachings include tradition, a sense of shame, following a hierarchy, and protecting face. Applying Hofstede’s (1991) research findings to individuals from Asian countries, they would tend to demonstrate a high index factor related to short-term orientation. However, individuals from the United States would tend to have a low index factor and reflect more of a long-term orientation.

Other studies have illustrated that cultural variability may impact the meaning and understanding of academic integrity (Durkin, 2008; Joy & Kolb, 2009; Yamazaki, 2003). My study is primarily grounded in the work of Pincus and Schmelkin (2003) and Whitley
(1998) as well as other studies that examine academic integrity using the various cultural dimensions described by Hofstede (1991). An examination of the impact of cultural differences in the context of recent research models provided a context in which to further understand how differing cultural values among graduate students from China with regard to academic integrity are a large part of the challenges that these students in particular face while studying at U.S. institutions.

Organizational Culture Theory

In essence, according to Bertram Gallant (2007) culture is a system of beliefs, understandings, knowledge, and meanings shared by organizational members (p. 393). Schein (2010) describes organizational culture as:

A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (p. 18)

Furthermore, he contends that there are three organizational levels, which he refers to as artifacts, espoused values and underlying assumptions (Schein, 2010). However, other researchers (Durkin, 2008; Joy & Kolb, 2009; Pincus & Schmelkin, 2003; Whitley, 1998; Yamazaki, 2003) have also prescribed leadership toward integrity culture change as the solution to academic dishonesty. Additionally, Bertram Gallant (2007) explains:

these distinction levels should not be considered indicative of a hierarchy of importance or significance but rather indicative of the extent to which the cultural element is directly observable. While artifacts (e.g., mission statements, slogans, physical structures) are easily observable and
discernible, espoused values and underlying assumptions are increasingly more interpretive and implicit. (p. 393)

Schein (2010) also describes the importance of the role of leadership in light of organizational culture. Consequently, Bertram Gallant (2007) focuses her study on both organizational culture and leadership together. This treatment of organizational culture and leadership together is the specific reason Bertram Gallant claims other researchers have prescribed leadership toward integrity culture change as the solution to academic dishonesty (p. 394).

Joy and Kolb (2008) contend that culture has a significant effect in deciding a person’s preference for abstract conceptualization versus concrete experience (p. 83); and their research concludes that conditioning by certain cultures may complement the learning style requirements of certain areas of academic specialization while also clashing with other specializations. Also, Joy and Kolb point out that in the first years of undergraduate higher education, where discipline specific conditioning is yet to take root, culture-based differences may be even more pronounced (p. 83). Therefore, educators may need to ensure that the learning situations they design have elements that students from different cultures can comprehend (pp. 83-84). However, Lechuga and Fernandez (2011) report that individuals who cross cultural boundaries face many challenges when trying to adapt to a receiving culture that triggers changes in the conceptualization of the self. This process has been termed acculturation and change entails learning new behaviors, values, and beliefs of the receiving culture. Research has shown, according to Lechuga and Fernandez that individuals choose among four main acculturation strategies:
assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization (p. 196). Their study found that interventions designed to advance the adjustment of individuals undergoing the process of culture change may be more successful if they target a combination of individual level and contextual level factors (p. 203).

Additionally, Sobré-Denton (2011) contends that the increase of international students creates multiple opportunities for intercultural contact. These increases in intercultural contact points give way to a growing need to embrace a cosmopolitan perspective. Within this cosmopolitan perspective, international students studying abroad may be challenged to address issues of acculturation with little preparation, training, or systems in place for social support/adjustment (p. 79). She argues that cosmopolitanism is a state of identity without borders that is accessible to those able to engage in voluntary migration across multiple cultures and the subsequent intellectualization of such an experience (p. 80). Sobré-Denton claims therefore,

> those individuals participating in positive transitional and social experiences through cosmopolitan support systems may form lasting cross-cultural relationships, may work toward resolving intercultural conflict, may work toward reducing stereotypes of other cultural groups (including the host culture), and may work to train and encourage interculturally competent leaders in a world that is simultaneously growing and shrinking, global and local. (p. 90)

Cushner and Brislin (1996) contend that the dynamics of culture and their effects on interpersonal communication can provide a positive learning environment in which students from all cultures can share their ideas and prosper from the rigors of their academic pursuits. These authors define culture as something that is made by human beings rather than something that occurs in nature. Additionally, culture consists of
interrelated components of material artifacts, social and behavioral patterns, and mental products (p. 6).

People are socialized within their own cultures to accept as “proper and good” relatively narrow ranges of behaviors. Those behaviors not labeled as good are perceived as less desirable or, in extreme cases, absolutely wrong. Further, others who engage in those less desirable behaviors may be seen as backward, ignorant, or ill-mannered. In other words, people become accustomed to doing things in certain ways, and they see behaviors surrounding these activities as proper. When they interact with people from other cultures, however, what they perceive to be proper behaviors are not always forthcoming. In addition, behaviors that one group of people consider improper may be practiced on a routine basis by those in another group. (p. 12)

Gannon (2004) applies the use of cultural metaphors for understanding the cultural mindset of a nation and comparing it to those of other nations (p. 7). This application involves identifying some phenomenon, activity, or other institution of a nation’s culture that all or most of its members consider to be very important and with which they identify cognitively and/or emotionally (p. 7). The characteristics of a metaphor become the basis for describing and understanding the essential features of the society (p. 7). Gannon (2004) also provides a cultural metaphor for the Chinese, in which this metaphor symbolizes the Chinese Family Altar. The Altar characterizes harmony within the family and capacity to change while maintaining solid traditions (p. 66). Conversely, Wiseman and Koester (1993) contend that cultures differ on many dimensions. One dimension that has received consistent attention from both cross-cultural communication researchers and psychologists focuses on individualism verses collectivism. Studies related to cross-cultural research have provided evidence that the value orientations of individualism and collectivism are pervasive in a wide range of
cultures (p. 78). The authors define individualism as a system that emphasizes the importance of individual identity over group identity, individual rights over group rights, and individual needs over group needs (p. 78). These types of tendencies can be found in the United States, Australia, Great Britain, Canada, Netherlands and New Zealand (p. 79).

However, collectivism is defined as:

the broad value tendencies of a system in emphasizing the importance of the we identity over the I identity, group rights over individual rights, and in group oriented needs over individual wants and desires. (Wiseman & Koester, 1993, p. 78)

Empirical evidence has supported the claim that nations such as China, Taiwan, Korea, Japan and Mexico maintain a clearly collective culture (p. 79).

Thus, the cultural variability dimension of individualism versus collectivism can serve as one way in which individual’s process self-views and as a criterion with which others’ self-presentation performance is evaluated (Wiseman & Koester, 1993, p. 80). This cultural variability dimension is one of the determining factors that influence the way individuals may interpret the meaning of academic integrity.

Within each cultural theory, whether the theory provides an examination of the dynamics of culture and its effects on interpersonal communication, impact on deciding a person’s preference for abstract conceptualization versus concrete experiences, acculturation, cosmopolitanism, dynamics of culture, or the use of cultural metaphors, a clear understanding emerges of how differing cultural attitudes of international graduate students could impact the meaning of academic integrity. It was the goal of this study to
provide insight into issues related to academic integrity that faculty and administrators of U.S. institutions of higher education are facing in light of the increase in the numbers of graduate students from China at their respective institutions.

**Purpose of the Study and Research Questions**

The higher education literature is replete with empirical studies examining self-reported cheating behaviors by students and with essays on academic integrity problems (Bertram Gallant & Drinan, 2006, p. 839). However, no published research could be found that examines differing cultural attitudes and understandings of international graduate students regarding the meaning of academic integrity. The research studies that are available, Pincus and Schmelkin (2003) and Whitley (1998), only examine the concept of academic integrity from the perspective of faculty and only based upon U.S. customs. Consequently, my study explored how U.S. classroom environments as well as institutional policies and practices impacted Chinese graduate student understanding of and experience with the U.S. based concept of academic integrity. In order to understand the differing cultural attitudes and understandings of Chinese graduate students toward the meaning of academic integrity, the following questions guided this study:

**Research Questions**

1. How do Chinese graduate students attending U.S. universities understand and make meaning of the concept of “academic integrity” as applied in U.S. graduate education?

2. How do U.S. classroom environments and institutional policies and practices impact Chinese graduate student understanding of and experience with academic integrity?
3. How do U.S. faculty describe their experience with Chinese graduate students related to student understanding of academic integrity and the factors that may contribute to that understanding?

4. To what extent and in what ways do Chinese graduate students, faculty, and administrators believe that cultural differences impact international student understanding of academic integrity and related issues that arise in the context of student enrollment in the U.S.?

The first section of this chapter introduced how international students serve a vital and increasing role in the internationalization of higher education in the United States. However, as their presence increases, policies and student services especially designed for international students will be important priorities for postsecondary administrators (Lamkin, 2001). One of the growing concerns is the increase of academic dishonesty among graduate international students who attend U.S. institutions; and specifically, how U.S. faculty and administrators are facing the concept of academic integrity in light of the increase in the number of international students enrolled at their perspective institutions.

The theoretical framework of the study focused on Hofstede’s (1991) cultural dimensional theory, using three of the five dimensions that are highlighted in his study. Although Hofstede’s theory provided a basis for the study, a thorough review of the current literature was examined in order to further guide my study. The next chapter focuses on the literature that attempts to explain the differing cultural values among Chinese international students with regard to academic integrity while studying at U.S. institutions.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In order to understand the academic integrity issues that U.S. institutions face when enrolling international students, an examination of the academic challenges that international students face due to how different the U.S. higher education system is than what most of them have previously experienced is necessary. Differing cultural values among international students from Asian countries with regard to academic integrity are a large part of the challenges that international students face while studying at U.S. institutions (Chapman & Lupton, 2004; Handa & Power, 2005). The first section of the literature review in this chapter focuses on current research with regard to Western views on academic integrity commonly held at institutions of higher education. The second section explores current research on Asian views of the academic environment. Specifically, the focus will be on the academic views of China. The third section will examine the relationship between acculturation and academic integrity. This third section will address cooperation vs. competition and the need for a social hub (social network theory) rather than a “node” as these may mitigate academic issues. Finally, my review provides an analysis of research describing issues related to academic integrity that faculty and administrators of U.S. institutions of higher education are facing in light of
increasing numbers of international students from China enrolled at their respective institutions.

**Cultural Norms and Values for the Academic Context**

**Western Academic Views**

In order to understand how Western views on textual ownership have developed, Pennycook (1996) examined what it means to be original, an author, and how it is that author, authenticity, and authority are so closely intertwined in Western thought (p. 204) by examining the works of Kearney (1994), related to the genealogy of Western imagination. Pennycook (1996) argues that in order to determine what it means to be original or to say something new (have textual ownership) the reader must understand the evolution of how authority and Western thought are intertwined. The history of Western imagination, according to Kearney (1994), evolves with three dominant paradigms, the mimetic (premodern), the productive (modern) and the paradic (postmodern). In the premodern, mimetic era (biblical, classical, and medieval),

the image stood as a representation of reality, as a means through which nature, and especially God, could be worshipped. For both Aristotle and Plato, imagination remained largely a reproductive rather than a productive activity, a servant rather than a master of meaning, imitation rather than origin. (Pennycook, 1996, p. 204)

It was not until the Enlightenment during the 18th Century, according to Pennycook, that this view of imagination shifted and was replaced by the productive paradigm of the modern.

In this view, the imagination was no longer viewed as a mimetic capacity but as a productive force: As a consequence of this momentous reversal of roles, meaning is no longer primarily considered as a transcendent
property of divine being: it is now hailed as a transcendental product of the human mind. (p. 204)

It is through this shift that Pennycook (1996) explains how the humanist subject coupled with the notion of property rights produced an understanding of individual ownership of ideas and languages (pp. 204-205). Pennycook also explains that this understanding of imagination is closely tied to the development of notion by the author (p. 205).

The 17th and 18th centuries brought the concept of authorship of individual works of literature as individual acts of creativity became crucial, whereas the scientific domain evolved into a more general unauthored agreement on scientific truths. (p. 205)

Kearney (1994) argues that the establishment of the notion of author constitutes the privileged moment of individualization in the history of ideas, knowledge, literature, philosophy, and sciences (p. 101). As a result of these shifts of creativity and authorship, according to Pennycook (1996), is the need to see an emphasis on “new” meaning, on originality, on individual creativity, as an aspect of Western culture. Thus, the shifts of creativity and authorship are both a very particular cultural and a very particular historical emphasis, which is still prevalent today. It is with the rise of such individualization that the history of literary plagiarism started to emerge (p. 205).

Durkin (2008) states:

In the West, the practice of academic argumentation and debate is rooted in the Socratic-Aristotelian pursuit and discovery of “truth” through the disciplined process of critical thinking. Objective truth is sought through logical evaluation of the weaknesses and strengths of a theory, statement, or proposal and comparing and contrasting it with alternative views or explanations. (p. 42)
She also claims one more characteristic of Western culture related to academic critical thinking is the need for acceptance of free expression and of direct, public disagreement. Teamwork and open discussion encourage brainstorming of ideas, with a readiness to reject any that do not stand up to critical analysis (p. 42). This is further supported by Campbell and Li (2007) in which their research found that the Western classroom culture used the Socratic teaching approach emphasizing independent learning, learner participation, co construction of knowledge, questioning, critical analysis, and evaluation of information of ideas (p. 386). However, Hayes and Introna (2005) examine the different cultural understandings that students of different nationalities, studying in two United Kingdom management-related postgraduate programs, have of plagiarism (p. 215). According to these researchers, in the United Kingdom:

the term assessment is used for all parts of work that contribute to the final grade awarded to the student for a course. Assessment normally consists of course work and examinations. The term course work is used for work that normally is done at home, such as essays (or term papers), reports, literature reviews, and so forth; the term examinations normally refers to examination papers completed under supervised examination conditions. Plagiarism is an issue in course work rather than in examinations. (p. 216)

The researchers found that most international students had limited or no experience with course work to be completed at home while in their home country. Examining their views and experiences of cheating during examinations provided valuable insight in the values surrounding academic malpractice in their country of origin (Hayes & Introna 2005, p. 218). The researchers’ study highlighted emphasis on memorization, outdated material, and lack of trust in fairness of the assessment process and how much value these students would place on academic malpractice. Hayes and
Introna found that in all countries represented, other than the United Kingdom, most students viewed exams as being purely memory tests (p. 222). Their research findings mentioned:

… the Chinese students explained that there was one book for each course and exams were designed to allow students to demonstrate how well they memorized the book. Further, Chinese students complained that the book they were required to memorize was often outdated. This alienation from the examination system in China was evident in the fact that 30% of students admitted to using unpermitted crib sheets (unpermitted notes) during exams. (Hayes & Introna, 2005, p. 222)

Additionally, Hayes and Introna (2005) found that 80% of all Asian students and 20% of Chinese students admitted to unpermitted collaboration during examinations. More importantly perhaps, they reported that 80% of Asian students and 30% of Chinese students judged this to be trivial or not cheating (Hayes & Introna, 2005, p. 223). The motivation for cheating according to Hayes and Introna was the grades and fear of failure among Chinese and other Asian students. In Asia and Greece, high marks were seen as important in terms of finding a good job, but especially important for students planning to undertake an overseas postgraduate program. Thus, the pressure for high marks may lead to cheating (p. 224).

The Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence, in its report *Recognizing and Addressing Cultural Variations in the Classroom* (2005), defines the U.S. educational system. It was found that generally in U.S. classrooms the professor’s role is that of not only an expert but as a coach and discussion leader. Students are expected to ask questions and are encouraged to debate with peers and to challenge their professors’ ideas. Stronger emphasis on individual performance rather than on group work was
found in U.S. classrooms. An informal classroom environment encourages this type of learning; although, there are still instructors who prefer a formal classroom. In addition, U.S. students learn in a coed environment most of their lives and so there is no need for adjustment when attending coed classes in U.S. colleges (Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence, 2005). Additionally, according to the Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence, U.S. academic settings require students to read under intense time constraints and are often synthesizing information from various sources. Student comprehension of readings relies not only on language skills but ability to recognize the organizational structure and conventions of written English and the markers authors use to signal when they are challenging previous research, switching tactics, and asserting a new claim (p. 9). Students are generally encouraged to approach reading critically and have some experience using libraries (p. 9).

More importantly perhaps, the Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence (2005) contends that U.S. secondary education often includes a variety of writing assignments emphasizing personal expression and students are taught to state their main argument or interpretation directly and up front, then go on to support it with evidence (p. 11). However, attitudes toward cheating and plagiarism, as well as understandings of what constitutes each, appear to be in tremendous flux in the U.S. (p. 11). In the U.S. education system, according to the Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence, grades are usually given more frequently throughout a course, thereby promoting communication between students and their professors or teaching assistants (p. 16). These students seek
their help outside the classroom, and a number of them make appointments with their instructors or visit them during office hours to discuss writing assignments (p. 15).

Coupled with the findings by the Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence, the variability of Western teaching styles in higher education also plays a major role in Western academic views. Lueddeke’s (2003) study focused on the relationship between a number of factors that characterize Western academics working in higher education and their preferred approaches to the scholarship of teaching (p. 215). He found that qualifications and years of teaching appear to have a moderate impact, while gender and post appear not to play any major role (p. 221). Additionally, those individuals teaching in the hard/pure or applied subjects such as science, mathematics, and engineering are more likely to bring an Information Transmission/Teacher Focus. However, those teaching soft/pure or applied subjects such as history, sociology, and English are more likely to bring a Conceptual Change/Student Focus approach in classroom situations (pp. 220-221). Consequently, Lueddeke’s study confirms there is considerable variation in how academics from different disciplines prefer to approach the scholarship of teaching (p. 224). Therefore, variations in teaching styles play a major role in Western academic views.

**East Asian Academic Views**

Chinese universities, specifically, according to Hayes and Introna (2005), lectures often systematically cover the material in the textbook, and the exam requires students to demonstrate that they can recall all relevant material from one textbook and their lecture notes—often verbatim. Another consequence of this is that when Chinese
and other Asian students enter Western higher education, it is especially difficult for them to be critical about an author and to state their own opinions (p. 215). Often minimal or no interpretation or commentary is expected from the student. Pennycook (1996) argued that this form of learning should not be frowned on but should be viewed as different and deeply embedded in cultural and linguistic practices, most notably with regard to paraphrasing (p. 225).

Durkin (2008) examines East Asian master’s students in dealing with Western academic norms of critical thinking in classroom debate and assignment writing. Her research focuses on the differences in academic expectations, which have resulted in misunderstanding and some confusion for both Western lecturers and East Asian students studying in the West (p. 38). She contends that it is difficult describing cultures as Eastern and Western. The term Eastern Asian is used in her research as a general term for six targeted cultures (China, Taiwan, Thailand, Japan, Korea and Indonesia). This is not to suggest, according to Durkin, that these cultures are not very different from each other in many ways – social, religious, historical, and educational (p. 40). However, there does seem to exist a sufficiently identifiable core of rhetorical traditions, which allow for the use of the singular label East Asian (p. 40). Therefore, it could be assumed that students coming from East Asian countries may experience common challenges in adapting to Western expectations. Durkin’s study interviewed students from East Asian countries and found they reject full academic acculturation into Western norms of argumentation, which is characterized by rigorous, “strong” critical thinking (p. 42).
Instead, many of these students opt for a “Middle Way” that synergizes those elements of Western academic norms that are perceived to be culturally acceptable with the traditional cultural academic values held by many East Asian students. (p. 42)

She explains that East Asian discourse emphasizes listening to others, exposition of accepted fact, and restraint in expressing personal opinions, especially when these are contrary to the common consensus (p. 47). However, the Middle Way combines two different approaches, conciliatory dialogue and wrestling debate (p. 47). Although characterized by constructive dialogue which is inoffensive and involves empathetic listening to the other’s viewpoint, the Middle Way nevertheless does allow for some challenge. This, however, is indirect, and the focus is on reasoning, which aims to bring together rather than separate. Participants are therefore very mindful of their use of language and are sensitive and circumspect in their use of explicitness in positing an idea (p. 48). According to Durkin (2008), the Middle Way thus begins the search for truth with an “agnostic empathy” toward all views presented.

