Academic integrity policies at universities

Ahmet Su, PhD – Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto

May 2025, Khazar University – Research Center for International and Global Higher Education, Baku, Azerbaijan

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Context, approach & definitions

- If an institution does not think it has a problem with academic integrity, it just has not detected it yet.

Anthony McClaren, CEO of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency in Australia

Context, approach & definitions

- International Center for Academic Integrity: commitment to six core values >> honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, courage.
- The approach to academic integrity should be proactive, supportive, and educational, rather than solely focusing on punitive measures.
- Academic integrity as a positive aspect of the learning process and the benefits of honest scholarship.

Context, approach & definitions – II

- Mastering the art of scholarship, including researching, understanding and building upon the work of others and requires that you give credit where it is due. At its core, academic integrity requires honesty.

- Common student motivations for dishonest behavior (Egan, 2018):
  - Pressure for better grades
  - Time constraints & procrastination
  - Lack of understanding
  - Peer influence and misconceptions about consequences

Current challenges

- Plagiarism
- Contract cheating
- Use of AI tools
- Assessment security
- Exam fraud
- Fake certifications
- Essay mills

Current challenges – II

- Increasing student populations and digital challenges (GenAI).
- Financial disincentives for strict enforcement due to reliance on tuition fees (Glendinning et al., 2020).
- Inconsistent handling of misconduct, misuse of plagiarism detection tools.
- Evolving integrity threats, including predatory publishing and sophisticated cheating methods.
- Lack of clear policy definitions and support for educative approaches in many institutions, especially regarding contract cheating.

