# Navigating the perfect storm: academic integrity beyond 2023

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Transcript

**Prof Judyth Sachs** [00:00:01:20]
Good morning, everyone. My name is Judyth Sachs and I'm the Chief Academic Officer of Studiosity. I wish to acknowledge that I am hosting and recording this symposium from the lands of the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation. I also acknowledge the custodians of the various lands on which you all work today and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people participating in this symposium today.

I acknowledge that we have members from Pasifika and Māori peoples, and Canadian First Nations people. We acknowledge your Elders past and present. We're here today to predict and imagine the challenges and successes to come, but also to reflect on how we have how we've got here in terms of academic integrity. It's certainly been quite a change, quite an elevation and escalation, both in terms of the interventions, but also in terms of the instances.

We also, at the end of today's symposium, recognise the work of Tracey Bretag and her landmark work and passion for the field of integrity. So this is a topic of great interest for everyone today. And at the end of the session, we will recognise the Tracey Bretag Award for Academic Integrity and I will invite Jack to present that award and announce that award.

So the session is organised around the introduction. I will then ask each member of the panel questions that relate to their expertise and experience, and I ask them to indicate that relatively briefly. And then there have been questions that have been asked from the audience. And I thank the people that have sent in the questions and they really are very useful and very insightful.

And at the end, after Jack has presented the Tracey Bretag Award, I will attempt to bring it all together. So that will be the greatest challenge as well as trying to manage the questions as they come in. So could I invite our panel to introduce themselves? And let's start with Guy, and it's only because Guy is in front of me in terms of the tiles.

There's no sort of sexist or gendered message behind that. So Guy, can you just introduce yourself, please?

**Dr Guy Curtis** [00:02:23:24]
Sure thanks Judyth. So I'm Guy Curtis. I'm a senior lecturer in Applied Psychology at the School of Psychological Science at the University of Western Australia. I have been researching academic integrity going back to 2004, so now getting into a bit over 15 years that I've been doing academic

integrity research and certainly it's become the increasing focus of my research in the last five years.

So I've been doing an awful lot of it and then knowing what I find from research on academic integrity, I've got into advocacy of what we can do with those research findings to improve academic integrity in the higher education sector.

**Prof Judyth Sachs** [00:03:04:2]
Thank you. So Christine, you're the second tile. So we're not going in geographical location. We're going from one side of the country to the other. So, Christine.

**Assoc Prof Christine Slade** [00:03:13:21]
Thanks Judyth and welcome everyone. So I'm Associate Professor Christine Slade, I'm the academic lead in of assessment in the Institute of Teaching and Learning Innovation at the University of Queensland. And in that role I have leadership responsibilities in the University's Academic Integrity Action Plan, and that's probably been going now for about three years, given a bit of interruption with COVID.

I'm also leading a HERDSA-funded grant with Guy and **Sheona Thomson** from QUT, looking at the motivation of why students use buy/sell/trade file sharing sites. And we hope to be able to help institutions use that as an evidence base to inform some decision making. And of course, I was with Tracey, probably not as much as Rowena has been in the past years, but I did do a couple of things with her where I was on the team of TEQSA-funded experts doing the national workshops around Australia and also doing the online tool kit.

And then before that I was also part of the collaborative in Epigeum to develop the educative modules for students and staff.

**Prof Judyth Sachs** [00:04:34:22]
Let's fly back to the west, and Rowena.

**Prof Rowena Harper** [00:04:38:22]
Thanks, Judyth, and I'm really pleased to be here with Guy and Christine as well. My name is Rowena Harper. I'm the Director of the Centre for Learning and Teaching at Edith Cowan University in Western Australia, and part of my role in that centre is to oversee our university's approach to academic integrity. I've worked in the area of academic integrity for well over ten years.

I've developed student academic integrity modules in my roles in academic language and learning. I've provided staff development in the areas of prevention, detection and education management, and I've also informed policy and procedure at the various institutions I've worked at.

I also research actively in the area and have done for quite a few years and a lot of that was done in collaboration with and alongside Tracey Bretag, who we're honoring this morning, who I very much miss as a colleague and friend. So I'm very pleased to be here.

**Prof Judyth Sachs** [00:05:34:12]
Thanks very much. So let's let's get down to the business of this morning's symposium. And the first question, I think I'll direct it to Guy. And it is about legislation because a number of people were interested in in the legislation. And it's something that's happened since our last symposium. So the landmark Australian legislation was designed to empower universities to better protect their students, develop academic integrity, protect and maintain the perceived global value of Australian education.

What have we seen and would you how would you rate its success or effectiveness?

**Dr Guy Curtis** [00:06:10:08]

Sure. So the TEQSA amendment prohibiting academic cheating services, which is what more of us here in the area would colloquially call "contract cheating sites" or "contract cheating providers" has had an impact already. We we saw almost immediately from that law being implemented that some of the sites that were providing assignments to students for payment self geo-blocked from Australia because they knew that they would be in breach of Australian law.