Durkin’s (2008) research findings indicate that the majority of East Asian postgraduate students ultimately reject full acculturation.

That is, they do not fully accept and internalize the academic norms and values of the United Kingdom regarding critical thinking and argumentation. On the contrary, the students in her research opted for the Middle Way in preference to going on the full acculturation stage. To them, Western critique is perceived as too insensitive and unnecessarily offensive not only in the Western academic sphere but also in the Western media and in society in general. (p. 48)

As a result, Durkin (2008) suggests that faculty in the West develop their own Middle Way that does not lose the rigorous “quest for truth,” even if it results in
polarized viewpoints and even offence to some. This new Middle Way could, however, also integrate the caring, more holistic and empathetic emphasis of East Asian cultures (p. 51). In this way, according to Durkin both groups could move closer together in their expectations and thinking without either group abdicating its unique culture identities and beliefs (p. 51).

Pennycook (1996) explains that the Confucian doctrine of *cheng ming* works with the opposite assumption, namely that “things are conceived of as conforming to the natural order not in themselves, but in virtue of corresponding to their names” (p. 221). Additionally, he states that primacy is accorded to language and to the “real” world. Notions such as metaphor, which suggests that some word “stands for” something else, become quite different because reality is in the language and not in the world (p. 205). As a result, Pennycook explains that the memorization of texts is not a pointless practice from this point of view, because the issue is not one of understanding the world and then mapping language onto it but rather of acquiring language as texts as a precursor to mapping out textual realities (p. 222).

Fang and Faure (2011) also examine the influence of Confucian philosophy in light of the characteristics of Chinese communication. They establish a five-point framework of Chinese communication characteristics:

1. Implicit communication: refers to a mode of communication (both verbal and nonverbal) which is contained, reserved, implicit, and indirect.

2. Listening-centered communication: Chinese culture encourages listening not speaking. Thus, a spoken voice is equated with seniority, authority, age, experience, knowledge, and expertise.
3. **Polite communication**: Embodies the values of modesty and humbleness in Chinese culture.

4. **Insider-communication**: Chinese tend to become highly involved in conversation with someone they know (insiders), but they rarely speak to strangers.

5. **Face-directed communication**: Respect of the in-group for the person with good moral reputation as well as his or her prestige. Face is thus not only an individual’s but also his or her in-group’s business, often with moral connotations. (p. 322)

Fang and Faure (2011) contend that the five-point framework gives importance to Confucian cultural values and their impact on Chinese communication characteristics, but it does not discuss the paradox inherent in Chinese culture and Chinese communication as embodied by the Chinese philosophy of Yin Yang (p. 322). The five-point framework does not discuss the changing Chinese communication style as a consequence of changing institutional and cultural contexts of China. Their research examines how Yin Yang is key to understanding the dynamics of Chinese communication characteristics. Therefore, Fang and Faure transform the existing five-point Chinese communication characteristics framework into a new framework involving five pairs of contradictory Chinese communication characteristics (p. 325).

1. Implicit communication vs. explicit communication
2. Listening-centered communication vs. speaking-centered communication
3. Polite communication vs. impolite communication
4. Insider-oriented communication vs. outsider-oriented communication
5. Face-directed communication vs. face-undirected communication (p. 325)

This new framework, according to Fang and Faure (2011), is a direct result of China’s rapid market-oriented economic development, globalization, foreign direct investment and the Internet. These researchers further explain that while the old communication characteristics have vanished from Chinese culture, that both old and new cultural values and communication characteristics, like the interaction between Yin and Yang, are more and more visibly coexisting in today’s Chinese society (p. 325). Applying this to the academic environment Fang and Faure argue that recent developments show that Chinese students can also be comfortable to resorting to a direct argument and use of linear patterns of rhetoric in appropriate circumstances (p. 327).

Furthermore, these researchers state that in Chinese university classrooms and in executive training programs, asking questions and even sharp questions to the professor/trainer is now common. In traditional teaching the participants were supposed to come to listen to the professor/trainer who was supposed to have the unchallengeable knowledge and to be the only person to speak in the classroom. Moreover, students’ evaluation of the performance of the professor/trainer is also a jump in the radically opposite direction but now it is done (p. 328).

Academic Issues U.S. Institutions Face When Enrolling Chinese Students

Unlike Western views on academics, Asian views focus on lectures and on student recall of all relevant material through memorization. This is partly to do with preparation for the gaokao (China’s college-entrance exam). According to Larson
the results are the sole criteria determining college placement in mainland China (p. 1). In addition, the Confucian philosophy is also at the center of the Asian academic teaching styles. Researchers have found that this style of teaching has consequences when Asian students enter Western higher education (Durkin, 2008; Fang & Faure, 2011; Pennycook, 1996), as it is especially difficult for these students to be critical about an author or state their own opinion. Therefore, by examining current research related to Asian views of the academic environment the reader will have a better understanding of how the differing cultural values among international students from Asian countries impact their understanding of academic integrity in U.S. classrooms.

Pincus and Schmelkin (2003) found that inconsistencies exist in the definition of academically dishonest behaviors and that a lack of consensus and general understanding of academic dishonesty exists among all members of the campus community (p. 196). Their research study focuses on the underlying perceptions of 150 full-time faculty and 150 adjunct faculty at a private U.S. academic institution in order to gain a better understanding of how they conceptualize academic dishonesty (p. 198). Pincus and Schmelkin determined faculty perceive academically dishonest behaviors on two dimensions: a clear-cut continuum of “Seriousness” and a somewhat more ambiguous “Papers vs. Exams” dimension (p. 206). The researchers defined the clear-cut continuum of “Seriousness” as a dimension in which one end of the continuum includes behaviors that faculty code as severe and that are clearly considered academically dishonest behaviors with some bordering on illegal. At the other end of the continuum are those behaviors that are perceived as being less severe (p. 203). However, the Papers vs.
Exams dimension also had a comparison of behaviors having to do with papers and homework at one end of the continuum. The other end of the continuum is extreme behaviors that are related to exams in the classroom (p. 206). Furthermore, Pincus and Schmelkin (2003) found that no differences in faculty perception of academic dishonesty were found due to full-time/adjunct status, sex, rank, tenure status, primary teaching emphasis, and/or division (p. 206). They also found that faculty do not perceive academic dishonesty dichotomously as an all or nothing situation. Rather, faculty view the various potential indicators of academic dishonesty on a continuum of severity, which for faculty is related to the clarity of the definition. (p. 206)

Whitley (1998) in his article, Factors Associated with Cheating Among Students: A Review, explains that students might cheat simply because they do not understand the limits of acceptable behavior. Such misunderstandings might be especially important in cases of plagiarism and unauthorized cooperation on assignments (p. 263). Furthermore, Vandehey, Diekoff, and LaBeff (2007) reported another issue facing academic institutions is that only 9% of faculty report academic dishonesty. Consequently, if higher education institutions according to the authors seek an increase in reporting, then policies aimed at reducing the time needed to see a complaint through the review process are needed (p. 478).

According to Bertram Gallant and Drinan (2006), addressing student cheating is a complex and dynamic challenge. Its dynamic attributes result from the turnover of students, gaps in faculty commitment, and preoccupation with more visible and contemporary problems such as hate crimes, sports corruption, or any of the many other
issues demanding attention on campuses (p. 840). Hard, Conway and Moran (2006) provide further evidence as to the complexity of student cheating. They found that faculty members who underestimate the frequency of misconduct very rarely take action to challenge students’ misconduct. It is highly likely that at least some students in these faculty members’ classes engage in misconduct and get away with it (p. 1076). As a result, Hard, Conway and Moran argue that to increase the number of faculty members actively working against misconduct requires making faculty more aware of the scope of misconduct (p. 1076). There should also be a greater knowledge of the misconduct policy by faculty in order to bring about more significant positive results on campuses (p. 1077).

Angelova and Riazantseva (1999) found that international students, who bring different writing experiences with them in U.S. classrooms, need assistance to adjust to the requirements of the new academic environment. This assistance, according to these researchers, depends on international students and U.S. faculty a like learning to address explicitly how academic writing conventions differ across cultures (p. 491). Angelova and Riazantseva found that all of the professors who participated in their study were aware of at least some of the cultural differences in the educational backgrounds and writing styles of international students. The professors interviewed also found that some of the students from Asian cultures quoted extensively or even reproduced large chunks of text verbatim when asked to reflect on a topic. Their reactions to these incidents were not to interpret this as plagiarism or cheating but to ask these particular students to redo their work (p. 509). Additionally, Angelova and Riazantseva found that the faculty they
interviewed reported that these students experienced a lack of knowledge regarding the rhetoric of U.S. academic papers (p. 510). Thus, the results of their study suggest that U.S. faculty often do not have much information about international students’ educational and cultural backgrounds as such information is important for understanding and overcoming the problems that these students encounter in the process of learning a specific disciplinary writing discourse (p. 518).

**Cosmopolitanism vs. Intercultural Personhood**

The increase of international students in U.S. higher education creates multiple opportunities for intercultural contact. According to Sobré-Denton (2011), these increases in intercultural contact points give way to a growing need to embrace a cosmopolitan perspective. Within this cosmopolitan perspective, international students studying abroad may be challenged to address issues of acculturation with little preparation, training, or systems in place for social support/adjustment (p. 79). She argues that cosmopolitanism is a state of identity without borders that is accessible to those able to engage in voluntary migration across multiple cultures and the subsequent intellectualization of such an experience (p. 80). Additionally, she claims that if cosmopolitanism provides the conceptual background of her research, then cross-cultural adaptation foregrounds its particular questions and assumptions. According to Sobré-Denton cross-cultural adaptation is defined as an identity change process that varies depending on the social support received by and the pre-departure orientations of sojourners (p. 81). Sobré-Deton claims, therefore, that individuals who are involved in
cosmopolitan support systems may form lasting cross-cultural relationships. These relationships may assist in developing interculturally competent leaders.

Ossewaarde’s (2007) research also examines the cosmopolitan characteristics of a global society. However, he contends that even though humanity, as a reference for the we-identity, is still a blank area on the emotional maps of the many, local groups are increasingly confronted with a widening of identification with strangers and the strange. Such a global identification, as an empirical reality of strangerhood and strangeness, gives way to more inclusive identities than the ties of kinship, nationality and ethnic identity, which were once able to provide for the appreciation of the underlying unity of all humankind (p. 384).

According to Ossewaarde (2007),

Cosmopolitanism stresses that in the era of global interconnections, human beings are expected to live, survive or flourish without local, immediate, concrete, and exclusive bonds. Cosmopolitanism is a deliberate attempt to make space for strangers, to have world citizens rule in the cosmopolis. Ignorance and fear of strangers is a lack of the will to be part of the world. Such an attempt, however, fails to do justice to classical and current sociology. Cosmopolitanism grounds its expectations on a particular understanding of human beings, of human nature and human potential. (p. 384)

But given the empirical reality, contends Ossewaarde, world citizenship seems a sociological, psychological, political and economic impossibility for most humans (p. 384).

Kim’s (2005, 2008) integrative theory asserts that adaptation occurs through communication and the building of social networks and that cultural immersion is generally positively related with fluency in the language of the host culture (Sobré-
Denton, 2011, p. 810.) Kim emphasizes that the process of communication with the host culture actively leads to such identity stress, and the international’s reaction to the stress leads to adaptation into the host culture and subsequent growth. She also contends that intercultural identity is employed as a counterpoint to, and as an extension of, cultural identity, and as a concept that represents the phenomenon of identity adaptation and transformation beyond the perimeters of the conventional, categorical conception of cultural identity. Her research points out that the stress-adaptation-growth dynamic provides a systemic account for the identity development process as the interplay of acculturation and deculturation (p. 359). This dynamic, according to Kim, is the conflict rooted in resistance to change, the desire to retain old customs in keeping with the original identity, on the one hand, and the desire to change behavior in seeking harmony with the new milieu, on the other (p. 363). She also explains that this conflict is essentially between the need for acculturation and the resistance to deculturation. The internal disequilibrium created by such conflicting forces can be manifested in intense emotional “lows” of uncertainty, confusion, and anxiety. Therefore, such intense situations cause stress, in which mental and behavioral habits are brought into awareness and called into question. However, this stress presents individuals with an opportunity to search deep inside them for new possibilities to recreate themselves. Over time, such conflicts, in turn make individuals susceptible to external influence and compel them to learn new cultural elements (p. 363). Therefore, through prolonged and cumulative intercultural communication experiences, individuals undergo a gradual process of
intercultural evolution. The emerging intercultural personhood is characterized by two interrelated key patterns of self-other orientation: individuation and universalization.

Emerging from experiences of acculturation, deculturation, and the stress-adaptation-growth dynamic is an emergence of intercultural identity. Kim (2008) contends that intercultural identity is an open-ended, adaptive, and transformative self-other orientation (p. 364). One of the two key elements of intercultural identity development is individuation that involves a clear self-definition and definition of the other as a singular individual rather than as a member of a conventional social category. With this capacity, one is better able to see oneself and others on the basis of unique individual qualities rather than categorical stereotypes. Individuation fosters a mental outlook that exhibits greater cognitive differentiation and particularization (p. 364).

Another element of intercultural identity development, according to Kim (2008), is universalization in self-other orientation, a parallel development of a synergistic cognition of a new consciousness. Universalization is born out of an awareness of the relative nature of values and of the universal aspect of human nature (p. 364). As individuals advance in the identity transformation process, they are better able to see the common humanity among different cultures and ethnicities, and locate the points of consent and complementarity beyond the points of difference and contention (p. 364). This will also allow individuals to overcome parochialism and form a vital outlook that is not locked in a provincial interest of one’s own group membership, but one in which the individual sees himself or herself to be a part of a larger whole that includes other groups as well (p. 364). However, Kim points out that with the advent of electronic
communication and globalization, distance no longer dictates the extent of intercultural communication. To the individuals, social organizations, communities, and nations that are nostalgic for the age of certainty, permanence, and a fixed and unitary cultural identity, this changing global reality can represent a particularly unsettling, discontinuity and malaise. Therefore, Kim’s theory offers an alternative vision of being oriented to oneself and to the world that is more open, flexible and inclusive (p. 366). Kim’s work offers one explanation as to why there are academic issues that U.S. institutions face when enrolling international students. An illustration of this point is that many students from Asian countries struggle academically due to the approach to learning in the West, which is contrary to their experiences in their own country (Hayes & Introna, 2005).

Additionally, Hannerz (1990) contends that the perspective of the cosmopolitan must entail relationships to a plurality of cultures understood as distinctive entities. It also includes a stance toward diversity itself, toward the coexistence of cultures in the individual experience (p. 239). He explains that there is a state of readiness, a personal ability to make one’s way into other cultures, through listening, looking, intuiting and reflecting. There is also cultural competence in maneuvering more or less expertly with a particular system of meanings and meaningful forms. Competence with regard to alien cultures itself entails a sense of mastery, as an aspect of the self (p. 240). One’s understandings have expanded, and a little more of the world is somehow under control. Yet there is a paradoxical interplay between mastery and surrender. The cosmopolitan may embrace the alien culture, but he or she does not become committed to it. All the time he or she knows where the exit is (p. 240).
Acculturation and Academic Integrity

Kashima and Loh’s (2006) research study examines the relationship between international students’ acculturation and social networks they develop in the host society. They focused on the social ties that students develop with other international students from different countries. They investigate three types of social ties (local, conational, and international) and five aspects of acculturation: (1.) psychological adjustment; (2.) sociocultural adjustment; (3) acquisition of host cultural knowledge; (4.) heritage cultural identity; and (5) Australian university identity (p. 473). Their findings indicate that international students’ acculturation was influenced significantly by their social ties, especially international ties, and their level of need for cognitive closure (NCC). High NCC students tend to find their sojourn in the foreign country more unsettling and stressful (p. 483). Nevertheless, personal ties with local and other international students seem to facilitate better psychological adjustment. Also, among students with low NCC, those with greater personal ties with other international students hold stronger heritage cultural identity (p. 483).

Sakurai, McCall-Wolf and Kashima (2010) examine the effects of a multicultural intervention program on the development of social ties, cultural orientation, and psychological adjustment among international students in Australia (p. 176). Their study focuses on students primarily from 11 Asian countries (China, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Thailand, Laos, Indonesia, Vietnam, Japan, India, Taiwan and Korea). Sakurai, McCall-Wolf and Kashima contend
these young people from diverse cultures but with similar academic goals and experiences subscribe to a shared identity of ‘international students’ and form a loosely knit community. Upon enrolling in the educational institution, therefore, the new international students join in this large community, with a potential for establishing personal ties with its diverse members. Nevertheless, an often found problem among international students is their feelings of social isolation, loneliness, and disappointment with the lack of friendship ties, especially with local students. (p. 177)

Therefore, these researchers find that multicultural intervention programs for social tie development, cultural orientation, and psychological adjustment of international students is necessary and educators should be encouraged to organize multicultural intervention programs (p. 184).

**Social Networks vs. Social Node**

Henderickson, Rosen and Aune (2011) focus on the overall composition of international students’ personal networks but also the varying strengths of these friendships. The theoretical grounding for their research is divided into three sections: (a.) international student friendship formation using cross-cultural adaptation theory; (b.) quality and quantity of social support within the context of social network analysis, and (c.) the dependent variables satisfaction, contentment, homesickness, and social connectedness (p. 282). These researchers find that preparing students for study in another country may be catalyzed by having students undergo intercultural or social support training. Additionally, they find that international students with a higher ratio of individuals from the host country in their network claimed to be more satisfied, content, and less homesick (p. 289). Henderickson, Rosen and Aune find that the classroom is
also a venue that offers an opportunity to evoke cultural curiosity in students and to strengthen each other’s cultural knowledge (p. 290).

**Conclusion**

The differing cultural values among graduate students from China with regard to academic integrity are a large part of the challenges that these students face while studying at U.S. institutions. However, it is unclear how Chinese graduate students understand academic integrity and what kind of issues they may link to academic integrity. More importantly perhaps, what advice are graduate students from China giving to other students coming to study in the U.S.? Additionally, these same areas need to be addressed through the eyes of faculty and administrators who come into contact with Chinese graduate students at the academic institutions they attend. The current research focuses more on cultural theories related to the critical thinking skills of international students from Asian countries and less on how they are impacted by Western views. Pennycook (1996) attempts to define Western culture related to the academic thought process. On the other hand, Durkin (2008) defines characteristics related to academic critical thinking and the need for acceptance of free expression and direct, public disagreement. The issue of plagiarism, according to Hayes and Introna (2005), is not always simply a matter of cheating or not cheating. These researchers argue:

practices that might be termed plagiarism are often the outcome of many diverse and complex influences, especially for students who find themselves in unfamiliar and difficult terrain. On one hand, the ideological basis of the notion of plagiarism and the alienation from the assessment task may lead students to feel justified when they plagiarize.
On the other hand, when students sincerely try to cope with the situation by patch-writing and “borrowing of words,” they may be further alienated by attempts to impose rigid categories of judgment, which may lead to an increased sense of powerlessness and of being justified in the first place. (p. 229)

Consequently, Hayes and Introna (2005) contend a need exists for Western academics not only to develop a broader understanding of how international students were taught and assessed but also to communicate more clearly their own expectations (p. 229). In addition, Western academics need to also explain how their policies and practices differ from those policies in the students’ own country, and to provide resources for students to meet these expectations (p. 229). As a result, all of these research studies highlight the underlining framework of Hofstede’s (1991) cultural variability theory.