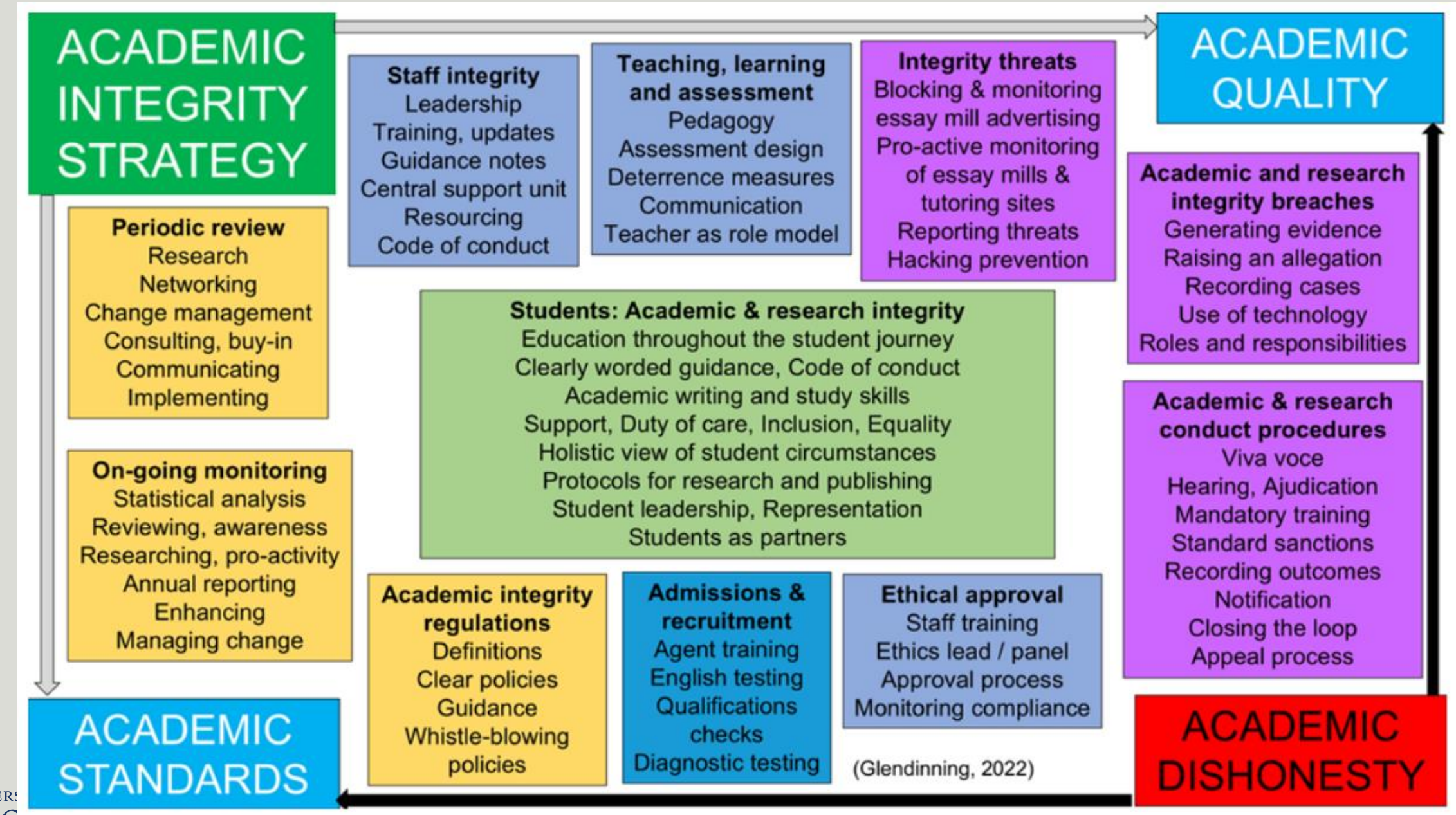
Policy…

- Academic integrity is a strategy, not just a standard when embedded in every aspect of education, it safeguards quality and promotes honesty.
- Glendinning et al. (2025) presents similar steps in their guidelines on developing academic integrity policies.

Policy, structure & accessibility

- Broad, inclusive scope covering students, faculty, and staff across all academic operations.
- Connection with quality assurance cycles and senior governance oversight.
- Key policy components:
  - Conduct expectations
  - Recruitment guidelines
  - Research and publication ethics
  - Procedures for reporting and managing breaches
  - Education and support mechanisms
  - Policy monitoring and review
- Emphasis on clear, positive, and inclusive language promoting shared values.
- Ensuring easy accessibility (websites, handbooks, learning platforms).

Big picture



(Glendinning, 2022, p. 208)

Policy – 2

Policy connections and integration

- Active promotion and education on academic integrity for all stakeholders.
- Training on critical thinking, citation, time management, ethical decision-making.
- Integration into curricula and course syllabi for consistent messaging.
- Framing academic integrity as a developmental value, not just rule compliance.

Policy – 3

Implementation & Challenges forward

Procedures and Responsibilities

- Clear definitions of misconduct including new concerns like unauthorized GenAI use.
- Transparent, standardized processes for investigation, reporting, and appeals.
- Roles and responsibilities clearly assigned to staff, students, and administration.
- Equity, diversity, and inclusion principles embedded in procedures.

Sanctions and Assessment Guidelines

- Purpose of sanctions: deterrence, correction, skill development, fairness.
- Clear guidelines for assessments and GenAI use, including permitted tools and legal risks.

Principles

Universities Australia – Principles

- *Principle 1:* The primacy of institutional autonomy.
- *Principle 2:* Everyone is responsible.
- *Principle 3:* Whole university approach.
- *Principle 4:* Consistent and effective institutional policies and practices.
- *Principle 5: Engage with and empower students.*
- *Principle 6:* Empower and engage with staff.
- *Principle 7:* Sector collaboration.

Research insights

Some relevant studies…

- Overview of punitive vs educative policy models (e.g., Western Canadian universities).
- Importance of shifting from moralistic punishment to holistic support and prevention.
- Impact of inadequate policy definitions on enforcement and student understanding.
- Research evidence supporting educative approaches for long-term cultural change.

Research insights – 2

Academic Integrity Maturity Model (AIMM)