Others seem to have got that message as well over time, which is good. At the same time, TEQSA recently released to universities a list of over 2300 websites that they know are still in the business of selling assignments to Australian university students or sorry to university students per say. With about nearly 600 of those directly targeting Australian students. TEQSA have taken one court action to block a provider and prosecute provider under that law, which I think and hope will send a bit of a message.

I think the impact has been not so much on stopping these sites yet in getting to Australia, but in raising awareness that they are illegitimate services. And that's been quite helpful both to staff and students to kind of get an idea of what is in fact something that's providing them genuine educational support versus something that is, is genuinely providing cheating.

**Prof Judyth Sachs** [00:07:56:12]
Rowena, Christine, do you want to make any comments further to what has been said?

**Assoc Prof Christine Slade** [00:08:03:06]
I was just going to add, I guess, from a university's point of view, that it's given us a place, a location to actually be able to report different not only sites, but different practices. So I think whether that actually, you know, comes to anything but I guess that understand we have a place to be able to say to somebody with authority, this is what is happening in our university.

And so I guess in cumulative- every, other universities do the same thing, so we are building up a better picture of, you know, like for example, the number of sites, but also the types of things and the new things that are actually happening.

**Prof Rowena Harper** [00:08:46:11]
Yeah. And I think the strength of having legislation for me is that prior to the legislation being in place, all the implications for engaging in contract cheating fell on the students themselves and there were no implications for the providers. And so I think the real strength is that, you know, sending the signal to the industry that this is illegal activity. The knock-on effects in terms of deterring, I think remain to be seen. But that for me is a key strength.

**Prof Judyth Sachs** [00:09:18:12]
But there's a question that's come up from somebody from Universities Australia. And I guess one of the things about the legislation it does allow for the revocation of degrees. Are you aware of any instances where that's happened and what do you think the impact of that will be on universities? And anybody can answer that. It's a good one, isn't it?

**Prof Rowena Harper** [00:09:48:06]
It's a it's an incredibly good question. I read that in the submitted questions and I thought about that one for a long time. I think when TEQSA recently shared with universities, y'know, the lists of students that they suspected may have outsourced to contract cheating providers, I know that a range of universities had names shared with them of students who had graduated.

And so the message we got very clearly from TEQSA was that that was an important moment for the universities to consider their policies and procedures around the revocation of degrees, because I think many institutions just hadn't put themselves in a policy position to be able to act confidently around those issues. So I think we probably would have seen in the last couple of years a real strengthening of policy and procedure in that area.

I'm not aware of any actions taken so far, but certainly I would anticipate that universities were responding to that data from TEQSA in just that way, reviewing their own policy and procedure around degree revocation.

**Prof Judyth Sachs** [00:11:01:08]
And I guess that's a role for the academic boards to be really the eyes and the ears, but also the upholders of academic integrity. And they make recommendations, I imagine, to revoke your degrees and things.

**Dr Guy Curtis** [00:11:19:01]
And that's been my experience at UWA as well. That information from TEQSA about students who may have engaged in contract cheating certainly raised the issue around what is our policy of revoking degrees and is it fit for purpose in situations where students are identified after graduation as having potentially cheated during their studies? So it's raised that awareness there.

And I know the conversations have been very deep and serious at some institutions where they've had quite a lot of cases that were identified in that set of data that came out of TEQSA

**Assoc Prof Christine Slade** [00:12:00:12]
Yeah. So I think that like Guy, I believe some would have serious conversations. And I remember Tracey saying when we were on the TEQSA project, you know, to the participants that you've got to take care of your policy, you've got to make sure you have really good policies. But you know, and there were several other things around the, you know, the characteristics of that.

But I guess the challenge for universities is being able to capture everything in that policy. So not making it too specific. So do you have to have a section particularly about that or can you capture that in another part? You know, so as we progress through challenges with academic integrity, we're going to have to have policy around them all.

So I guess that's a place where people can share. And I think there was another question around that the collaboration and sharing of policies or how we've done certain things. That communication is really important because we're constantly in this, you know, the next thing's happening, and are we prepared and people who work in the policy space will know that it takes quite a long time to actually change something there.

So it's an interesting conversation, I think, to continue having perhaps through the Academic Integrity Network in Australia that how could we actually tackle this?

**Prof Rowena Harper** [00:13:16:23]
I think also I know that it raised number of questions for me about how we would substantiate cases of contract cheating for students who'd graduated because when we reviewed our standard approaches for investigating and particularly for interviewing a student, a lot of the interviewing questions relate to kind of testing the student's knowledge of a subject. And if they're two or three years out from university and haven't been working in the field, we can't expect them to have retained the level of detailed knowledge that we would if they were still immersed in the subject.