The next chapter focuses on the research methodology for this study that examines Chinese graduate student understanding of the concept of academic integrity as applied in U.S. graduate education. Through a series of interviews, the study explores the issues of academic integrity through the eyes of individuals who have experienced this phenomenon.
CHAPTER III
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The goal of this phenomenological study was to examine how U.S. classroom environments as well as institutional policies and practices impacted Chinese graduate student understanding of and experience with the U.S. based concept of academic integrity. In interviews Chinese graduate students, faculty and administrators were asked to reflect on their understanding and experiences related to academic integrity. Strong structural and textural descriptions were used to accurately portray the participants’ view of the phenomenon. This chapter describes the research methodology for this study including a rationale for the use of a qualitative approach, the design of the study, the process of site selection, the method and process of contacting participants, a description of interview protocols, the process of data analysis, and limitations of the qualitative approach and sampling methods.

Qualitative Methodology

In light of the first two chapters, the concept of academic integrity among Chinese graduate students and U.S. faculty and administrators who work with these students is at the forefront of discussion and reveals the complexity in addressing academic dishonesty. Additionally, very little is written with regard to understanding academic integrity in light
of the cultural norms found both in the United States and in China. Thus, a need existed to understand academic integrity through the eyes of the Chinese graduate student as well as the faculty and administrators who work with these students and who formalize policies and programs that promote greater understanding of academic integrity among international students. According to Creswell (2007) qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (p. 37). Moreover, Schwandt (2003) contends qualitative inquiry is more comprehensible as a site or arena for social scientific criticism than any particular kind of social theory, methodology, or philosophy (p. 293). Thus, both Creswell and Schwandt support the virtues of qualitative studies in order to find the arena in which a particular set of laudable virtues for social research are championed, such as fidelity to specific phenomena, respect for the individual and his or her life experiences, and attention to the fine-grained details of daily life (Schwandt, 2003, p. 294). A qualitative study provided the means to examine issues related to academic integrity that Chinese graduate students and U.S. faculty and administrators who work with these students are facing in light of the increase in the numbers of Chinese students enrolled at their respective institutions.

Conceptual Foundation for the Study’s Design: Social Constructivism

To examine the phenomenon of how Chinese graduate students and U.S. faculty and administrators make sense of academic integrity, this study took a social constructivist view of qualitative research. According to Creswell (2007), researchers who adopt social constructivism incorporate:
an understanding of the world in which they live and work. They develop subjective meanings of their experiences—meanings directed toward certain objects or things. These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrow the meanings into a few categories or ideas. The goal of research, then, is to rely as much as possible on the participants’ view of the situation. (p. 20)

On the other hand, Schwandt (2003) argues:

social constructionist epistemologies aim to overcome representational epistemologies in a variety of ways. They typically begin by drawing on an everyday, uncontroversial, garden-variety constructivism. (p. 305)

According to Schwandt this ordinary sense of constructionism is also called perspectivism in contemporary epistemology (p. 306).

**Researcher Positionality**

In light of the way in which social constructivism views acquiring knowledge, this study must also acknowledge that the interpretations of the study are therefore, by definition, seen through a socially constructed view of the researcher. The challenge of phenomenological research is for researchers to be transparent with themselves, to allow whatever is before them in consciousness to disclose itself so that they may see with new eyes in a naïve and completely open manner (Moustakas, 1994, p. 86). Moustaka’s position refers to this process as an epoche (or bracketing) in which investigators set aside their experiences, as much as possible, to take a fresh perspective toward the phenomenon under examination (Creswell, 2007, pp. 59-60).

In order to try to meet this challenge and acknowledge the influence of values on research, I provide a short description of my background as it relates to international graduate students, faculty and administrators of U.S. institutions of higher education. I
am currently employed as the Executive Director of the Office of International Services at a large research university in the Midwest. I have worked in the field of international education since 1991. During my professional career in international education I have had much contact with international graduate students, faculty, and administrators of U.S. institutions of higher education and have witnessed how these groups interact, especially as it relates to issues surrounding academic integrity. I have witnessed both as an international educator and a conduct hearing panelist an increase in the number of international students who have been academically dismissed from the university based upon conduct hearings related to faculty and administrator complaints of academic dishonesty. Over the course of my time in the field of international education I have seen a growing concern about academic integrity by not only other professionals in the field of international education, but also by faculty and administrators.

Consequently, because of my background as a professional international educator and my work in the field of international education, I hold a strong bias toward assisting international students achieve their educational goals in the U. S., but also toward advising faculty and administrators of ways to internationalize their campuses. I believe that international education is a way in which professionals in higher education can prepare all students to become global citizens.

Since I cannot separate myself as a person from myself as a researcher, I must control my bias so that it does not interfere with the data in a way that corrupts or invalidates the research. Therefore, there will be more focus on a description of the experiences of the participants rather than my own experiences. This study used
bracketing in order to ensure that personal experiences were set aside as much as possible (Creswell, 2007, p. 59). I set aside my experiences and took a fresh perspective toward the phenomenon under examination (pp. 59-60).

**Phenomenological Research**

This study examined issues related to academic integrity that Chinese graduate students and U.S. faculty and administrators who work with these students are facing in light of the increase in the numbers of Chinese graduate students enrolled at their respective institutions. Additionally, this study provides a better understanding regarding how differences in cultural values may impact the meaning of academic integrity by Chinese graduate students. In order to obtain this level of understanding, this study examined each stakeholder group’s experience with academic integrity with a special analytical focus on common themes that emerged across the groups. The process of obtaining perceptions held about academic integrity among Chinese graduate students and U.S. faculty, and administrators who work with these students was derived from phenomenology. The basic purpose of phenomenology is to reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence (Creswell, 2007, p. 58). To this end, qualitative researchers first identify a phenomenon to be studied. The researcher then collects data from persons who have experienced the phenomenon, and develops a composite description of the essence of the experience for all of the individuals (p. 58). This description consists of “what” they experienced and “how” they experienced it (Moustakas, 1994).
According to Creswell (2007), an effective phenomenological study would include several steps: (a.) the researcher determines if the research problem is best examined using a phenomenological approach; (b.) the phenomenon of interest to study is identified; (c.) the researcher recognizes and specifies the broad philosophical assumptions of phenomenology; (d.) data are collected from the individuals who have experienced the phenomenon; (e.) the participants are asked broad, general questions; (f.) the researcher goes through the data, highlights “significant statements,” sentences, or quotes that provide an understanding of how participants experienced the phenomenon, and then develops clusters of meaning from these significant statements into themes; (g.) the significant statements and themes are then used to prepare a description of what the participants experienced and the setting that influenced how the participants experienced the phenomenon; and (h.) the results from the structural and textural descriptions are used to write a composite description that presents the “essence” of the phenomenon (pp. 60-62).

Thus, a phenomenological study provides a deep understanding of a phenomenon as experienced by several individuals (Creswell, 2007, p. 62). Exploring how an image of academic integrity at three different levels connects with personal experiences has not previously been studied in depth or shared with the academic community.

**Design of the Study**

**Criteria for Site Selection**

In order to obtain a good sampling of interviewees for this study, selected institutional factors were considered in order to identify a site that would encompass all
of the elements of the study. These elements included: (a.) a university with graduate and professional programs; (b.) a large international graduate student population of at least 300 from China with either a F-1 or J-1 visa; (c.) a large international student population that has been enrolled full-time as graduate students for at least one year; (d.) full-time faculty who have at least two years of postsecondary teaching experience and have taught international graduate students from China; (e.) an administrative unit that oversees and manages international student services and programs; or (f.) administrators who develop, interpret and enforce policies and procedures related to academic integrity.

Upon approval of this study by both the dissertation committee and Loyola University’s Institutional Review Board, I identified a large research institution located in the Midwest for possible participation in my study. I targeted a large institution for my study in order to have access to a sizeable population of Chinese graduate students, and faculty and administrators from which to sample. I focused on an institution within the Midwest in order to have more flexibility with scheduling interviews. A pseudonym was used for the name of the institution (University of Blue Hill) in order to mask its identity.

Once the institution was identified, I informally contacted the Senior Student Affairs Officer at the institution about the basic goals of the study and asked for her support. Additionally, I informed her that I would be in contact again once the study had been approved by Loyola University’s Institutional Review Board. After approval from Loyola University’s Institutional Review Board, I formally contacted her via letter (see Appendix A) and asked that she consider my study for implementation at her institution. I also included with this letter a brief overview of the study (see Appendix B) to assist
with understanding the proposal. The institution did not require that I submit a request to its institutional review board. Once the Senior Student Affairs Officer at the institution approved the study; I then asked that the institution provide a letter of cooperation confirming final approval (see Appendix C). Once this approval was secured, I asked the Senior Student Affairs Officer to appoint a research liaison who assisted me in identifying and contacting possible interviewees.

Since there were sufficient numbers of participants at the institution selected, a second similar institution was not contacted.

**Criteria for Participant Selection**

This research study provides a better understanding of how differences in cultural values impact the meaning of academic integrity by Chinese graduate students. In light of this goal, an examination was needed of how U.S. classroom environments as well as institutional policies and practices impact Chinese graduate student understanding of and experience with academic integrity. Therefore, a purposive sample of 15 Chinese graduate students, five faculty members and five administrators from a large Midwest research institution of higher education were invited to participate in this phenomenological study. The goal for these three groups was to secure volunteers from nine Chinese graduate students, three faculty members and three administrators. The research liaison at the institution invited 67 students, 11 faculty and five administrators who met the criteria to participate in the study. Nine students, three faculty, and three administrators were selected for interviews.
**Student selection.** A purposive sample of 15 Chinese graduate students was established that met the following criteria: (a.) enrolled full-time with either a F-1 or J-1 student visa; (b.) approximately half male and half female; (c.) with majors across academic disciplines; and (d.) have studied full-time in a graduate or professional program at the institution for at least one year.

**Faculty selection.** A purposive sample of five full-time faculty members was selected that also focused on a diverse population addressing the following criteria: (a.) taught international graduate students from China; (b.) have had two or more years of graduate level teaching experience; (c.) sampling across academic disciplines; (d.) representative of both men and women.

**Administrator selection.** A purposive sample of five full-time administrators also focused on a diverse population that met one or both of the following criteria: (a.) oversees and manages international student services and programs for the university; or (b.) individuals who are directly responsible for developing, interpreting and/or enforcing policies and procedures directly related to academic integrity.

**Data Collection**

**Contacting Participants**

After the research study was approved, the Senior Student Affairs Officer at the University of Blue Hill was contacted to discuss who at the institution would be in the best position to serve as a research liaison. Once this person agreed to serve in this capacity, she became the primary contact between me and the participants during the study. I scheduled an appointment to personally meet with this individual not only to
discuss the study in depth but also to respond to any questions. After consent was given to conduct the interviews at the university, I asked the liaison to identify 15 Chinese graduate students who met the criteria. The goal of the research study was to obtain nine students. However, I did not initially obtain the required number of volunteers. Therefore, I asked the liaison to send the invitation to an additional 15 students. It took two more times sending the invitation in order to obtain the required number of volunteers. This individual also assisted in identifying five faculty members who met the criteria, as well as five administrators who are responsible for overseeing or managing international student services and programs for the university or developing, interpreting and implementing policies related to academic integrity. The goal for these two groups was to secure volunteers from three faculty members and three administrators. Once again, if I had not obtained the required number of volunteers the liaison would have sent the invitation to an additional three faculty members and three administrators. However, for these two groups I was successful in obtaining the required number of volunteers on the first attempt.

Once the potential participants were identified, the research liaison contacted the various members of each group. The invitation materials included a brief synopsis of the research study, letters of invitation to: students and faculty and administrators, and demographic data forms (see Appendices B, D, E, F and G). As the researcher, I did not know who was contacted and the liaison did not know who responded to me. All initial information about the study was sent via e-mail by the liaison and all responses were sent directly to me, not to the liaison. Any questions about the study or participation in the
study were directed via e-mail to me. I was not copied in any way on the initial e-mail to the participant pool, nor did I see the list of potential participants in advance. In order to thank the international graduate students who participated in the study, the invitation offered them a $20 gift certificate to the institution’s bookstore at the completion of the interview.

**Interviews**

In order to understand the issues related to academic integrity that Chinese graduate students and faculty and administrators of U.S. institutions of higher education are facing in light of the increase in the enrollment of Chinese graduate students, this study included individual interviews as the method of data collection. Creswell (2007) endorses the psychologist Moustakas’s (1994) approach to conducting phenomenological research and data collection through the use of interviews (pp. 60-61). The Chinese graduate student participants were asked a series of semi-structured questions (see Appendix H) related to their understanding of academic integrity. For example, they were asked how their cultural background may relate or influence their understanding of academic integrity. These types of questions according to Creswell focus attention on gathering data that will lead to a textural and a structural description of the participant experiences, and ultimately provide an understanding of their common experiences (p. 61).

This study also invited Chinese graduate students and faculty and administrators not only to share their understanding of academic integrity, but their personal experiences related to how cultural values may impact the meaning they ascribe to the concept of
academic integrity. As a result, individual in-depth interviews were used to gather data which first focused on describing the meaning of the phenomenon.

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) cite 12 aspects of a qualitative interview from a phenomenological perspective: life world, meaning, qualitative, descriptive, specificity, deliberate naiveté, focused, ambiguity, change, sensitivity, interpersonal situation, and positive experience (p. 28). By focusing on these aspects of qualitative research interviews in this study, I was able to experience what Kvale and Brinkmann term the mode of understanding in a semi-structured and empathetic life world interview, which exemplifies learning in everyday life (p. 32). Additionally, these 12 aspects helped focus the interview on the experienced meanings of the participant and helped to clarify the mode of understanding (p. 26).

Creswell (2007) recommends that in data collection related to a phenomenological study that an interview protocol be designed (see Appendices H, I and J). In this study three groups of participants were interviewed including Chinese graduate students and faculty and administrators responsible for either overseeing, or managing international student services and programs for the university or developing, interpreting and/or enforcing policies/practices that promote a greater understanding of academic integrity. All participants were asked to complete a demographic data form prior to the interview. The Chinese graduate students in the study were asked to provide their name, contact information, age, gender, whether they are currently sponsored in F-1 or J-1 non-immigrant visa status, name and country of the academic institution that they received the equivalence of an undergraduate degree, field of study, length of time they have been in
the United States. Faculty were asked to provide their name, gender, age, academic field of expertise, number of years of graduate level teaching experience, and the name and country of the academic institution that they received their terminal degree. Finally, administrators were asked to provide their name, gender, age, title and area of responsibility. During the interview for each participant I introduced myself, offered a brief synopsis of the purpose of the research study and reviewed the consent process for participants. The interview focused on the goals of the study by asking a series of open-ended questions designed to solicit cultural attitudes and understandings of the meaning of academic integrity in the context of how U.S. classroom environments as well as institutional policies and practices impact understanding. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) foreign cultures may involve different norms for interaction with strangers concerning initiative, directness, modes of questioning, and the like (p. 144). Since I have been employed in international education since 1991, I am familiar with the cultural differences and am aware of the verbal and nonverbal factors that may cause interviews to go amiss.

**Ethical Considerations**

According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) ethical issues permeate interview-based research. They contend:

The knowledge produced by such research depends on the social relationship of the interviewer and interviewee, which rests on the interviewer’s ability to create a stage where the subject is free and safe to talk of private events recorded for later public use. This again requires a delicate balance between the interviewer’s concern for pursuing interesting knowledge and ethical respect for the integrity of the interview subject. (p. 16)
Additionally, Kvale and Brinkmann contend that ethical issues, such as obtaining the participant’s informed consent to participate in the study, securing confidentiality and considering the possible consequences of the study for the participants, should be taken into consideration when preparing an ethical protocol for an interview study. It is with this concept in mind that I used the following safeguards to protect the participants as well as the results of the study.

**Informed Consent**

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) contend that informed consent entails informing the research participants about the overall purpose of the investigation and the main features of the design, as well as any possible risks and benefits from participation in the research project (p. 70). According to these researchers, informed consent also involves the question of how much information should be given and when.

Full information about the design and purpose counteracts deception of the participants. Providing information about a study involves a careful balance between giving too much detailed information and leaving out aspects of the design that may be significant to the participants. (p. 71)

As a result, prior to the interview process, I asked all research participants to review the informed consent form (see Appendices K, L, and M), allowing them time to read the information contained on the form and answer any questions. Additionally, I asked all participants if they will consent to having the interviews digitally recorded and explained the purpose of recording the interviews. I discussed the purpose of the digital audio recording, the handling of the digital audio recording and the use of a transcription service. Furthermore, I reviewed at this time the statement of confidentiality that the
transcriber signed (see Appendix N). I also informed the participants that at any time they may choose to end the interview and choose to no longer participate in the study. Finally, I informed the students that their participation will in no way impact either their academic standing or immigration status. All participants were informed that the interviews should take approximately 60 minutes to conduct.

**Setting**

Creswell (2007) explains that the setting for interviews in qualitative research studies should be, if possible, a quiet location free from distractions. The researcher should ascertain if the physical setting lends itself to audiotaping, which Creswell believes to be a necessity (pp. 133-134). Therefore, in choosing the place and time of the interviews, I suggested that the interviews take place either in a reserved conference room or open classroom, or if the participant believes less chance of interruption will occur at another location, I arranged for the interview to take place at that location.

**Confidentiality**

Confidentiality in research, according to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), implies that private data identifying the participants will not be disclosed (p. 72). Therefore, this research study took appropriate measures in order to protect the identification of the participants. The brief synopsis of the study, the invitation to participate in the study, and the consent forms all were reviewed by the Senior Student Affairs Officer prior to the start of the study. The names of participants were not disclosed to institutional representatives. All participants in the three groups had the opportunity to review how the data collected from the interview will be used and were given the opportunity to
withdraw from participating in the study. All audio recordings made during the interviews were transcribed and stored on a flash drive as well as a paper back up. Both forms of transcriptions are being stored in a secure place and will be retained for up to two years after the completion of the study and then properly destroyed. Additionally, any field notes with participant information obtained during the study are being kept in a secure place and then properly destroyed no more than two years after the completion of the study. During the course of compiling the final report, notes, transcriptions and drafts, pseudonyms were used to protect the institution and the individuals who participate in the research study. In addition, non-identifiable personal descriptors were used in the report as an additional preventative measure to guard against breeching confidentiality.

**Trustworthiness**

In addition to protecting participants from harm and respecting their confidentiality, it is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure the trustworthiness of the research study. In a qualitative study, trustworthiness focuses on the concepts of reliability and validity. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) contend:

> Although increasing the reliability of the interview findings is desirable in order to counteract haphazard subjectivity, a strong emphasis on reliability may counteract creative innovations and variability. (p. 245)

Additionally, validity is another element of trustworthiness of a research study. Kvale and Brinkmann explain that not only as a matter of conceptualization and of the methods used, the person of the researcher, including his or her moral integrity, are critical for evaluating the quality of the scientific knowledge produced (p. 248). In order to confirm
the trustworthiness of the study’s results, I reflected on the five questions that are identified by Creswell (2007) when assessing the quality of a phenomenological study.

