**Stages of Institutional Development for Academic Integrity**

Four stages of institutional development are hypothesized so as to comprehend and distinguish the relative positions of colleges and universities regarding the organization of academic integrity on their campuses:

**Stage One: "Primitive"**  
This stage describes a school with no policy or procedures (or minimalist ones) and where there is great variation in faculty and administrative handling of cheating.

**Stage Two: "Radar Screen"**  
This stage describes a school where cheating issues have risen to public debate because of the perceived weakness of academic integrity policies and fundamental concerns with the consistency and fairness of existing practices. Stage two is characterized by early efforts, usually led by administration, to put a policy and procedures into effect, often for fear of litigation.

**Stage Three: "Mature"**  
This stage characterizes a school where academic integrity policies and procedures are known and widely, but not universally, supported. Continuing efforts occur to socialize new faculty and students to the academic integrity policy, and it is used frequently by faculty, in particular.

**Stage Four: "Honor Code"**  
This stage describes an institution where students take a major responsibility in implementing the integrity policy, and there is wide recognition that the code distinguishes the school while leading to lower cheating and plagiarism rates than most non-code schools.

Stage four is not necessarily the best. Most institutions can get to stage three, and a few can create and sustain stage four. Stage four is heuristic so that institutions may learn what kinds of campus cultures can sustain integrity. Stage three schools, in particular, should strive to emulate the advantages of student empowerment seen in stage four schools. Prudence dictates that "the best is the enemy of the good" so great care in attempting to move to stage four is required. Stage three is a realistic and desirable stage for most institutions.

Institutions should engage in planning that identifies their current stage of development and the obstacles and opportunities in moving to the next stage.

International Center for Academic Integrity, Clemson Univeristy

http://www.academicintegrity.org/