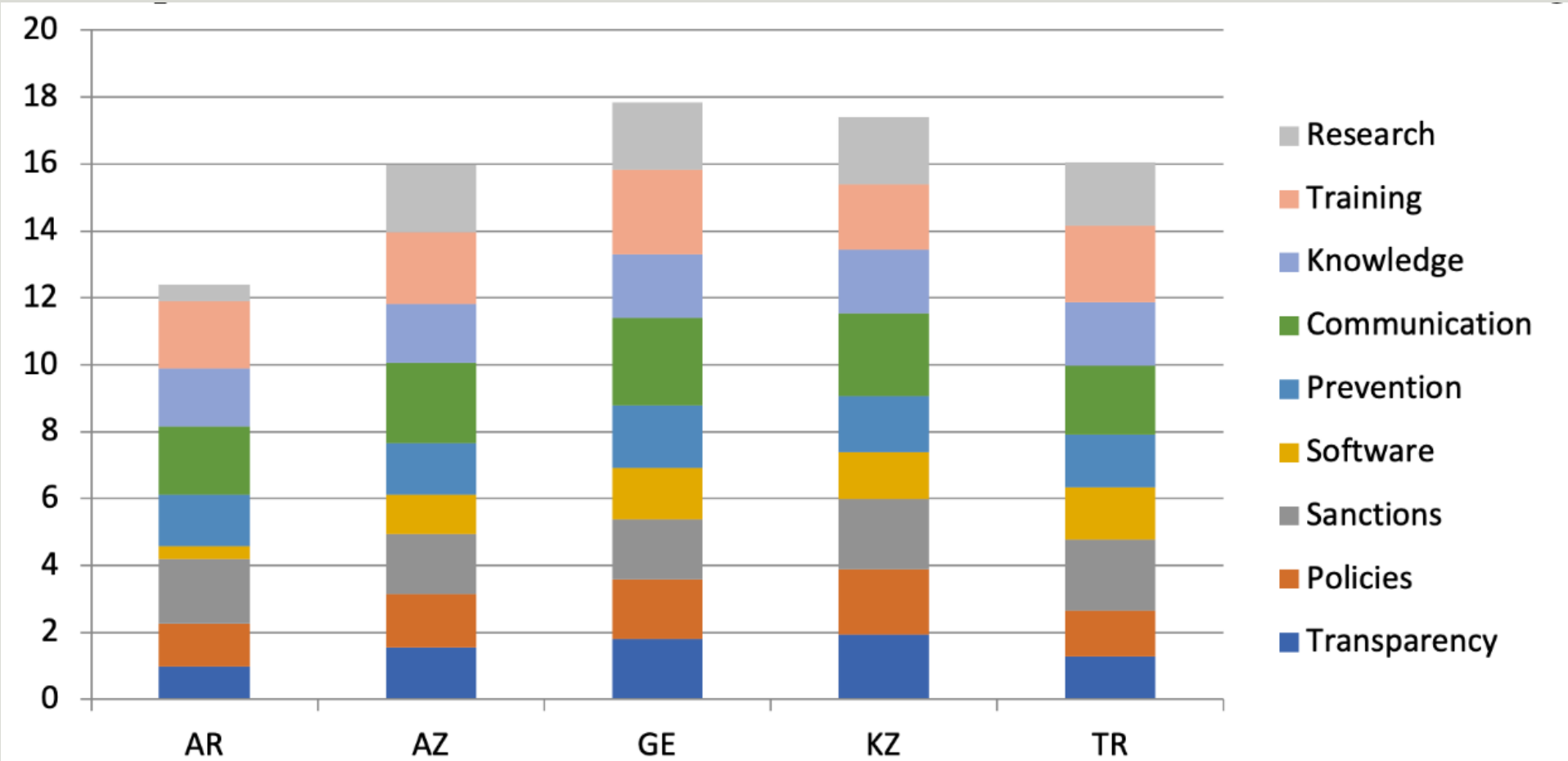


Figure 6: AIMM results for PAICKT countries

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Research insights – 3

Academic Integrity Maturity Model (AIMM) findings from more countries…

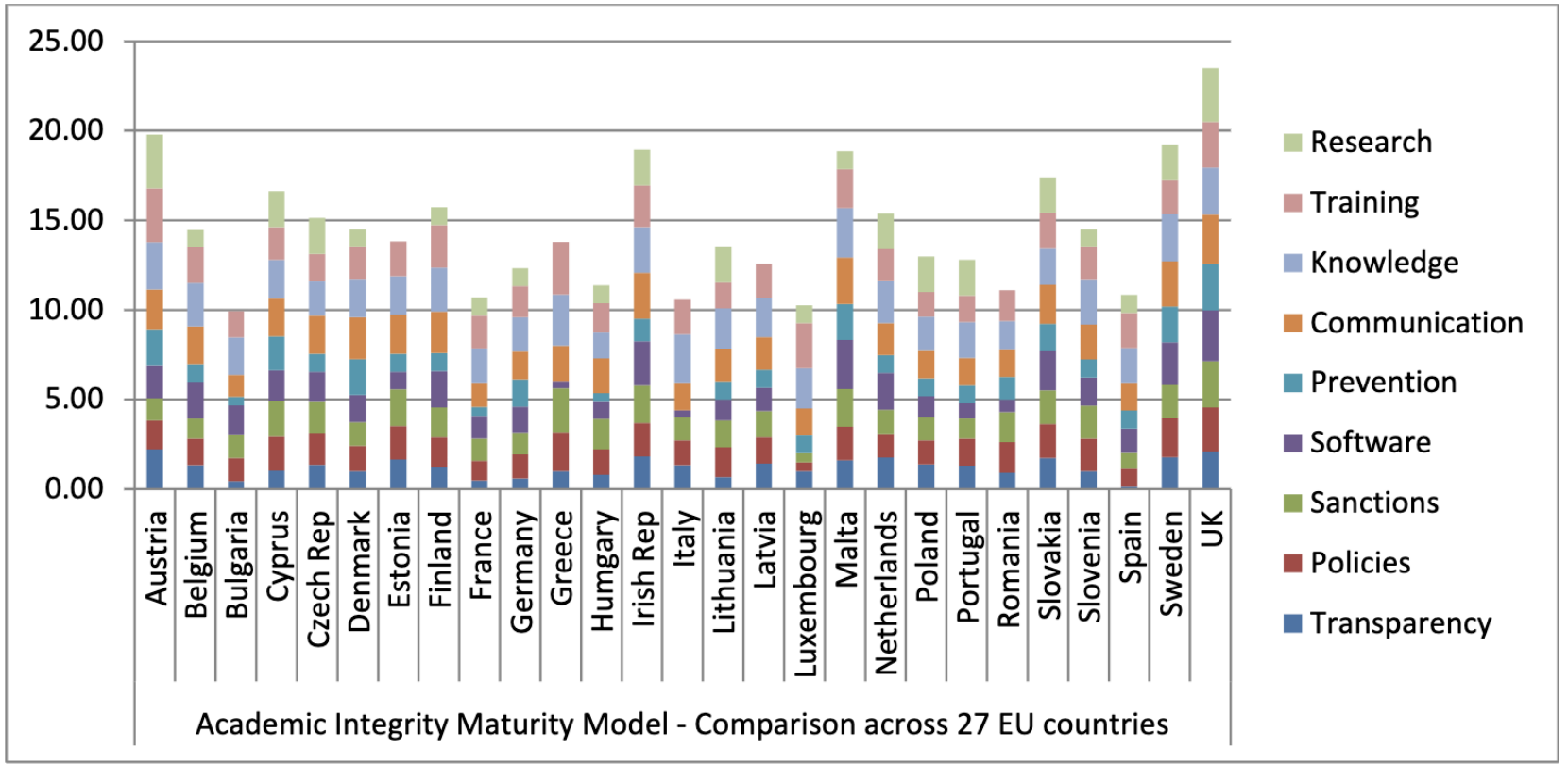

Figure 3: Comparison of Academic Integrity Maturity across 27 Countries (Glendinning 2013 p 37)

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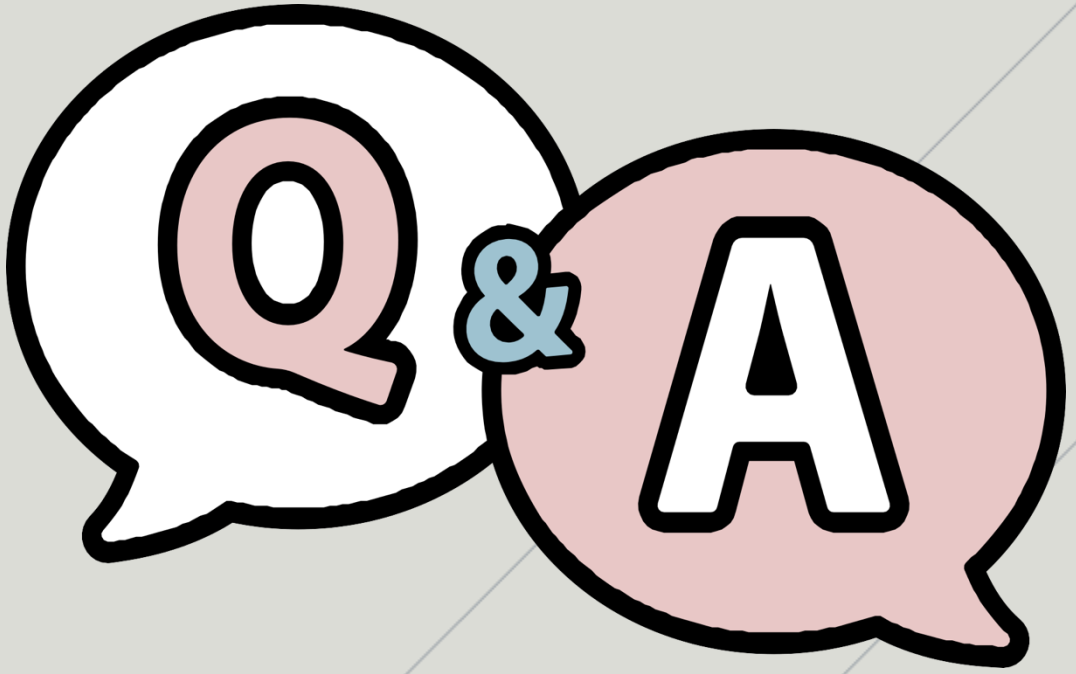
Conclusion

- Academic integrity policies as both regulatory necessity and moral imperative.
- Importance of embedding integrity in governance, teaching, and daily academic life.
- Emphasis on collaboration, clarity, and continuous improvement.
- Vision for academic integrity as a lived, shared value benefiting the entire academic community.
- Consistency and collective approaches with a constructive mindset.

Questions…



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**This is a sample list of references.

Thanks for listening…

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