1. Does the author convey an understanding of the philosophical tenets of phenomenology?

2. Does the author have a clear “phenomenon” to study that is articulated in a concise way?

3. Does the author use procedures of data analysis in phenomenology?

4. Does the author convey the overall essence of the experience of the participants? Does this essence include a description of the experience and context in which it occurred?

5. Is the author reflexive throughout the study? (pp. 215-216)

Lincoln and Guba (1985) state four components establish “trustworthiness” of a study: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Therefore, in order to address credibility and dependability, this study utilized two methods recommended by Lincoln and Guba. Confirmation of credibility and dependability depended on two processes: member checks and peer review. Member checks are used in the process of continuous, informal testing of information by soliciting reactions of respondents to the investigator’s reconstruction of what he or she has been told (p. 314). In order to ensure that each participant’s transcripts are being represented in a way that is accurate and representative of his or her true opinion, each participant received a written transcript of the interview via either e-mail or regular mail. The participant was given a period of two weeks to review the transcript and make any changes or revisions to answers, as well as add information that provides clarification.
Once the member check is completed, I also instituted a peer review process as I analyzed the data. I consulted with a professional peer with 23 years of experience in the field of international education, who challenged or questioned emerging themes as well as assisted me in developing a working hypothesis. This process will “keep the inquirer honest” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 308). I identified one professional peer who could review the results and assist in developing themes, while continuing to be careful to prevent any personally identifiable information from being reviewed by my colleague. This peer review strengthened the dependability of the data I am representing.

In addition, this study also made use of a reflexive journal that displayed my processes, philosophical position, methodological decisions I made, and the bases of decisions about the inquiry as a means of establishing trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As a final point, in order to address the issues of transferability and confirmability, this study integrated into my final dissertation a thick description, relying on frequent participant quotations, of detailed accounts of their experiences. This provided an effective tool to ensure that both the study’s ultimate findings as well as possible unstated biases of the researcher were kept in check.

**Data Analysis**

Data analysis in qualitative research consists of preparing and organizing the data for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally representing the data in figures, tables or discussion (Creswell, 2007, p. 148). Therefore, during the process of describing, classifying and interpreting, according to Creswell, researchers develop codes or categories (p. 152).
Then, moving beyond coding, Creswell explains, the research should classify the data by taking the text or qualitative information apart and look for categories, themes or dimensions (p. 153). Furthermore, he contends that phenomenological analysis first has to describe personal experiences with the phenomenon under study; and then, develop a list of significant statements from the interviews about how the individuals are experiencing the topic. Once this is obtained the significant statements should be grouped into larger units of information. These significant statements should have descriptions of what the participants in the study have experienced with the phenomenon (textural description). Additionally, descriptions of how the experience happened should also be added to each of the significant statements (structural description). Finally, the researcher will write a composite description of the phenomenon incorporating both the textural and structural descriptions (Creswell, 2007).

Coding for phenomenological studies, according to Creswell, is used for the 5 elements mentioned above (personal bracketing, significant statements, meaning units, textural descriptions, and structural descriptions). The description of the phenomenon becomes the “essence of the phenomenon” and is placed at the top of the process. Therefore, after each interview I created categories based on the digital audio recordings of the participants, dividing their significant statements into meaning units and then interpreting these units by textural and structural descriptions. These emerging categories were compared to the transcription of the interviews after careful review.
Limitations

As with many qualitative studies, this study was limited due to the small sample size. The study requires the participation of nine Chinese graduate students. Additionally, this study was also limited to three full-time faculty members and three administrators. I addressed this limitation of the small sample size through purposeful sampling. Furthermore, the research liaison employed at the institution where the study is conducted may have reached out to Chinese graduate students, faculty and administrators that he or she is in regular contact with during the course of his or her workday. This type of selection may skew the type of participants to those who may have experienced the phenomenon in the same way. To try to prevent this type of selection from happening, I asked the research liaison to consider within the pool of participants not only the ones he or she personally knew at the institution but also those who have not been in contact with the research liaison. However, while this may not fully eliminate the bias, hopefully it did counteract some of the limitations.

Conclusion

This study explores how Chinese graduate students understand and experience the U.S. based concept of academic integrity. The process of developing the research design was conducive to the best practices that are currently being used when conducting phenomenological studies that consist of individual interviews. Potential limitations of the study have been considered, and concern has been given to the selection of the various groups who participated in the study in order to reduce both biased and perspectival subjectivity. Implications for the participants in the various groups have also
been considered in the research design. The research protocol which includes the
synopsis of the study, the informed consent forms and the interview protocol all were
developed to keep participants well-informed as to the purpose of the study and their role
within it. Additionally, appropriate measures to protect the identification of the
participants have been made to prevent any negative or unplanned outcomes from the
study. It was the goal of this study to generate a better understanding how Chinese
graduate students understand and experience academic integrity.
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS

Introduction

The literature review in Chapter II focused on how cultural values may influence the perception of academic integrity among university students from Asian countries including Korea, China, Japan, Hong Kong and India (Chapman & Lupton, 2004; Handa & Power, 2005). However, the literature is less clear about how international students from China understand academic integrity and the issues they link to academic integrity. Additionally, these same integrity issues are addressed by faculty and administrators who come into contact with Chinese graduate students at the U.S. academic institution they attend. This review, and my own experience working in international education since 1991, led to four areas of inquiry around which student, faculty, and administrator interviews were organized. The goal of the interviews was to address the following research questions: (a) How do international graduate students attending U.S. universities from China understand and make meaning of the concept of “academic integrity” as applied in U.S. graduate education? (b.) How do U.S. classroom environments and institutional policies and practices impact Chinese graduate student understanding of and experience with academic integrity? (c.) How do U.S. faculty describe their experiences with international graduate students from China related to
student understanding of academic integrity and the factors that may contribute to that understanding? and (d.) To what extent and in what ways do Chinese graduate students, faculty, and administrators believe that cultural differences impact international student understanding of academic integrity and related issues that arise in the context of their enrollment in the U.S.? Conclusions and a discussion of key findings will be presented in Chapter V.

Individual interviews exploring the research questions were conducted with nine students, three faculty and three administrators. An analysis of all audio transcripts and field notes was conducted as a mean of triangulation, a standard method for limiting bias in qualitative studies. The data from these sources were integrated into a narrative. Member checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1995) were used to ensure the accuracy of the transcription and the thoroughness of participant responses. Once member checks were completed, a peer review process was instituted to ensure that data were interpreted in a fair and accurate manner (Lincoln & Guba, 1995). More importantly, in order to address trustworthiness issues of transferability and confirmability, this study integrated into the narrative thick description, relying on frequent participant quotations, of detailed accounts of the participants’ experiences.

In order to obtain interviewees for this study, selected institutional factors were considered in order to identify a site that would encompass all elements of the study. These elements include identifying Chinese graduate students and U.S. faculty and administrators who work with these students. Specific factors used to select the institution are presented in Chapter III. The study was conducted at a large Midwestern
research institution which met these elements. A pseudonym was used for the name of
the institution (University of Blue Hill) as well as the participants in order to mask their
identity.

The sampling criteria called for Chinese student participants: (a.) to be enrolled
full-time as graduate students with either a F-1 or J-1 student visa; (b.) to represent both
men and women; (c.) to have majors across academic disciplines; and (d.) to have studied
full-time in a graduate or professional program at the institution for at least one year.
Criteria for faculty selection required that they: (a.) be employed full-time; (b.) teach
international graduate students from China; (c.) have two or more years of graduate-level
teaching experience; (d.) represent diverse academic disciplines; and (e.) be
representative of both genders. Criteria for administrator selection included: (a.)
employed as a full-time administrator; (b.) oversee and manage international student
services and programs for the university; and/or (c.) responsible for developing,
interpreting, and/or enforcing policies and procedures related to academic integrity. The
research liaison at the institution invited 67 students, 11 faculty and 5 administrators who
met the criteria to participate in the study. Nine students, three faculty, and three
administrators volunteered for interviews. All participants were actively engaged in the
interviews. Both the administrators and faculty were excited about the research focus and
indicated that the Provost at their institution was actively addressing issues related to
academic integrity in hopes of developing a standard University policy.
Institutional Site

The University of Blue Hill, located in the Midwest, enrolled approximately 15,000 (8,000 undergraduate and 7,000 graduate students) for Fall of 2012. At the time of this study, the University had approximately 2,000 international students. Chinese students account for over half of this population with approximately 1,000 students including approximately 800 graduate students. They are almost equally divided in gender. The top ten fields of study are: architecture; law; electrical engineering; accounting; business administration; chemistry; biomedical engineering; energy, environmental and chemical engineering; finance; and economics.

Participants

Student Participants

In order to obtain 15 Chinese graduate students to participate in the study the research liaison sent invitations to a total of 67 students who met the criteria. In the end, seven male and two female Chinese graduate students volunteered to participate in the study. All but two of the students were enrolled in either science or engineering academic fields. The other two were enrolled in business or social work fields. Additionally, six students were enrolled in Ph.D. programs and three were enrolled in Master’s programs. Eight students held F-1 non-immigrant student visa status and one held J-1 non-immigrant student visa status. The length of time that each of the students had been in the United States ranged from 1 to 4.5 years. The student participants ranged in age from 20-29 years (see Table 1).
Faculty Participants

The research liaison invited 11 faculty members to participate in the study in order to achieve the necessary three volunteers. Among the three faculty members who participated, the number of years teaching graduate level courses varied from 9 to 24 years. Additionally, the number of international students from different countries that the faculty taught also varied from 100 to 200 students over their career. All three faculty members obtained their terminal degrees in the U.S. The academic rank each faculty member held was Professor, Associate Professor, and Assistant Professor, respectively. Two faculty members were female and one was male. The faculty ranged from 30 to 59 years of age (see Table 2).

Administrator Participants

In order to obtain three administrators to participate in the study the research liaison sent invitations to five administrators. Of the three administrators who participated, two were female and one was male. The ages of the administrators ranged from 50-59 years of age. In addition, two administrators were employed in the Dean’s office of their respective colleges and oversaw student discipline as part of their responsibilities. The third administrator was responsible for managing the International Office for the institution (see Table 3).

The next sections reveal key findings related to how U.S. classroom environments as well as institutional policies and practices impact Chinese graduate student understanding of and experience with academic integrity. These sections are based upon the research questions that guided my study, and focus on (a.) the concept of academic
integrity as understood by Chinese graduate students; (b.) institutional classroom environments and policies related to academic integrity; (c.) faculty and administrator experiences with Chinese graduate students with regard to integrity; and (d.) cultural influences and Chinese student understanding of academic integrity.

Table 1: Student Interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Current academic status</th>
<th>Academic Discipline</th>
<th>Studied full-time in a graduate/professional for at least one year</th>
<th>Completed undergraduate degree in the U.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dong</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fa</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>Energy, Environ &amp; Chemical Eng.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chunhua</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>Immunology</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biyu</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aiguo</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>MBA</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Da</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>Biomedical Eng.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheng</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>Energy, Environ &amp; Chemical Eng.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chao</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bohai</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>Energy, Environ &amp; Chemical Eng.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: Faculty Interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Employed Full-time</th>
<th>Taught int’l graduate students</th>
<th>Number of years of graduate level teaching experience</th>
<th>Academic Discipline</th>
<th>Obtained terminal degree in U.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prof. Smith</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof. Thompson</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof. Black</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Computer Science</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Administrator Interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrator</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Employed Full-time</th>
<th>Oversees and manages int’l student services</th>
<th>Responsible for developing, interpreting and/or enforcing policies and procedures directly related to academic integrity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Brown</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Manning</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Green</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Understanding of Academic Integrity**

During the interviews, I asked students what their current understanding was of the concept of academic integrity. Additionally, I asked questions about experiences they have had that help them understand the concept of academic integrity and to provide examples related to dishonesty in an academic setting in the U.S. Alternately the students
were asked to provide examples of dishonesty in an academic setting in their native country. I also asked how clear faculty and institutional expectations, policies and rules were around matters related to academic integrity and how faculty (or administrators) help them better understand academic integrity. All of the interview questions were guided by the underlining research question: How do international graduate students attending U.S. universities from China understand and make meaning of the concept of “academic integrity” as applied in U.S. graduate education?

The key findings that emerged for this section are: (a.) Chinese students understand academic integrity from the perspective of the institution’s code of honor; (b.) faculty include an explanation of academic integrity in syllabi and discuss the topic at the first class; and (c.) student understanding of academic integrity primarily relates to plagiarism.

**Academic Code of Honor Influences Understanding of Academic Integrity**

The institution requires that all graduate students adhere to the code of honor which is published in the Graduate Student Handbook. During the beginning of the first semester all students are provided printed copies of the handbook. In addition, the University of Blue Hill states in its current Graduate Student Handbook, “the integrity code governing all teachers, scholars, and researchers is severe.” The policy states even a single allegation of impropriety, unless refuted to the satisfaction of peers, can tarnish a reputation and block career development. Academic integrity violations include plagiarism, cheating, copying or collaborating on assignments without permission, fabrication, and research misconduct to name a few. For example, the integrity policy
states in order for students to avoid plagiarism, students are expected to be attentive to proper methods of documentation and acknowledgement. Additionally, students are required to access the code by going online, log on to review, and provide an electronic acknowledgement that they have read and agree to the code. All nine students expressed that they had a basic understanding of the concept of academic integrity; and this understanding was based upon adhering to the institution’s code of honor. Bohai (Energy, Environmental & Chemical Engineering) explained:

    We all have, I think before we enter school, we all have a handbook for every graduate student…the beginning of each class, each course, the professor will go through item by item of this handbook…

Dong (Chemistry) responded:

    …I said since I had been doing some teaching as a part-time teaching assistant and those rules [related to academic integrity] actually were delivered to us – sort of often like once in a while to make sure that we would pass this information to our students.

Biyu (Accounting) states:

    …in the Business School we have a code of honor so everyone is supposed to read that before their Master’s starts.

**Syllabi and Faculty Discussion**

The faculty members interviewed referenced academic integrity in their course syllabi and/or discussed the topic during the first day of class. Both the Schools of Engineering and Social Work require all faculty to include a section on academic integrity in their course syllabi. However, this is not necessarily required in all colleges at the University of Blue Hill. Professor Black’s (Computer Science) syllabus mentions:
Academic integrity is an essential characteristic of any scholar. Anyone found cheating on any assignment in this course will receive an F in this course.

Professor Thompson (Social Work) also indicated the following:

We have a standardized syllabus structure that all faculty use, so your readings and your assignments and all that can change, but there’s a standardized language that’s in every syllabus that talks about student responsibilities, faculty responsibilities and academic integrity.

Furthermore, Professor Smith (Social Work) addresses academic integrity in her syllabus by listing it under academic policies. She provides the following description:

Academic integrity in the completion of tests, oral presentations and written assignments is expected. Violations of academic integrity [e.g., plagiarism] are very serious offenses. Violations will result in notification to the Assistant Dean and may result in referral to the Academic and Professional Integrity Committee, which could lead to dismissal from the program. Please review and adhere to the entire set of Academic Integrity guidelines in the student handbook on {intranet}.

All nine students stated the faculty helped them understand the concept of academic integrity by discussing the concept during the first day of class and through having it mentioned in the course syllabus. For example, Biyu (Accounting) stated:

…In all of our course syllabi it is required that professors have to add the code of honor, code of conduct somewhere in their syllabus so that every student no matter what class you take will have that for the record. If you ever have questions then you can always refer back to that. I think that’s also good.

Bohai (Energy, Environmental & Chemical Engineering) recalled:

Every professor would emphasize academic integrity in the first class of the course. I think most of us understand it fairly well.
All nine students also stated the importance of adhering to instructor classroom expectations with regard to academic integrity. For example, Biyu (Accounting) explained:

…Our professor also placed some emphasis on that. I would think if the professor said it is individual work that means there is no discussion at all with our classmates that would be academic integrity and then of course this would be the more strict side. In general there is no cheating or anything or discussion for exams or for any of the preparations for finals if that’s not allowed by the professor. Basically, on general side our code of honor and then on the more specific side depends on what the professor says is okay and what is not okay.

Bohai (Energy, Environmental & Chemical Engineering) stated:

The most impressive experience I personally have is from a course that my advisor taught…I copied a sentence from the Wikipedia and some other students also copied from the same source. My advisor found it and he warned us. Then I definitely realized that the copy and paste from other sources without appropriate citation was unacceptable.

Cheng (Energy, Environmental & Chemical Engineering) explained his experience with adherence to faculty expectations in the following way:

…if I write something that is not my work or not my words, my advisor would definitely know that and he is a person with integrity and would not allow me to do that.

**Student Understanding of Academic Integrity Primarily Relates to Plagiarism, Cheating and Other Forms of Dishonesty**

Students were asked to provide their current understanding of academic integrity. All nine students indicated that academic integrity was based upon not plagiarizing, respecting the code of honor, not cheating, or engaging in any discussion for exams that is not allowed by the professor. For example, Chunhua (Immunology) stated:
My understanding of academic integrity basically consists of, in terms of my research, I’m doing biological sciences, so it’s basically not to fake any data, not taking any intellectual property of other people that doesn’t belong to me and claim it as mine, or citing anything that other people did without referring to the original creator of the idea of the data.

Da (Biomedical Engineering) defined academic integrity in the following way:

For academic integrity I think it is when you study or just when you look at them, you cannot copy from others. You just need to be honest to what you did study and something like that.

Bohai (Energy, Environmental & Chemical Engineering) also expressed his definition this way:

I think it’s kind of like a property. I mean, if you violate academic integrity, you are stealing something and you are violating some other’s property.

Fa (Energy, Environment & Chemical Engineering) explained:

…You cannot make fraud data, and that’s the bottom line in the research for the graduate student. And the second thing is if you reference other’s work and so in that way you put this in your publications, in your papers, you have to give credit to them. You need to cite their reference.

Summary

My findings illustrate that students from China understand the concept of academic integrity from various sources. Specifically, these students acquire their understanding from the institution’s code of honor and the faculty. The University of Blue Hill provides copies of the printed Graduate Student Handbook that contains the academic code of honor to all newly enrolled students during the first week of the semester. In addition, some of the colleges at the University require students to log in to review the policy on academic integrity and acknowledge that they have read and
understood the policy. Faculty in some of the colleges are required to include an explanation of academic integrity in their course syllabi and to discuss it during the first week of classes. Both standards and practices are decentralized across colleges at the University of Blue Hill with regard to academic integrity. This decentralization contributes to the lack of a cohesive institution-wide practice or conformity across the units when dealing with issues related to academic dishonesty.

The next section addresses how institutional policies, standards, practices and classroom environments impact student experiences with academic integrity. Both institutional policies and classroom environments are discussed during orientation programs provided to students.

**Classroom Environments, Orientations, and Institutional Standards**

Students were asked whether classroom environments and policies around matters related to academic integrity were clear and how faculty (or administrators) help them understand the issues involved with academic integrity. The key findings that surfaced related to (a.) differences in classroom environments, (b.) orientation programs that addressed the concept of academic integrity, and (c.) high ethical practices in U.S. higher education.

**Classroom Environments in U.S. and China**

All students were asked to provide examples of dishonesty in an academic setting in China. Once again, themes involving different classroom environments and differences in the understanding of academic integrity emerged across all interviews. Specifically, the students emphasized the importance of tests as a measurement of their
academic performance in Chinese classrooms. In addition, they stated that there was increased copying and pasting from the internet in China. However, in the U.S. students indicated there was greater emphasis on academic integrity and reflective papers. Dong (Chemistry) offered the following example:

How would I describe it? Well that’s a very good question. The biggest difference between the two education systems in the United States and in my home town or country China, is the performance at school specifically the performance in the test are way more important and significant in judging a student’s performance overall, which naturally results in much more pressure on students.

…they would try their best to get the best results out of their tests and in the meantime sometimes, not sometimes, I would say mostly their teachers, teaching performance are judged by their students’ school work performance as well. So it becomes a battle between the government or the Ministry of Education versus teachers plus the students. So it’s certainly understandable that in some cases students have just so much pressure and they just like to try their best to try all kinds of ways to get the best scores to get them into the best colleges or like the best high schools…

Da (Biomedical Engineering) stated:

For my cultural background, I have to be honest that in my undergraduate study, where I grew up for my middle school and high school, the teachers they didn’t accept that as very important. I think what they cared more about is if you cheat or you copy from others just make sure you are not caught. That’s more important. You understand me? By recent day I think more and more the education in China is more and more advanced and the academic integrity is more and more important now.

Chunhua (Immunology) explained dishonesty in the following way:

So my belief is that in China it’s not so…academic integrity firstly is not so much emphasized. Certainly, I didn’t do my undergrad or high school in China, but I hear from my friends back in China talk about things. I believe sometimes for example in the States, a lot of homework or projects are quite open-ended and depends a lot on personal creativity and innovation. For example, like doing a project and develop it, requires a lot
of individual thinking, whereas, maybe in China, the questions or homework problems are more of solve this math problem or solve this physics problem. I hear that they can just copy other people’s homework basically.

Aiguo (MBA) expressed:

In China because especially in the last ten years the university has expanded its recruitment programs. A lot of students entering universities are using documents inappropriately from the internet or something else without mentioning the sources. Unfortunately, their papers were published. I don’t know the exact name but I know some professors from the top three universities in China were fired over this issue.

**Orientation Programs**

All students were asked to share experiences that they have had (or know about) that help them understand academic integrity. These students referenced orientation programs offered by the institution as beneficial to their understanding of academic integrity. The students pointed out that there were two types of orientation programs:

(a.) the International Office provided a general orientation program, and (b.) each college provided a program that focused on topics such as academic integrity. For example, Dong (Chemistry) stated that the institution helps students understand the issue involved with academic integrity in the following way:

Well I would say it is the way they advertise those rules because during the orientation when a new student comes in, actually academic integrity rules were very heavily emphasized to the new students…

Chunhua (Immunology) also explained that the orientation program is set up in the following manner:

It’s basically small student groups, maybe 10 or 12 students with two faculty members and we talk about issues pertaining to academic integrity,
doing case studies, giving scenarios and discuss what is or not a breach of academic integrity.

Furthermore, Biyu (Accounting) stated the following with regard to the orientation program offered by the University:

Before school starts all of our fellow classmates had an orientation on academic integrity and it was given by the program director. During that session he mentioned that if say we are told to buy a course packet for the class, that means we should not share the course packet with another student. We should not re-sell it because then it would be a violation of the copyright. Before that I had no such awareness so I think that helped me understand academic integrity.

The faculty commented on the various orientation programs offered to the new students. For example, Professor Thompson (Social Work) explained:

…we do an orientation that’s specific. We do an orientation on what the writing style expectations are within the social work profession, which requires compliance. Your papers need to be written in APA format, and we teach them what that format is. We call it a workshop, so that they know what that is. That is available to all of our students. We also have a training that is specific for international students. We have an orientation that’s specific to international students [from China], to help them get a better understanding of what to expect in an American classroom…we’ve added content in our orientations on professionalism, and what it means to be a professional.

Professor Smith (Social Work) recalled:

We do an international student orientation during our incoming student orientation. I’m actually in charge of that orientation this year, so I know a little bit more this year about the content of it. It includes a piece on academic integrity expectations and looks at that from a cultural perspective---that’s led by our International Programs Manager, as well as the University’s English Language Program, which offers support for our international students. And then we do an APA compliance. Our Writing Lab Director leads a session for all incoming students focused on the expectations of APA and touches on when you don’t cite correctly, it can be considered academic dishonesty. It can be considered a violation of academic integrity.
The administrators interviewed also discussed the orientation programs offered to new students at the beginning of the semester. For example, Ms. Manning stated:

…in orientation, the international office I think has a role there that they can play. The school orientation for the international students [China], or for all—not just international students, but graduate students. And then each professor, then too, we think has a responsibility to describe what their academic integrity policy is to the students in the class.

Ms. Brown recalled:

In our orientations for all graduate areas we want to make sure academic integrity is covered for the students. So we have discussed this topic with various graduate programs here in the university. We have multiple programs and various disciplines, so we approach academic integrity in a lot of different ways.

Mr. Green explained:

…international students [China] arrive to us and go through orientation to be almost step by step and didactic in our presentation of not just the general concepts of academic integrity but actually putting it more positively saying, how to produce genuine research. How to precisely cite according to the expectations of American or American British European standards of citations.

**High Ethical Standards and Practices in U.S. Higher Education**

All students commented about the differences in the classroom environment between academic institutions in China and the U.S. These students also thought that U.S. institutions had higher ethical practices with regard to academic integrity. They also focused on the fact that institutions in China only require that they answer the questions and not provide independent creative thinking as they found in the U.S. These same students explained that academic integrity is not as important in China as it is in the U.S. since it is not monitored or enforced in an official capacity. Additionally, almost all
students felt that faculty and administrators clearly explained their expectations, policies and rules around matters related to academic integrity. For example, Da (Biomedical Engineering) explained:

They [professors in China] do also emphasize academic integrity, but I don’t think the enforcement is strict enough and many professors are more than enough tolerant on this. They will warn you mostly and say it is not correct but there isn’t a strict enforcement, like I will give you an “F” for this course.

In addition, Aiguo (MBA) stated:

I think there are a lot of differences in the universities in China and here in the United States because in China we do have some certain standards about academic integrity but here in the United States the standard is mainly enforced by the student body. Here we have a conduct code, we have an integrity code which is drafted by the student representatives and so we should abide by these ourselves. In each class here in the United States the professor will especially respect the conduct. It will be written in some form in the syllabus of each class and it will be strictly enforced.

Chao (Social Work) recalled:

It’s a serious question because in my home country, I guess the people don’t pay much attention to the academic integrity; and as far as I know…when people graduate from the undergraduate schools when they write their thesis, they just copy from other articles or something like that…I don’t think the atmosphere in my home country is so serious about academic integrity like in the United States.

The faculty also offered their explanations related to high ethical standards and practices in U.S. institutions of higher education. Professor Black (Computer Science) provided the following scenario:

…I understand that in a country with so many people like China has and so few positions at Tshinghua, which is like their MIT, right? I understand that’s very, very competitive. Our system for training doctors is also competitive but do you want a doctor working on you who is
unethical? How do you reward ethical behavior instead of clever behavior, that’s a hard problem?

The administrators’ responses related to high ethical standards and practices in U.S. institutions of higher education can be summarized in Mr. Green’s statement:

There might be other academic integrity issues that have to do with the sharing of answers and so forth but a lot of what we do in our graduate education is so far removed from testing via multiple choice and it’s not understood as a viable means of assessing the gain of knowledge. But I think that when we come to the research paper or when we come to again the employment of a precedent if you’ve been asked to look at precedence in structures or precedence in environmental systems and so on that the type of education—that educational model is less the rule in China than it is in the United States.

Summary

All three findings in this section reflect how differences in institutional classroom environments in China and the U.S. as well as institutional polices relate to student understanding of academic integrity. In addition, all three groups of participants referenced the orientation programs as an important means to understand the concept of academic integrity. For example, the orientation programs facilitated by both the international office and the various colleges/schools at the institution offer sessions related to academic integrity and the institution’s expectations. All nine students emphasized the high ethical standards and practices in U.S. higher education. They explained that issues related to academic integrity were not enforced in China as they were in the United States. It was common practice for instructors in China to focus on standardized tests and the importance of scoring high on the college entrance exam. The instructors in China would also discourage diverse and independent thinking. However,
in the U.S. higher education system independent and creative thought is highly encouraged.

The next section focuses on faculty and administrator experiences of academic integrity with Chinese students. Both faculty and administrators expressed the need for Chinese students to clearly understand U.S. academic expectations. In addition, faculty and administrators defined academic integrity primarily in terms of plagiarism but included other forms of academic dishonesty.

**Faculty and Administrator Experiences with Academic Integrity and Chinese Students**

The faculty and administrators were consistent in their responses to my question related to the experiences they had dealing with academic integrity issues among Chinese graduate students. Key findings that emerged are: (a.) the need for Chinese graduate students to clearly understand U.S. academic expectations; (b.) faculty have a different understanding of academic integrity which is based upon cultural differences and students being overwhelmed with coursework expectations; and (c.) faculty and administrators define academic integrity primarily in terms of plagiarism. Both faculty and administrators indicated that students from China have a difficult time understanding the concept of academic integrity. All of the faculty and administrators related the difficulty for students to not being familiar with U.S. educational expectations.

**Students Need to Understand U.S. Academic Expectations**

According to the faculty and administrators who were interviewed, the primary challenge for the Chinese students is for them to clearly understand integrity expectations
at a U.S. institution of higher education. They cited examples of practices which may have been acceptable in China but would not be acceptable in the United States.

**Faculty responses.** Professor Black (Computer Science) offered the following:

…I think America has, for the most part, fostered the idea that you need to think in order to get a good grade, that it’s something you actively participate in. You’re not going to find a solution, you have to create a solution and we set up problems just for that very purpose. Whereas the solution in and of itself, from what I’ve seen is often the subject with some of the Chinese students. Now, their communication skills are sometimes not what they ought to be. Some of the students have a hard time understanding English. Many of them have a hard time writing and expressing themselves. In my area, which is not English, I can certainly read past that, I can grade their assignments and I don’t really have a problem with that. I mean the students are bright and energetic and as courteous and motivated as the other students but do detect more of the, ‘I don’t know where to start to solve this problem’ kind of thing from them.

Professor Smith (Social Work) explained:

…They [Chinese students] are expected to engage, they’re expected to engage with each other, they’re expected to question the readings, question me, question the status quo, question a lot of the preconceived notions they may have come in with, and they are very uncomfortable with that in many cases.

Additionally, Professor Thompson (Social Work) stated:

…there’s no question about comprehension; do you understand the rules of the game? Are you able to follow, really, what we are saying about these expectations? Because, particularly for some of our Asian students, this is the first time they’ve been in the United States, and they will smile and nod as if they understand, when sometimes they don’t.

**Administrator responses.** Mrs. Brown explained:

I’ve seen some situations where students have said, “I really don’t understand.” Like they don’t understand all the gradations in terms of citations and particularly as it relates to plagiarism. They don’t understand
the difference between summarizing, paraphrasing, citing directly and when is that we need to have somebody listed and cited.

Mr. Green stated:

I think in many ways the idea of – well for architecture students in particular the idea of a research paper is an accepted norm within the United States. I don’t think it’s accepted [in China] or I have not understood it to be an accepted or necessary practice for students.

So I think the acquisition of knowledge in architectural history and architectural theory and structures and other technical subjects has been very much based upon electronic format with almost all multiple choice examinations.

…but I do think that when we come to the research paper or when we come to again the employment of a precedent if you’ve been asked to look at precedence in structures or precedence in environmental systems and so on that this type of education – that educational model is less the rule in China than it is here in the United States. And so that very often just that mode of research knowledge and assessment is the biggest thing to unpack for international students and of course it’s language based and then it’s the formatting of information in that research paper format.

Student and Faculty Views of Integrity Differ

All three faculty mentioned that Chinese graduate students seemed to hold a different understanding of academic integrity from that held by the faculty. According to the faculty, this difference is based upon both cultural differences and students being overwhelmed with coursework expectations. For example, Professor Smith (Social Work) explained:

…One has been cultural differences in terms of citations. So expectations of citations, I think it goes beyond just not understanding or not being familiar with APA. But it really is a kind of a cultural expectation that you would over cite, as opposed to paraphrase and put into your own words. I see a big difference with our international students in that regard; that they tend to quote directly from text and sometimes cite that correctly, sometimes not. And then the other realm I would say it falls into is just
they’re so overwhelmed with the amount of reading and the amount of writing that they’re required to do, that sometimes they just literally do take the easy way out, and cut and paste.

So I see that as maybe cultural differences, in a different way. That it isn’t about wanting to show respect or show that you would consider someone to be an expert in something, and so you want to use their words. That it really is “I can’t keep up with this. I need to find a way to do this quickly and the easiest way to do this quickly is to cut and paste from someone else’s work. So those have been the two things that I’ve seen primarily.

Professor Thompson (Social Work) reflected on her experiences in the following way:

…I would say that one of the most common themes around academic integrity is just students coming from countries that have very different standards around plagiarism. Particularly students from China where there’s a tendency to not provide sufficient citations when using direct quotes. Now we also have a training that we do during orientation on appropriate use of APA and how to cite, and what constitutes plagiarism and what to do to prevent it. We tend to…I tend to look at these on a case-by-case basis, and give students the benefit of the doubt that initially it’s a process of transitioning to a new system of documentation. Then if there’s a pattern, if it’s something that has happened more than once, then we got a different problem.

**Faculty and Administrator Definitions of Academic Integrity**

Both the faculty and administrators were asked to provide their own definition of academic integrity. They were also asked how they describe this concept to their students. The definitions highlight how both the faculty and administrators point primarily to plagiarism when defining integrity. However, the faculty also described academic integrity in terms of citation expectations. The administrators provided a description of academic integrity focused on trust and the relationship each student has to
the ‘scholarly community.’ For example, Professor Thompson (Social Work) defined academic integrity in the following way:

I think in its simpler form, it’s when you are giving appropriate credit where it is due, when the information you’re providing in your work is not your own. So that you’re taking ownership of what is your intellectual property, but not claiming anyone else’s, but are able to integrate the two without confusing the reader on what is yours and what belongs to someone else.

Professor Black (Computer Science) offered this definition of academic integrity:

Okay, so it’s funny, I talk about this sometimes in front of the grad students. At a formal level we have an ethics segment that we do and plagiarism is one of the strongest forms of academic integrity violation and that is simply passing work off that appears to be your own that is not your own. And these days my field is also concerned with what we call self-plagiarism, which sounds like a contradiction in terms but I publish a paper and I give the impression that it’s all new, but a third of it is from a paper I published previously, I haven’t stolen from somebody else but I’ve stolen from myself and I misrepresented in fact the novelty, the originality of the material I sent in. So, plagiarism I think is certainly passing off work that you imply to be your own or that you claim to be your own and either is just as bad when in fact it’s not.

Professor Smith (Social Work) proposed her definition of academic integrity:

…as utilizing appropriate and established standards for citing work, and for going beyond the floor of academic integrity, which would be what the expectations are around citation, and really looking to the ceiling of academic integrity.

All three administrators offered their definitions of academic integrity which focused not only on plagiarism but included other forms of integrity violations, such as unauthorized collaboration and self-plagiarism. For example, Mrs. Brown provided the following definition of academic integrity:

…I would say representing any of the work that you hand in or that you do as your own or is defined – like for example in some situations I recognize
group work is allowed. We only work in groups if it’s allowed and then it becomes a group product but otherwise everything is your own work unless you have indicated what comes from other people.

Mr. Green defined academic integrity in this way:

…I would say truly the knowing and intentional use of other’s work without citation or referencing in a way that advantages your work relative to your colleague’s.

Lastly, Ms. Manning defined academic integrity in the following way:

It really encompasses a number of different areas. First of all I think, primarily, it’s submitting work that is your work and your work alone, unless you note it as being otherwise. So if you submit something, then you’re saying that it is your work and not someone else’s. It’s submitting real data, real information; you’re not making stuff up and submitting it. If you’re collaborating with others on a project, you’re disclosing that and giving credit to those who may have contributed to the work that you submitted. It’s submitting work, you know, when you do a paper or project and you submitted for a class, you’re not re-submitting it for another class.

Both the faculty and administrators were asked to explain how they describe academic integrity to their students. The findings reflect differences of how the faculty and administrators define academic integrity. For example, Professor Smith (Social Work) explained her answer in the following way:

So what I ask my students is: If I told your mother and father about this, would they consider that this was appropriate? If it were on the front page of a newspaper, would you be proud of your actions? If you can’t answer yes, that it would not be okay to tell your parents or on the front page of a newspaper, then you want to question your behavior with that. So I start with--- Here are the bare minimums: The floor of academic integrity is really the citation expectations from APA and the honesty of acknowledging anyone else who supported your work on any assignment. Beyond that, there’s a lot of gray areas. So how would it be if your parents knew and if it was on the front page of a newspaper?

Professor Thompson (Social Work) stated her description of academic integrity:
Well, we talk about those things, like I said, in orientations, through workshops we do on writing in APA format, how to avoid plagiarism, by talking very directly about the connection between academic integrity and your professional ethic and code of conduct. We make all of those things explicit, both in writing and verbally, before classes start, with all of our students.

All three administrators described academic integrity in terms of using a very general description related to a ‘scholarly community.’ They all indicated that students should have a sense of what academic integrity means and the impact it has on the community. For example, Ms. Brown offered this description:

We would define it during orientation. So we would talk about the fact that as an academic institution and a scholarly community it’s important that we give credit to the people who have come up with various ideas and information that we were discussing and it’s important to be able to trust that what we are representing is actually ours. It’s just a trust and being part of the community and representing who we are versus what came from other people. And so, academic integrity involves giving credit to the people that deserve it.

Lastly, Mr. Green stated:

…I would say in the first place that you’re here to learn for yourself. So I put it more contextually—knowing that the intentional use of material which is not your own, without precise citation, without acknowledgment of the references to your ultimate advantage or the observation of that because that’s equally part of this too, where the community aspect of this is as important as the individual aspect. That if you know that someone has knowingly used and not cited and so on, then you too are in a way condoning that breach of academic integrity. So that’s the other consequence that people—makes people very uncomfortable that it’s actually the communitarian impulsiveness which is just as important as the individual impulse. This is the hardest part to bring forward that we’re all in this together.
Summary

The faculty and administrator responses reveal experiences they had dealing with academic integrity issues among Chinese graduate students and highlighted the significance of different understandings related to academic integrity. They cited factors such as the difference in U.S. institutional academic expectations, (i.e., research methodology, classroom participation, comprehension, and language difficulties) as some of the key factors that impact Chinese student understanding of academic integrity. According to the faculty and administrators these factors are related to cultural misunderstandings of U.S. classroom expectations and how students were academically prepared in China. All faculty members and administrators defined academic integrity primarily in terms of plagiarism but included other forms of academic dishonesty. Additionally, they were asked to describe academic integrity. While faculty provided a common description primarily in terms of citation expectations, administrators described academic integrity in terms of trust and the relationship each student has to the ‘scholarly community.’

The next section examines how cultural influences impact Chinese graduate student understanding of academic integrity from the perspective of all participants in this study. All students shared personal experiences that exhibit dimensions of their culture and how this impacts their understanding of academic integrity. Specifically, honesty and the influence of parents are two dominant elements of Chinese culture that influence student understanding of integrity. The faculty and administrators revealed how cultural
influences such as respect, teaching style, and role of the instructor impact the understanding of academic integrity by the students from China.

**The Impact of Culture on Chinese Student Understanding of Academic Integrity**

The students, faculty, and those administrators who oversee and manage international services and programs for the university were asked to address how Chinese culture may influence student perceptions of academic integrity. All students shared examples of how their cultural backgrounds influenced their views. For example, students stressed the importance of honesty as being one of the pillars of their culture. In China they were continuously told to be honest in every area of their work. Additionally, they revealed that the influence of their parents and an emphasis on respecting the importance of the parental role are key factors that influence their views. These cultural influences are found in Confucian teaching which is deeply rooted in Chinese culture. Confucianism promotes tradition, a sense of shame, following a hierarchy, protecting face, and concern with possessing the sense of honesty (Hofstede, 1991, p. 173).

According to Hofstede (1991), one of the key principles of Confucianism is that the stability of society is based on unequal relationships between people. For example, a son owes his father respect and obedience. Members of a family do not act as individuals in order to maintain harmony in the family. Hofstede explains that harmony is found in this maintenance of face in the sense of dignity, self-respect, and prestige (p. 165).

Responses from faculty are grouped in two different ways: (1.) in terms of plagiarism and other misappropriation of the work of another, and (2.) to student feelings of being overwhelmed. The administrators described cultural influences including language issues
and students feeling overwhelmed. These students are overwhelmed as a result of overcoming Chinese learning styles, classroom structure, and volumes of reading that need to be absorbed in a different language. They no longer can reiterate standard answers to show respect. In the U.S. they must read assigned material and express, in their own words, their thoughts and perspective on the subject matter.

**Student, Faculty and Administrator Understanding of How Chinese Culture Influences Integrity Perceptions**

The students were asked to share experiences about their cultural background that helped them understand the concept of academic integrity. All described personal experiences that exhibit dimensions of their culture. Specifically, Chinese culture emphasizes such elements and attributes as integrity and the influence of parents.

**Student responses.** Aiguo (MBA) explained:

…I think first, historically the Chinese people are very honest. Let me give you an example. If you are doing business in China you know that your relationship with your stakeholders, like clients and vendors, are especially important and vital to your success of business. That’s why I mention relationships. I think historically people have integrity. Respect each other, always to each other. I think that’s the baseline of a business or any kind of relationship.

Chao (Social Work) also offered the following illustration of how his cultural background influenced his views of academic integrity:

Honesty is the core value of Confucius in China, so in the process the way we were raised, we are continuously told to be honest to every area of your work, but in academic areas we do not just follow what teachers told us to do. We’ll observe what they do, or the whole school, or what’s the atmosphere there. So there is a discrepancy between the teachings and the reality. It will sometimes be confusing to us too. We should follow this
kind of integrity, but the reality is you don’t follow it so what should we do, so sometimes it’s confusing to us.

In addition, Biyu (Accounting) stated the following with regard to how cultural background influenced her views:

…In my country I think the emphasis for integrity or like the right institutions are not so strong. It’s not academic integrity but it’s integrity in general. This influences the academic side. For instance, people buy…the CDs with the copyright but you then somehow copy it and sell it at a cheaper price…That’s a violation and people don’t realize it is wrong.

Cheng (Energy Environmental & Chemical Engineering) stated:

Well, my family didn’t emphasize much about academic integrity, those kinds of things I learned pretty much from class. So from very young, teachers made rules and we obeyed, it is just that growing up some people stopped obeying those kinds of things and maybe did something that makes them look better—makes them have better grades. But others will still obey although it is okay to break it. So I chose to obey that kind of thing and I don’t need to do that, I can now stop. So I think it is decided both by the cultural background and also the personality.

Da (Biomedical Engineering) explained:

My family influenced me in a positive way like my parents always told me about you cannot cheat in the exam or it is not good to cheat.

Bohai (Chemistry) stated:

Okay, I think our culture, the parents and teachers prefer standardized answers. The standardized answers can be from, for example from ancient wisdom people. It’s not actually from our mouth but we prefer a standardized answer to meet the grading criteria. Another example is we all have highly competitive, highly selective college entrance exams and they are all graded by standardized answers. So, you always have to guess what is a standardized answer. So, they do not encourage a lot of diversity, independent thinking. But maybe you do not intentionally do it but you always want to seek for a standardized answer to make you safe and it may induce a risk of plagiarism.
**Faculty responses.** The faculty explained that student experiences with Chinese culture influence integrity perceptions. Faculty revealed cultural values such as respect, esteem, role of the instructor, teaching style, students feeling overwhelmed and pressured to succeed influence student understanding of academic integrity. For example, faculty explained that students from China, especially male students, do not hold female or part-time instructors in the same regards as male instructors or full-time. In addition, students who feel overwhelmed as a result of having difficulties with the language and meeting deadlines is also directly influenced by their experience with Chinese culture. Professor Smith (Social Work) indicated:

I think the biggest thing I’ve seen in terms of how I think the cultural values influence that is it really depends on the esteem with which they hold the instructor or the course. If they consider that I have something important to share and they trust me and they value me as an expert, they correct it, and they apologize, and then they come to me to show me what they’ve done with the Writing Lab to show me how they’ve corrected. If, on the other hand… I think some of the cultural values about being a woman in the classroom. You know how they perceive women in the classroom, and I’ve taught as an adjunct as well as a full-time faculty member. The difference is astounding. As an adjunct faculty, many of the international students—I’m thinking particularly of the male international students from China—did not care what I said about their papers. They did not correct, they did not fix. They said, “Mm-hmm” and moved right on. And I would then check in with other faculty who’d had them, and if it was a male faculty, if it was a tenure faculty member, if it was someone that they had come here to study under or study with, that person could say the exact same thing and get a lot further.

So I think there are the cultural values around education and the role of the instructor. A lot of my classes tend to just challenge some of our international students in general because I’m far more interactive. It’s less didactic, it’s less me standing at the front of the room and lecturing at them. They are expected to engage, they’re expected to engage with each other, they’re expected to question a lot of the preconceived notions they
may have come in with, and they’re very uncomfortable with that in many cases.

Professor Black (Computer Science) explained his view:

I think there is certainly…every society tolerates things in different ways. Driving is a good example. Some behavior that would be tolerated, let’s say in Paris, would not be tolerated here but maybe more so in New York, so it just depends on where you are. You have to get used to that sort of thing before you’re able, I think to be held accountable for it. Part of our difficulty from the University’s standpoint is that we’re a fairly tolerant place and we understand that students make mistakes and so it’s almost always the case that the first offense of this sort of kind is disregarded. Disregarded is a strong word. It’s not dealt with very harshly. The student will be fully informed of what they’ve done and why it’s wrong and that this is a punishable offense. We could suspend the student if we wished to but it’s almost always the first offense we’re not going to do that much to the student. The students unfortunately know this and if you know that, from a game theory standpoint, it rewards you to cheat until you’re caught, right? Because after all the first offense isn’t going to be punished at all.

Additionally, Professor Thompson (Social Work) indicated:

Yeah, I think where culture comes in to play, and there’s some universality in this, but I think it is aggravated by certain cultures. So is the issue of shame, you know, of feeling on lots of levels. I think part of what causes students, particularly international students, to intentionally or unintentionally engage in plagiarism is a sense of desperation, of feeling overwhelmed, having difficulty finding language, and kind of taking text in its original form, to try and be able to meet deadlines or meet expectations, and I think that the issue of being embarrassed if they got caught doing this intentionally. I think that’s amplified for international students, and they have more at stake. You know, they’ve made bigger sacrifices, often to be here. They’re often more financially distraught. There’s a lot riding on them being successful, a lot of expectations from extended family members in their home countries, so this whole issue of stigma and shame gets amplified.

**Administrator responses.** The three administrators’ views regarding how cultural influences impact Chinese student understanding of academic integrity revealed
two common themes: (1.) language issues and (2.) students feeling overwhelmed. For example, the administrators stated that students from China struggle with understanding what is being conveyed to them with regard to academic integrity. The administrators indicated that these students do not know how to separate what is theirs from someone else’s work. Additionally, administrators indicated that the students were feeling overwhelmed with academic expectations and trying to understand the new culture that they were now exposed too. The difficulties students were having related to understanding and feeling overwhelmed stem from how the students were prepared prior to arrival at the institution. For example, Mrs. Brown explained:

During their first semester there’s so many – there are just all the day to day issues that students have to deal with and are much heavier for international students. Things like getting cell phones and driver’s licenses or finding their way around and Social Security cards and it just takes a lot of time and so that – in a lot of cases we believe that time management or the ability to manage the multiple demands at the same time is really part of an issue of academic integrity.

We also think that there are sometimes cultural issues that students coming in don’t see academic integrity in the same way. Their understanding of what belongs to—what needs to be quoted and cited is not the same as what our institution understands it…

She has also seen some situations where the students have indicated that they really do not understand what they did incorrectly. Mrs. Brown indicated that:

they don’t understand the difference between summarizing, paraphrasing, citing directly and when we need to have somebody listed and cited. And I think some of this has to do with not understanding what is plagiarism. It’s a cultural definition of who owns this. If you want to think about it as who owns this intellectual property.

She further explained:
…we’ve had students from China been accused of plagiarism for example and said—this idea that they didn’t understand what to do. It was like, ‘Well yeah, this is this person’s idea.’ But they didn’t understand the need to separate what was theirs from somebody else’s and again those are situations where we really work hard to try and address that in our educational efforts.

Ms. Manning also explained:

Yes, I think it has to do with some cultures. It’s more of a cultural issue where…in some cultures it’s more the feeling that information belongs to the population. If there’s information out there it belongs to everyone, compared to the United States, where we hold intellectual property—(you know how we value)—where somebody can actually make money off their ideas and have patents and things like that. That isn’t always intellectual property, that intellectual ownership of information isn’t always the same around the world.

Summary

The interviews regarding how cultural influences impact Chinese student understanding of academic integrity uncovered some interesting issues. All three groups expressed that cultural influences impact Chinese student understanding of academic integrity. The students reported that in China they are graded on standardized answers. In addition, honesty is something they attribute to their culture. This concept of honesty is rooted in both the influence that the parents and teachers have on students from China. Furthermore, this concept is deeply rooted in Confucius’ teachings that are an integral part of Chinese culture (Hofstede, 1991, p. 40). The family as a prototype for all social organizations and the stability of society are based on unequal relationships between people and were reflected in student responses as key principles of Confucian teachings (Hofstede, 1991, p. 165). Thus, cultural influences appear to impact how students from China view integrity while attending the university in the United States. As a result, in
light of coming from an academic setting that promotes standardized answers it is hard for Chinese students to grasp the concept of plagiarism and the idea of intellectual property. This concern is further exacerbated by language issues and students who are overwhelmed in their new environment. In addition, different pedagogical approaches are used by faculty in the U.S. and those found in China. These differences appear to contribute to a disconnect between faculty and administrators and students. None of the faculty or administrators asked students what they experienced in China related to academic integrity upon their arrival to the U.S. Consequently, this lack of understanding on the part of faculty and administrators appears to contribute to the important issues both faculty and students are experiencing around academic integrity.

**Conclusion**

This chapter presents key findings from an analysis of the interview data collected in an exploratory study examining how graduate students from China understand and experience the U.S. concept of academic integrity. Nine Chinese graduate students, and three faculty and three administrators from a large research institution located in the Midwest were interviewed. Student responses provided valuable insight into issues related to academic integrity that faculty and administrators are facing in light of the recent increase in the numbers of Chinese students at their respective institutions.

Data from student interviews revealed that Chinese graduate students struggle with understanding and making meaning of the concept of academic integrity. Almost all students reported strong differences exist between how academic integrity is defined and emphasized in China as compared to the U.S. The Chinese students struggle with
language along with a whole new set of expectations. In the U.S. they are asked to demonstrate individual or independent thinking. The faculty do not just want to know what is already written. Reading material and interpreting for oneself is on what students are being graded. In addition, students revealed a stricter enforcement of academic integrity in the U.S. However, Chinese students stated that faculty and administrators assisted them with understanding academic integrity. Faculty and administrators revealed that in conjunction with not only cultural issues the Chinese students are also overwhelmed with the amount of reading and writing that is required in conjunction with their transition to the U.S.

The next chapter includes conclusions and discussion about how Chinese graduate students understand and make meaning of the concept of academic integrity. Recommendations are provided to faculty and administrators of U.S. institutions of higher education wishing to address Chinese student understanding of academic integrity. Additionally, recommendations for additional research are included.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The higher education literature is replete with empirical studies examining self-reported cheating behaviors by students with essays on academic integrity problems (Bertram, Gallant, & Drinan, 2006, p. 839). However, no published research could be found that examines differing cultural attitudes and understandings of international graduate students regarding the meaning of academic integrity. The lack of published research in this area combined with my own professional experience in international education since 1991 motivated this phenomenological research study. The study consisted of a purposive sample of nine Chinese graduate students from China, three faculty members and three administrators all at the same institution. Once participants were selected, individual interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview protocol that invited participants to share their understanding of academic integrity and their personal experiences related to how cultural values may impact the Chinese student’s understanding of academic integrity.

The results of this qualitative research study provided insight into four areas addressing cultural attitudes and understandings of the meaning of academic integrity. First, the study provided a perspective on how international graduate students from China make meaning of the concept of “academic integrity” as applied to U.S. graduate education. Second, it addressed how U.S. classroom environments and institutional
policies and practices can impact Chinese graduate student understanding of and experience with academic integrity. Third, the study revealed U.S. faculty experiences with international students from China related to student understanding of academic integrity and factors that contribute to that understanding. Finally, the study addresses cultural differences that may impact Chinese student understanding of academic integrity and related issues that arise in the context of graduate education.

**Summary of Study**

The first two chapters introduced how international students serve a vital and increasing role in the internationalization of higher education in the United States along with the academic challenges that they face. Differing cultural values are a large part of the challenges that students from China face while studying at U.S. institutions. Research studies that by Pincus and Schmelkin (2003) and Whitley (1998) only examine the concept of academic integrity from the perspective of faculty and only based upon U.S. customs. Additionally, research studies by Pennycook (1996), Kearney (2004), and Campbell and Li (2007) focus more on cultural theories related to critical thinking skills of international students and less on how they are impacted by Western views. Research also focuses on the need for Western academics not only to develop a broader understanding of how international students were taught and assessed in their own nations but also to communicate more clearly their own academic expectations (Hayes & Introna, 2005, p. 229). These research studies all highlight the underlining framework of Hofstede’s (1991) cultural dimensional theory. The purpose of my study was to examine experiences related to academic integrity that faculty and administrators at one U.S.
institution of higher education face in light of the increase in the number of graduate students from China. The study also explored how differences in cultural values may impact an understanding of academic integrity by these students. The conceptual framework of the study focuses on Hofstede’s cultural dimensions theory, using three of five dimensions examined in his study. These dimensions are “Power-Distance Index,” “Collectivism vs. Individualism,” and “Confucian Dynamism” (long- vs. short-term orientation) (Hofstede, 1991). These three dimensions were especially important to this study because they provide insight into how international students from China approach specific issues related to academic integrity in U.S. institutions of higher education.

Specific goals of this research study were to address the following research questions: (a.) How do international graduate students attending U.S. universities from China understand and make meaning of the concept of “academic integrity” as applied in U.S. graduate education? (b.) How do U.S. classroom environments and institutional policies and practices impact Chinese graduate student understanding of and experience with academic integrity? (c.) How do U.S. faculty describe their experiences with international graduate students from China related to student understanding of academic integrity and the factors that may contribute to that understanding? and (d.) To what extent and in what ways do Chinese graduate students, faculty, and administrators believe that cultural differences impact Chinese student understanding of academic integrity and related issues that arise in the context of student enrollment in the U.S.?

Chapter III focused on the methodology for this study including a rationale for the use of a qualitative approach, the design of the study, the process of site selection, the
method and process of contacting participants, a description of interview protocols, the process of data analysis, and limitations of the qualitative approach and sampling methods. As the researcher, I followed a social constructivist view (Creswell, 2007) of qualitative research in order to examine the complex phenomenon of how Chinese graduate students and U.S. faculty and administrators make sense of academic integrity. I collected data by conducting in-depth interviews with nine international graduate students from China, three faculty members, and three administrators at a large Midwest research institution.

Chapter IV provides key findings from an analysis of the data collected in this qualitative study. The findings revealed that Chinese graduate students struggle with understanding and making meaning of the concept of academic integrity. The themes arising from the interviews revealed that faculty and administrators assisted student understanding of academic integrity. Data analysis also revealed that faculty and administrators found that in conjunction with not only cultural issues the students are overwhelmed with the amount of reading and writing required and this may influence academic integrity issues. The study found how cultural influences, such as honesty, influence of parents and the role of faculty impact Chinese student perceptions of academic integrity.

This chapter provides conclusions reached and discusses emerging themes through consideration of the conceptual framework focusing on three of five dimensions of Hofstede’s (1991) cultural dimensions theory as well as a review of literature that addresses differing cultural values among international graduate students from China.
These conclusions offer a basis upon which I make recommendations for faculty and administrators who engage with Chinese graduate students at the academic institutions they attend. Finally, my recommendations for future research that build upon this study conclude this chapter.

**Conclusions and Discussion**

The goal of this study was to examine experiences related to academic integrity that faculty and administrators of U.S. institutions of higher education are facing in light of the dramatic increase in the number of graduate students from China enrolled at their respective institutions. I conducted a qualitative research study at a large research institution located in the Midwest in which graduate students from China, and faculty and administrators were asked a series of questions designed to explore how U.S. classroom environments as well as institutional policies and practices impact Chinese graduate student understanding of and experience with the U.S. concept of academic integrity. This section presents conclusions based on the findings both to issues surrounding academic integrity and how Chinese and U.S. differences in cultural values may impact the meaning of academic integrity held by Chinese graduate students.

**Student Understanding of Academic Integrity**

Students revealed that they did have a basic understanding of the concept of academic integrity; and this understanding was based upon adhering both to the institution’s code of honor and to instructor course expectations. The key findings that support this conclusion include: (a.) academic code of honor influences understanding of academic integrity; (b.) faculty describe academic integrity in syllabi and discuss
expectations at the first class; and (c.) student understanding of academic integrity relates to plagiarism, cheating and other forms of dishonesty.

The University of Blue Hill’s Graduate Student Handbook includes a section related to the integrity code. The policy explains academic integrity to include plagiarism, cheating, copying or collaborating on assignments without permission, fabrication, and research misconduct. To reinforce the code, the faculty referenced academic integrity in their course syllabi and/or discussed the topic during the first day of class. Additionally, students emphasized the importance of adhering to instructor classroom expectations with regard to academic integrity. The overall explanation by the students can be summarized by a statement made by Biyu (Accounting), that ‘what the professor says is okay and what is not okay’. This statement supports Hofstede’s (2010) cultural dimensions theory, specifically, his “Power-Distance Index” dimension.

Hofstede states that individuals from high power-distance index countries (e.g., China) accept power relations that are more autocratic and paternalistic. Therefore, students acknowledge the “power” of the instructors simply based upon their role as an instructor (p. 56). The responses by students addressing the importance of adhering to instructor classroom expectations relate to respecting authority which is a concept grounded in Hofstede’s cultural dimensions theory.

The students articulated personal experiences that help them understand the concept of academic integrity. All nine students provided examples in which they either knew of someone in a class or who were personally involved in situations of academic dishonesty. Through a discussion with a faculty member or advisor the students came to
more clearly understand the concept of academic integrity. The students expressed that when they would compose their research papers, instructors would continually remind them not to plagiarize.

As a result, my research findings provide evidence that students relied on either personal experiences or their dependence on the faculty to help them with their understanding of the concept of academic integrity. Faculty explained that students from China, especially male students, do not hold female or part-time instructors in the same regards as male or full-time instructors. Therefore, cultural differences impact these students understanding of not only U.S. classroom environments, but the concept of academic integrity.

Classroom Environments, Orientations and Institutional Standards

Differences in classroom environments in the U.S. and China also influence student views of academic integrity. All students provided examples of dishonesty in an academic setting in their native country. They explained that it was not uncommon for faculty in China to use other individual’s research findings found on the internet or other sources without citing the original author of the study. Other examples provided by students highlight differences between the two education systems. For example, students explained that in China there was a strong emphasis on test performance, and especially achieving the best test scores, not on maintaining academic integrity. Students stressed the importance of achieving a test score that would allow them to gain entrance to the university. Therefore, the Chinese educational system focuses more on training the students to provide standardized answers as compared to answers requiring student
reflection and critical thinking. In addition, the students explained that academic integrity was not viewed as being very important. They expressed that it was their opinion, that if one cheated he or she should make sure one is not caught. All nine students also revealed that Chinese students may feel that they cannot improve on what is already written and prefer to use the original text rather than their own (Angelova & Riazanteseva, 1999; Hayes & Introna, 2005). More importantly, the students explained that they were not required in China to cite their sources when preparing written assignments.

**Faculty and Administrator Experiences with Integrity and Chinese Students**

Students revealed the importance of clarity of faculty and institutional expectations, policies and rules around matters related to academic integrity. The key findings that support this conclusion include: (a.) need for established printed policies related to academic integrity; (b.) orientation programs that address academic integrity; and (c.) maintenance of high institutional ethical standards. All students expressed that both faculty and institution were clear on their expectations, policies and rules related to academic integrity and that these practices aided them in understanding U.S. academic standards.

The students also referenced the orientation programs as beneficial to their understanding of academic integrity. They also explained that academic integrity rules were very heavily emphasized to new students during orientation. In addition, the use of case studies, offering scenarios, and engaging students in discussion of what is or is not a breach of academic integrity are vital to student understanding. By providing realistic
case studies related to integrity, the academic programs provide both a basis for students to understand integrity and to allow them to learn why it is important to their academic success.

All nine students commented about differences in classroom environments between academic institutions in China and the U.S. The students stated that U.S. institutions enforced higher ethical standards with regard to academic integrity. They also revealed that institutions in China only require that students answer specific questions, often fact-based, and do not ask for independent and creative thinking as they found in the U.S. These differences in classroom environments impacted all students’ understanding of the concept of academic integrity.

However, the faculty stated that the primary challenge for Chinese students is for them to understand academic expectations and standards at a U.S. institution of higher education. For example, all three faculty stated that expectations at a U.S. institution of higher education, like the University of Blue Hill, foster independent thought, active engagement in class discussion, and clear understanding of faculty expectations. Faculty also provided examples regarding what may have been acceptable in China would not be acceptable in the United States. According to faculty, U.S. classroom environments are much more interactive than in China. Students are expected to engage and participate in class discussion, in contrast to the type of lecture-oriented only teaching style these students are familiar with. They further articulated their point by stating that Chinese graduate student understanding of academic integrity is influenced by two sets of experiences. The first includes cultural differences in terms of citations of academic
work and the other is related to students being overwhelmed with the amount of reading and writing they are required to do, which was further intensified by language issues.

In addition, both faculty and administrators in their interviews defined academic integrity primarily in narrow terms of plagiarism. The importance of this conclusion illustrates what faculty and administrators view as a central issue when defining the concept of academic integrity for Chinese students. However, the Graduate Student Handbook and course syllabi provide a broader definition of academic integrity. For example, the policy states that academic integrity violations include not only plagiarism, but also cheating, copying or collaborating on assignments without permission, fabrication, and research misconduct. The administrators indicated that two primary issues they faced with regard to Chinese graduate students related to academic integrity included: (a.) how students from China approach and conduct their research; and (b.) formatting issues in a research paper. All three administrators explained that students from China are accustomed to multiple choice examinations and very little focus on academic integrity. However, the classroom environment in the U.S. is different compared to the environment in China. The classroom environment in the U.S. emphasizes adherence to academic integrity as well as research papers requiring critical thinking, analysis, and reflection. The administrators stated that these same students struggle while conducting research and citing sources for their class assignments due to these differences.
Cultural Influences on Chinese Student Understanding of Academic Integrity

All nine students expressed that honesty, the influence of their parents, and the emphasis on respecting the importance of parent role are key elements of the students’ cultural background. They provided examples of being taught the importance of the meaning of academic integrity early in their education. However, they shared that the focus of these lessons was centered on the concept of not cheating. They indicated that a different understanding of academic integrity exists in their home country as opposed to the U.S. For example, in China both parents and teachers emphasize a focus on preparing for standardized tests and do not encourage a lot of diversity or independent thinking. The overall preference by Chinese students and teachers was to focus on obtaining a high score on standardized entrance exams so they could get into a good university.

The faculty agreed that student understanding of academic integrity was influenced by cultural values such as the role of the instructor, teaching style, the student feeling overwhelmed and pressured to succeed. These cultural values mentioned by the faculty, are grounded in Confucian teachings and include respect for traditions, concern with maintaining “face,” and respect for social and status obligations (Hofstede, 1991). Hofstede contends the key principles of Confucian teaching include:

1.) The stability of society is based on unequal relationships between people.

2.) The family is the prototype of all social organizations.

3.) Virtue with regard to one’s tasks in life consists of trying to acquire skills and education, working hard, not spending more than necessary, being patient, and persevering. (p. 165)
In addition, Campbell and Li (2008) state that while engaging in “cultural learning,” international students have to try to make academic adjustments in a new territory where there are different patterns of teacher-student interactions, classroom cultures, and academic requirements and expectations (pp. 376-377). Major (2005) also states that students from several Asian countries may have difficulty adjusting to Western dialogical practices in class such as questioning, criticizing, refuting, arguing, debating and persuading (p. 85). The cultural differences identified in my study appear to impact the Chinese students interviewed and their understanding of academic integrity.

**Recommendations for Students, Faculty and Administrators**

**Students**

The student participants were consistent regarding advice they would give to other international students coming to the U.S. about dealing with academic integrity issues. Common themes emerging from the interviews addressed the importance of seeking help from faculty or academic support units, the importance of understanding the meaning of academic integrity, and learning about the severity of consequences related to violations of academic integrity. These recommendations further illustrate the cultural variability that is emphasized in Hofstede’s (1991) cultural dimensions theory. According to Hofstede (1991) cultural differences manifest themselves in a culture’s choice of symbols, heroes/heroines, rituals and values. Applying three of his dimensions of culture, a.) power-distance index; b.) collectivism vs. individualism; and c.) Confucian dynamism (long- vs. short-term orientation) to the themes it is evident how cultural values affect the meaning of academic integrity. For example, Hofstede’s (1991) concept
of “Power-Distance Index” explains relationships between students and teachers and language systems and organizational practices. The students interviewed acknowledged respecting the faculty and administrators, and specifically, how they define the meaning of academic integrity. Additionally, Hofstede’s (1991) concept of collectivism vs. individualism explains why the students interviewed would show that these students tend to have a more collective culture (Hofstede & Bond, 1984). All of the students expressed difficulty in their ability to approach faculty to ask them questions or for clarification on assignments. It is these types of actions that support Hofstede’s (1991) theory, which mentions members of collective cultures (i.e., China) are likely to use avoidance and where personal opinions do not exist (Hofstede, 1991, p. 59). Conversely, faculty and administrators interviewed adopt more of an individualistic culture. Finally, Hofstede’s concept of Confucian dynamism sheds light on all nine students’ point of reference. These students are coming from a country that is deeply grounded in Confucian tradition. Therefore, all responses by the students discussed the importance of honesty and how they were influenced by their parents. For example, the family is the prototype of all social organizations and the stability of society is based on unequal relationships between people (Hofstede, 1991, p. 165). The relationship between a father and son, is based on mutual and complementary obligations. The son in this case owes the father respect and obedience and the father owes the son protection and consideration (Hofstede, 1991, p. 165). More importantly, Hofstede’s third dimension, Confucian-dynamism also helps to explain how students from China understand the concept of academic integrity. Dong (Chemistry) illustrates this point:
I have to say whenever they come the first and foremost thing is to find a book or find a tutor, not a tutor, I would say find a faculty or find a lecturer who is very familiar with those rules (academic integrity) and at least get the idea of what those rules are. I think as it is they should have read those rules once at least—just make sure you’re not in trouble because you may have some misunderstanding of the rules and you might face some differences between the original system and the current one in the United States.

Chunhua (Immunology) suggested emphasizing “the severe consequences if they don’t keep the academic integrity. That is probably the most effective strategy to prevent people from breaching it…” Cheng (Energy, Environmental & Chemical Engineering) suggested “not to do anything that would hurt their integrity, it is not worth the risk.”

Aiguo (MBA) also offered this advice:

I definitely would suggest to them to respect academic integrity. Even if you sometimes have troubles or problems during some class, it is definitely important to maintain integrity during your academic life or even the personal behaviors in the future. That is very important. Second thing I think if they have some dilemma in certain scenarios where they don’t understand if their conduct will violate the standards, I would suggest to them to consult the faculty or institution as early as possible.

Da (Biomedical Engineering) made the following recommendation:

if you are not familiar with academic integrity now in the United States, before whatever you do, you should ask the professor. Don’t just ask the students, ask the professor.

Faculty and Administrators

All nine students emphasized the importance that having printed institutional and program policies related to academic integrity help them understand and make meaning of the concept. Additionally, orientation programs that include cases studies and/or scenarios followed by discussion related to institutional and faculty expectations, as well
as, U.S. classroom culture should also provide the Chinese graduate students with a better understanding of the concept.

The faculty and administrators emphasized the importance that they themselves understand the cultural differences present and the ability to work through them in order for students to gain a better understanding of academic integrity. Faculty and administrators need to be mindful of defining academic integrity in terms broader than plagiarism. They need to ensure that the definition they provide to their students is all inclusive, complements the institution’s definition and contains clear examples. More importantly, faculty and administrators should present the definition of integrity to international students in different formats (i.e., written and visual) in order to ensure these students understand the concept. They also need to design an online tutorial from the perspective of an international student’s point of view that focuses on the concept of academic integrity. For example, the online tutorial could be designed similar to the IRB CITI course concept. Faculty and administrators need to work toward a common definition across the institution and ensure that all written documents such as syllabi, handbooks, and websites explain academic integrity in the same manner. The institution also needs to ensure that when drafting a policy related to academic integrity that it is mindful of the various audiences that will read the document. Therefore, administrators should be cautious when using legal terms in the policy, which may not be understood by international students. Furthermore, faculty and administrators need to be cognizant of the fact that international students may experience feelings of being overwhelmed with academic work. Efforts should also be made and/or support services be put in place in
order to ensure these students are academically successful. For example, efforts such as adequate programs that address U.S classroom culture, academic integrity, research expectations, the various research paper formatting (APA, MLA, etc.) should be put in place to assist international students. Academic support units such as, English as a Second Language enrichment courses, Writing Labs, and Tutoring Centers, should be identified in order to assist international students to succeed.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

After conducting an extensive analysis of data gathered in this study and identifying common themes from the interviews as I addressed the research questions that guided my study, I began to identify new questions that need to be addressed as researchers continue to pursue Chinese graduate student understanding of academic integrity in U.S. higher education. As a result, future research should address the following questions: (1.) What impact does type of institution (i.e., private versus state; religious versus independent; or teaching versus research) have on international graduate student understanding of academic integrity? (2.) How do students who arrive to the U.S. from the top five countries understand academic integrity in comparison to students from China? (3.) What impact does the lack of well-articulated expectations, policies and rules related to academic integrity have on the understanding of this concept by international graduate students? (4.) What is the perspective of Chinese faculty who are teaching at U.S. institutions of higher education with regard to academic integrity?

By answering these research questions the researcher would gain additional insight into the impact that institutional sectors have on issues related to academic
integrity that faculty and administrators are facing at their respective institutions. Specifically, does the type of institution impact the role of U.S. classroom environments as well as institutional policies and practices on international graduate students from Asian countries and their understanding of academic integrity? By exploring international students from additional Asian countries and comparing the data, this will help the researcher determine if cultural differences emerge and potentially have an impact on students from these countries in understanding academic integrity. Also, by examining institutions that do not have well-articulated expectations, policies and rules related to academic integrity the researcher would be able to determine if this negatively impacts student understanding of academic integrity.

Another recommendation for future research is to compare institutional definitions related to academic integrity to determine which definitions may be most useful in fostering Chinese graduate student understanding of academic integrity. Finally, a comparison of international student orientation programs related to academic integrity needs to be conducted to determine whether and to what extent international graduate students acquire a better understanding of academic integrity and what may contribute to student understanding.

Limitations and Conclusion

A limitation of this study is its small scope with interviews of Chinese graduate students and U.S. faculty and administrators who work with these students at one institution in the Midwest. Another potential limitation was the way in which the Chinese graduate students responded to questions during the interview. These students
could have provided responses based upon respect for authority (interviewee vs. interviewer). Also, the students may have not been fully forth coming in their responses due to concern about disclosure and possible negative consequences to their academic programs. These limitations were countered by providing a safe place to conduct the interview, reassertion that their academic work would not be compromised, assurance of confidentiality and peer reviews. The study was a purposive sampling that revealed key themes that include both: the importance of clarity in both faculty and institutional expectations, and, policies and rules around matters related to academic integrity. In addition, all participants noted the importance of orientation programs that addressed the concept of academic integrity. Specifically, these programs should engage faculty and students in case studies, scenarios and discussion of what is and is not a breach of academic integrity. Furthermore, cultural differences need to be taken into consideration when defining the concept of academic integrity. Faculty and administrators need to educate students that academic integrity includes more than just plagiarizing. International students need to obtain a better understanding of the concept of academic integrity as it relates to U.S. institutions of higher education.

The literature is replete with empirical studies examining self-reported cheating behaviors by students and with essays on academic integrity problems (Bertram Gallant & Drinan, 2006, p. 839). However, no published research could be found that examines differing cultural attitudes and understandings of international graduate students from China regarding the meaning of academic integrity. What little literature exists focuses on the concept of academic integrity from the perspective of faculty and is only based
upon U.S. customs (Pincus & Schmelkin, 2003; Whitley, 1998). The participants in this study provided valuable information that was supported by two conceptual frameworks: a.) Hofstede’s (1991) Cultural Dimensions Theory; and b.) social constructivism (Creswell, 2007). Additionally, responses by participants provided for several recommendations for faculty and administrators who are facing challenges regarding academic integrity in light of the increase in the number of international students enrolled at their respective institutions. Responses obtained from participants also provided several recommendations for students who are planning to study at U.S. institutions of higher education. By striving to improve the understanding of the concept of academic integrity as applied to U.S. graduate education, not only will these international students be better prepared but they will succeed in their programs at U.S. universities.
APPENDIX A

REQUEST FOR INSTITUTIONAL LETTER
Dear [INSTITUTIONAL REPRESENTATIVE]:

I write to request authorization to conduct a study at your institution for my doctoral dissertation at Loyola University Chicago. My study will explore how international graduate student from China understand and experience the U.S.-based concept of academic integrity. To examine this concept, I wish to conduct individual interviews with international graduate students from China, and with faculty and administrators who are responsible for developing, interpreting and implementing policies related to academic integrity or oversees and manages international student services and programs for the university. My qualitative study seeks to a.) explore the understanding and meaning of the concept of academic integrity by international graduate students attending U.S. universities from China, b.) explore how U.S. faculty who engage with international graduate students describe these students’ understanding of the concept of academic integrity and the factors that contribute to their understanding, and c.) examine ways in which international graduate students, faculty and administrators believe that cultural differences impact international student understanding of academic integrity and related issues.

The information gathered in interviews with the Chinese graduate students, faculty and administrators will only be used for the purpose of my research. The identity of your institution as well as the individuals who participate will not be revealed. The attached Synopsis of the Research Study provides more information.

I appreciate your consideration and am happy to discuss my study with you in more detail. Please contact me via e-mail at jhamme2@luc.edu or phone at (708) 429-5567 if you have any questions regarding my request. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jim Hammerschmidt

e-mail: jhamme2@luc.edu
Telephone number: (708) 429-5567

Enc.

Date
APPENDIX B

SYNOPSIS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY
SYNOPSIS OF STUDY

Overview of the Research Study: An Investigation of International Graduate Student Understanding of Academic Integrity in U.S. Higher Education

Researcher: James Hammerschmidt, Ph.D. Candidate, Loyola University Chicago

Dissertation Director: Terry E. Williams, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Loyola University Chicago

Introduction
My name is James Hammerschmidt and I am a Ph.D. student in the program of Higher Education in the School of Education at Loyola University Chicago. I received both my Master’s degree in History (Research) and my Bachelor’s of Arts in History and American Studies from Saint Louis University. I am currently the Director of the Office of International Services at the University of Illinois at Chicago in Chicago, IL. I have been in the field of higher education as a full time professional since 1991.

This is a research study being conducted as part of a dissertation under the supervision of Terry E. Williams, Ph.D. in the program of Higher Education at Loyola University Chicago. This study seeks to identify and interview international graduate students from China, and with faculty and administrators who are responsible for developing, interpreting and implementing policies related to academic integrity or individuals who oversees and manages international student services and programs for the university.

Purpose
My qualitative study seeks to a.) explore the understanding and meaning of the concept of academic integrity by international graduate students attending U.S. universities from China attending U.S. universities, b.) explore how U.S. faculty who engage with international graduate students describe these students’ understanding of the concept of academic integrity and the factors that contribute to their understanding, and c.) examine ways in which Chinese graduate students, faculty and administrators believe that cultural differences impact international student understanding of academic integrity and related issues.

Procedures
International graduate students from China, faculty and administrators who agree to participate in this study will be asked to sign a consent form, complete a demographic data form that is sent prior to scheduling an appointment, and also to participate in a face-to-face interview. Chinese graduate students will be asked to provide their name, contact information, age, gender, whether they are currently sponsored in F-1 or J-1 non-immigrant visa status, name and country of academic institution that they received the equivalence of an undergraduate degree, field of study, length of time they have been in
the United States. Faculty will be asked to provide their name, gender, age, academic field of expertise, number of years of graduate level teaching experience, and the name and country of the academic institution that they received their terminal degree. Finally, administrators will be asked to provide their name, gender, age, title and area of responsibility. The interview will last approximately 60 minutes and will be digitally audio recorded for later transcription. During the interview, international graduate students will be asked to share their understanding and how they make meaning of the concept of academic integrity as applied in U.S. graduate education. For participating in the interview, the student(s) will receive a $20 gift card to the [INSTITUTION] bookstore. The faculty who engage with international graduate students will be asked to describe their perceptions of these students’ understanding of academic integrity and factors that contribute to their understanding. Students, faculty, and administrators will be asked to explain how they believe cultural differences may impact international student understanding of the concept of academic integrity and related issues that arise in the context of student enrollment in the U.S.

Risks/Benefits
There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this study beyond those experienced in everyday life. Measures will be taken to minimize the possibility of a breach of confidentiality. All individuals and the participating institution will be assigned pseudonyms.

By participating in the interviews, participants will provide valuable information about how U.S. classroom environments as well as institutional policies and practices impact international graduate student understanding of and experience with the concept of academic integrity.

Confidentiality
All information collected will be kept confidential and secure. The names of all participants and the participating institution will not be released. The researcher will use a professional service to transcribe the digital audio recordings of the interviews. The transcriber will also sign a confidentiality statement and return to the researcher any and all documents related to the transcriptions after they are completed. The data collected will be analyzed and reported as part of my dissertation. A summary of the results of the study will be available upon request.

Contacts and Questions
If you have any questions about this research project or interview, please feel free to contact James Hammerschmidt at jhamme2@luc.edu or by telephone at (708) 429-5567. You may also contact my Dissertation Director, Dr. Terry Williams, at (312) 915-7002 or twillia@luc.edu.
APPENDIX C

INSTITUTIONAL APPROVAL LETTER
Date

Mr. James Hammerschmidt
7740 Bristol Park Drive
Tinley Park, IL  60477

Research Title: An Investigation of International Graduate Student Understanding of Academic Integrity in U.S. Higher Education

Researcher: James Hammerschmidt

Dear Jim:

You have proposed a study for which you will serve as the investigator. Having read the synopsis of your study and having satisfied our internal review/IRB requirements at our institution, I am granting you approval to conduct this study at [Institution].

In this study, I understand that you will collect data from individual interviews with international graduate students, and with faculty and administrators who are responsible for developing, interpreting and implementing policies related to academic integrity. To assist you in arranging the interviews, I will ask that you contact [Research Liaison] in the [Office/Department] at [Telephone number] or [institutional e-mail address]. [He/she] will be able to facilitate the arrangement of making contact with a purposive sample of Chinese graduate students, faculty and administrators. During this process you will not receive identifiable information about the pool of possible participants being solicited for an interview, and [Research Liaison] should not be informed of who responds to your inquiry. Based on our initial conversation, I understand that you requested that [Research Liaison] contact 15 international graduate students, 5 faculty and 5 administrators initially, and then contact additional candidates from each group if necessary.

This consent is provided on the condition you also receive permission from Loyola University Chicago’s institutional review board panel to conduct this study.

Sincerely,

[Institutional Representative]
[Title of Institutional Representative]
APPENDIX D

LETTER OF INVITATION TO INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE STUDENT
Dear [International Graduate Student’s Name]

I write to invite you to participate in a research study for my doctoral dissertation at Loyola University Chicago in the area of Higher Education. My study examines international graduate student understanding of academic integrity. I am requesting that you participate in a 60-minute, face-to-face interview at your institution.

Should you agree to participate, I will provide a $20 gift certificate to [INSTITUTION] bookstore as a token of my appreciation for assisting with my study.

If you participate, I will hold the data obtained from our interview in strict confidence. All information related to you or [Name of Institution] will be removed prior to my analysis. No one at [Name of Institution] will know of your involvement in the study should you decide to participate and your participation in no way will impact your academic standing or immigration status.

I have enclosed a brief synopsis of the research study to help you in making a decision to participate. I look forward to your favorable response. If you would like to participate in this study, or have any questions about participation, please respond to me via e-mail at jhamme2@luc.edu by [Date]. Once I have received your response to participate in my study we can discuss the details of the interview.

Thank you again for your consideration.

Sincerely,

James E. Hammerschmidt

e-mail:  jhamme2@luc.edu
Telephone:  (708) 429-5567

Enc.

Date
APPENDIX E

INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC FORM
International Graduate Student Demographic Form

Name: ____________________________________________
(Mr./Ms./Mrs./Dr.) First Middle Last

Local Mailing Address: ____________________________________________

City: ___________________ State: _____________________
Zip: ___________________

Home Phone: __________________________

E-mail Address:

(please provide main email contact address and any additional email addresses that you can be reached at)

Gender: Male:_____; Female:______

Age cohort: 20-29_____; 30-39_____; 40-49_____; 50-59 ______; 60 or over ______

Visa: F-1_____; J-1 ______; Other_______

National Citizenship (name of country): __________

Academic institution where you obtained the equivalent of a U.S. undergraduate degree:

(Name of School/University) (Country)

Current Graduate Program you are enrolled in: ________________________________

Degree program you are enrolled in: _____________

Length of time you have been enrolled in your graduate program in the U.S.: ______

(months/years)
Dear [Faculty’s or Administrator’s Name]

I write to invite you to participate in a research study for my doctoral dissertation at Loyola University Chicago in the area of Higher Education. My study examines international graduate student understanding of academic integrity. I am requesting that you participate in a 60-minute, face-to-face interview at your institution.

If you participate, I will hold the data obtained from our interview in strict confidence. All information related to you or [Name of Institution] will be removed prior to my analysis. No one at [Name of Institution] will know of your involvement in the study should you decide to participate.

I have enclosed a brief synopsis of the research study to help you in making a decision to participate. I look forward to your favorable response. If you would like to participate in this study, or have any questions about participation, please respond to me via e-mail at jhamme2@luc.edu by [Date]. Once I have received your response to participate in my study we can discuss the details of the interview.

Thank you again for your consideration.

Sincerely,

James E. Hammerschmidt

e-mail: jhamme2@luc.edu
Telephone: (708) 429-5567

Enc.
APPENDIX G

FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATOR DEMOGRAPHIC FORM
Faculty and Administrator Demographic Form

Name:__________________________________________ Title: ___________________
(Mr./Ms./Mrs./Dr.) First Middle Last

Name of Department:

________________________________________________________

Work Mailing
Address:____________________________________________________

City:______________________ State:______________________
Zip:____________________

Work Phone: ___________________________

E-mail Address:
_______________________________________________________________
(please provide main email contact address and any additional email addresses that you can be reached at)

Gender: Male:______; Female:______

Age cohort: 20-29______; 30-39______; 40-49______; 50-59 ______; 60 or over ______

Employed: Full-time:______; Part-time:______

Please answer the questions below if you have graduate teaching responsibilities.

Number of years of graduate level teaching experience: _________________

Approximate total number of International Graduate Students taught: _______________

Academic institution where you obtained your terminal degree:

______________________________________________________________
(Name of School/University) (Country)

Current academic discipline(s):____________________________________
APPENDIX H

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
International Graduate Student Interview Protocol

Part I. Overview of study and participant information

Provide a short personal introduction. Describe my background and discuss my interest in this field of study.

Discuss the scope of the study. Nine Chinese graduate students will be interviewed for this study. Before conducting this study, both Loyola University Chicago and [Name of Institution] reviewed the proposal and approved its administration.

Discuss the purpose of the research. Recent studies suggest that plagiarism may be more of an issue among international students. When international students are accused of plagiarizing it is often either because it is assumed that these students have poor language skills or that they lack integrity. The failure to consider cross cultural issues in learning has led to these views. An examination of previous learning experiences in one’s home country is needed in order to obtain a deeper understanding of how culture enters into one’s understanding of academic dishonesty. This study seeks to examine how U.S. classroom environments as well as institutional policies and practices impact international graduate student understanding of and experience with the concept of academic integrity.

Review of list of questions for the interview. Participants will be asked to submit the completed demographic data form (if they have not done so previously) and also to participate in an in-depth interview. The interview will last approximately 60 minutes and will be digitally audio recorded for later transcription. During the interview, the participants will be asked to explain their understanding and how they make meaning of the concept of academic integrity as applied in U.S. graduate education.

Provide and review “International Graduate Student Consent to Participate in Research”

Discuss the Transcriber’s Confidentiality Agreement and transcription process

Part II. Questions

1. What is your current understanding of the concept of academic integrity? For example, what does academic integrity mean to you at this time?

2. Can you share with me experiences you have had (or know about) that help you understand the concept of academic integrity?
3. What examples can you provide of dishonesty in an academic setting in the U.S.?

4. What examples can you provide of dishonesty in an academic setting in your native country?

5. How does your cultural background help to inform your views about academic integrity?

6. To what extent are faculty and institutional expectations, policies, and rules clear to you around matters related to academic dishonesty?

7. In what ways can faculty (or administrators) help you better understand the issues involved with academic integrity?

8. What advice would you give to other international students coming to study in the U.S. about dealing with academic integrity issues?

**Part III. Closing**

Thank the individual for participating in this interview. Assure him or her of confidentiality of responses and the possibility of the need to contact them again for clarification. Provide the student with the gift card as agreed.
APPENDIX I

FACULTY INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
Faculty Interview Protocol

Part I. Overview of study and participant information

*Provide a short personal introduction.* Describe my background and discuss my interest in this field of study.

*Discuss the scope of the study.* Three full-time faculty members who taught international graduate students from China and have two or more years of graduate level teaching experience will be interviewed for this study. Before conducting this study, both Loyola University Chicago and [Name of Institution] reviewed the proposal and approved its administration.

*Discuss the purpose of the research.* Recent studies suggest that plagiarism may be increasing among international students. When international students are accused of plagiarizing it is often either because it is assumed that these students have poor language skills or that they lack integrity. The failure to consider cross cultural issues in learning has led to these views. An examination of previous learning experiences in one’s home country is needed in order to obtain a deeper understanding of how culture enters into one’s understanding of academic dishonesty. This study seeks to examine how U.S. classroom environments as well as institutional policies and practices impact international graduate student understanding of and experience the concept of academic integrity.

*Review of list of questions for interview.* Participants will be asked to submit the completed demographic data form (if they have not done so previously) and also to participate in an in-depth interview. The interview will last approximately 60 minutes and will be digitally audio recorded for later transcription. During the interview, the faculty will be asked to describe these students’ understanding of the concept of academic integrity and the factors that contribute to their understanding.

*Provide and review “Faculty Consent to Participate in Research”*

*Discuss the Transcriber’s Confidentiality Agreement and transcription process*

Part II. Questions

1. Would you describe for me experiences you have had dealing with academic integrity issues among international graduate students?
2. Are there specific challenges and issues you find in working with international graduate students that may relate broadly to academic integrity? If yes, can you describe?

3. To what extent do you believe cultural values may influence an international student’s understanding of academic integrity? Can you illustrate?

4. In what ways do you or the institution help international students understand what academic integrity involves in U.S. higher education? To what extent?

5. Are there specific policies in place related to academic integrity? Where would international students find these?

6. Do you experience any differences between domestic and international students in how each group approaches academic integrity expectations?

7. What is your own definition of academic integrity?

8. How do you describe academic integrity to your students?

**Part III. Closing**

Thank the individual for participating in this interview. Assure him or her of confidentiality of responses and the possibility of the need to contact them again for clarification.
APPENDIX J

ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
Administrator Interview Protocol

Part I. Overview of study and participant information

Provide a short personal introduction. Describe my background and discuss my interest in this field of study.

Discuss the scope of the study. Three administrators who are responsible for developing, interpreting and implementing policies related to academic integrity or individuals who oversee and manage international student services and programs for the university will be interviewed for this study. Before conducting this study, both Loyola University Chicago and [Name of Institution] reviewed the proposal and approved its administration.

Discuss the purpose of the research. Recent studies suggest that plagiarism may be increasing among international students. When international students are accused of plagiarizing it is often either because it is assumed that these students have poor language skills or that they lack integrity. The failure to consider cross cultural issues in learning has led to these views. An examination of previous learning experiences in one’s home country is needed in order to obtain a deeper understanding of how culture enters into one’s understanding of academic dishonesty. This study seeks to examine how U.S. classroom environments as well as institutional policies and practices impact international graduate student understanding of and experience the concept of academic integrity.

Review of list of questions for the interview. Participants will be asked to submit the completed demographic data form (if they have not done so previously) and also to participate in an in-depth interview. The interview will last approximately 60 minutes and will be digitally audio recorded for later transcription. During the interview, the administrator will be asked to describe these students’ understanding of the concept of academic integrity and the factors that contribute to their understanding.

Provide and review “Administrator Consent to Participate in Research”

Discuss the Transcriber’s Confidentiality Agreement and transcription process

Part II. Questions

1. Would you describe for me experiences you have had dealing with academic integrity issues among international graduate students?
2. Are there specific challenges and issues you find in working with international graduate students that may relate broadly to academic integrity? If yes, can you describe?

3. To what extent do you believe cultural values may influence an international student’s understanding of academic integrity? Can you illustrate?

4. In what ways do you or the institution help international students understand what academic integrity involves in U.S. higher education? To what extent?

5. Are there specific policies in place related to academic integrity? Where would international students find these?

6. Do you experience any differences between domestic and international students in how each group approaches academic integrity expectations?

7. What is your own definition of academic integrity?

8. How do you describe academic integrity to your students?

Part III. Closing

Thank the individual for participating in this interview. Assure him or her of confidentiality of responses and the possibility of the need to contact them again for clarification.
APPENDIX K

INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE STUDENT CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH
International Graduate Student Consent to Participate in Research

Overview of the Research Study: An Investigation of International Graduate Student Understanding of Academic Integrity in U.S. Higher Education

Researcher: James Hammerschmidt, Ph.D. Candidate, Loyola University Chicago

Dissertation Director: Terry E. Williams, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Loyola University Chicago

Introduction
This is a research study being conducted as part of a dissertation under the supervision of Terry E. Williams, Ph.D. in the program of Higher Education at Loyola University Chicago. You are being asked to participate in this study because you are an international student from China and are currently enrolled as a graduate student at a U.S. institution of higher education.

Purpose
My qualitative study seeks to a.) explore the understanding and meaning of the concept of academic integrity by international graduate students attending U.S. universities from China attending U.S. universities, b.) explore how U.S. faculty who engage with international graduate students describe these students’ understanding of the concept of academic integrity and the factors that contribute to their understanding, and c.) examine ways in which Chinese graduate students, faculty and administrators believe that cultural differences impact international student understanding of academic integrity and related issues.

Procedures
International graduate students from China, faculty and administrators who agree to participate in this study will be asked to sign a consent form, complete a demographic data form that is sent prior to scheduling an appointment, and also to participate in a face-to-face interview. Chinese graduate students will be asked to provide their name, contact information, age, gender, whether they are currently sponsored in F-1 or J-1 non-immigrant visa status, name and country of academic institution that they received the equivalence of an undergraduate degree, field of study, length of time they have been in the United States. Faculty will be asked to provide their name, contact information, gender, age, academic field of expertise, number of years of graduate level teaching experience, and the name and country of the academic institution that they received their terminal degree. Finally, administrators will be asked to provide their name, contact information, gender, age, title and area of responsibility. The interview will last approximately 60 minutes and will be digitally audio recorded for later transcription. During the interview, international graduate students will be asked to share their understanding and how they make meaning of the concept of academic integrity as
applied in U.S. graduate education. The faculty who engage with international graduate students will be asked to describe their perceptions of these students’ understanding of academic integrity and factors that contribute to their understanding. Students, faculty, and administrators will be asked to explain how they believe cultural differences may impact international student understanding of the concept of academic integrity and related issues that arise in the context of student enrollment in the U.S.

**Risks/Benefits**
There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this study beyond those experienced in everyday life. Measures will be taken to minimize the possibility of a breach of confidentiality. All individuals and the participating institution will be assigned pseudonyms.

By participating in the interviews, participants will provide valuable information about how U.S. classroom environments as well as institutional policies and practices impact international graduate student understanding of and experience with the concept of academic integrity.

**Confidentiality**
All information collected will be kept confidential and secure. The names of all participants and the participating institution will not be released. The researcher will use a professional service to transcribe the digital audio recordings of the interviews. The transcriber will also sign a confidentiality statement and return to the researcher any and all documents related to the transcriptions after they are completed. The data collected will be analyzed and reported as part of my dissertation. A summary of the results of the study will be available upon request.

**Voluntary Participation**
Participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not want to participate in this study, you do not have to participate. Even if you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any questions or to withdraw from participation at any time during the study without penalty. Your participation will in no way negatively impact your academic standing or immigration status.

**Contacts and Questions**
If you have any questions about this research project or interview, please feel free to contact James Hammerschmidt at jhamme2@luc.edu or by telephone at (708) 429-5567. You may also contact my Dissertation Director, Dr. Terry Williams, at (312) 915-7002 or twillia@luc.edu.
Statement of Consent
Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above, have been given an opportunity to ask questions, and agree to participate in this research study at this time. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Participant’s Signature
Date

Researcher’s Signature
Date
Faculty Consent to Participate in Research

Overview of the Research Study: An Investigation of International Graduate Student Understanding of Academic Integrity in U.S. Higher Education

Researcher: James Hammerschmidt, Ph.D. Candidate, Loyola University Chicago

Dissertation Director: Terry E. Williams, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Loyola University Chicago

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applied in U.S. graduate education. The faculty who engage with international graduate students will be asked to describe their perceptions of these students’ understanding of academic integrity and factors that contribute to their understanding. Students, faculty, and administrators will be asked to explain how they believe cultural differences may impact international student understanding of the concept of academic integrity and related issues that arise in the context of student enrollment in the U.S.

**Risks/Benefits**
There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this study beyond those experienced in everyday life. Measures will be taken to minimize the possibility of a breach of confidentiality. All individuals and the participating institution will be assigned pseudonyms.

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**Statement of Consent**

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APPENDIX M

ADMINISTRATOR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH
Administrator Consent to Participate in Research

Overview of the Research Study: An Investigation of International Graduate Student Understanding of Academic Integrity in U.S. Higher Education

Researcher: James Hammerschmidt, Ph.D. Candidate, Loyola University Chicago

Dissertation Director: Terry E. Williams, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Loyola University Chicago

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APPENDIX N

TRANSCRIBER CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT
Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement

I ______________________________, agree to transcribe the interviews for the doctoral research of James Hammerschmidt entitled “An Investigation of International Graduate Student Understanding of Academic Integrity in U.S. Higher Education”

I will maintain strict confidentiality of the data files and transcripts. This includes, but is not limited to the following:

I will not discuss the data files and transcripts with anyone but the researcher;

I will not share copies with anyone except the researcher;

I agree to turn over all copies of the transcripts and digital audio recordings to the researcher at the conclusion of my contract;

I agree to store all data files, transcripts and digital audio recordings in a safe and secure place while they are in my possession;

I have read and understand the information provided above.

_________________________________________  __________________________
Transcriber’s Signature                        Date

_________________________________________  __________________________
Researcher’s Signature                         Date
REFERENCE LIST

Angelova, M., & Riazantseva, A. (1999). “If you don’t tell me, how can I know?”: A case study of four international students learning to write the U.S. way. Written Communication, 16(4), 491-525. doi: 10.1177/0741088399016004004


VITA

James Hammerschmidt was born and raised in St. Louis, Missouri. Before attending Loyola University Chicago, he attended Saint Louis University, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts in History and American Studies, in 1981. From 1981 to 1983, he also attended Saint Louis University, where he received a Master of Arts in History (Research).

Currently, James is the Executive Director of the Office of International Services in the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs at the University of Illinois at Chicago in the heart of downtown Chicago, Illinois. As Executive Director, Mr. Hammerschmidt and his staff provide immigration-related services to over 4,000 international students, scholars, physicians, and staff at the University of Illinois at Chicago, as well as international students at the University of Illinois Peoria and Rockford campuses.

Mr. Hammerschmidt is also a member of NAFSA: Association of International Educators, one of the leading organizations promoting international education and providing professional development opportunities in the field based in Washington, DC. In his membership role, Mr. Hammerschmidt is chair of the NAFSA International Education Leadership Knowledge Community, a strategic group of members dedicated to envisioning, coordinating, and building the future blueprint of internationalization at colleges and universities. In his past leadership roles, Mr. Hammerschmidt served as
Chair of the NAFSA Regulatory Ombudspersons Subcommittee for two years and on the Committee on Immigration Policy and Practice as regional representative for scholars in the Midwest.