So I think it also raises questions about how we substantiate cases and needing to really strengthen that approach and think about how we would do that if we were investigating the case of a student who'd graduated.

**Assoc Prof Christine Slade** [00:14:09:03]
And Rowena, do you think there that the universities have the power to actually, not to revoke, but to actually take a case on like that? I mean, have you had advice around, 'we still have that authority for the student'. You know, I'm thinking of precedent cases, perhaps, that are going to come up where a student would challenge that if the university went ahead.

**Prof Rowena Harper** [00:14:30:15]

I think it's probably more a question for university legal departments. I think I would hope - with my teaching and learning head on and, you know, with an academic governance head on, I would certainly hope so if we discovered that we'd awarded a degree on the basis of fraudulent assessment, I would certainly hope that we had the power to revoke that if new information came to light.

**Prof Judyth Sachs** [00:14:54:19]
We've been talking about academic integrity as it relates to teaching and learning, but there's also the area around research. And how do you think that that, how can universities maintain the research integrity at the same level of rigor and appropriateness as we're doing in teaching and learning?

**Assoc Prof Christine Slade [**00:15:21:24]
Go Guy

**Dr Guy Curtis [**00:15:22:17]
I've put my hand up simply because this was a conversation we were having exactly yesterday in our Academic Integrity Working group at UWA, which I'm part of. We were talking about the distinction between academic integrity and research integrity, which is sort of one question. We've got things that overlap both, for example, in a research publication, someone might plagiarise in an undergraduate student assignment, someone might plagiarise, but we don't have researchers bringing handwritten notes into an exam because that's not what researchers are doing.

But it is something students are doing. So there's there's some overlap, but there's also some difference. Research integrity has a number of oversight mechanisms outside of the academic integrity things that are done. So universities are required to have Research Integrity Advisors under the National Policy on research, research integrity, things that are covered by ARC and NHMRC.

We have ethics committees for things that involve, say, human or animal research that again sit outside the area of academic integrity. At my institution, UWA, we have a compulsory research integrity module for new PhD students. Some of that includes some issues around academic integrity, such as plagiarism and that sort of thing, but also covers other aspects of research integrity.

And so that's an educative and training-based approach, which Tracey Bretag was a really big advocate for If we want to educate in this space, and certainly that's something that can be done anywhere and everywhere.

**Prof Rowena Harper [**00:17:16:24]
You know, if I can speak for ECU, I know our academic integrity and our research integrity teams have done a lot of work to play side by side the different sets of policies and procedures that relate to academic integrity and research integrity and have really tried to identify the touch points where one set of procedures might need to actually share and come into contact with the other.

And so I think that work really needs to be done in every university based on my experience, is that getting those - because typically it is two separate teams that deal with academic and research integrity, but really a partnership between those two areas to make sure we're really adhering to everything we need to under the code in terms of research integrity and also upholding academic integrity in the HDR space. I think that partnership is vital.

**Assoc Prof Christine Slade** [00:18:15:00]
I think that. Oh, sorry, Judyth.

**Prof Judyth Sachs** [00:18:16:23]
No, no, please, please.

**Assoc Prof Christine Slade**
I was just going to say, I think that's the area that's a little bit grey, is the higher HDR students because in research integrity, we've already got our codes of conduct for staff, at UQ now we've got a code of conduct for students as well. But that interaction between the people working on academic integrity and research integrity for those students, I think that is like Rowena says, that's a really important area for us to further, because I know that research students have so much more integrity issues that they have to deal with, but they also have these other ones and there's nothing to say that one of them, I guess, we're relying in some ways the answer is, "oh, well, they're under supervision, so therefore it's probably touch points where we know that they're not cheating". But I think we can't just leave it at that.

**Prof Judyth Sachs** [00:19:08:13]
In a number of the delegate questions, contract cheating was really a major concern, and there are now what they describe in the literature as 'pay to pass' websites.

As I speak, there are probably new ones being put out. What's the impact on student behaviour and learning outcomes, where large numbers can assess these 'pay to pass' websites? And anybody can answer that question.

**Dr Guy Curtis** [00:19:36:01]
I'll just say, can I throw to Christine because she's leading the research on buy, sell and trade websites.

**Assoc Prof Christine Slade** [00:19:44:00]
Well, we can also go back to our other research that the high percentage, 11 point something - 47 that we found in the incentive, y'know, instead of self-reporting, the incentivised survey, were using these file sharing, peer, whatever we want to call them. I guess on a practical basis, we definitely know students are using them and we have got implications at universities about it.

And I guess that's one lever that the legislation has helped. For example, in the STEM people struggling with some of the sites that give students answers, they've been able to report those. So it gives them a little bit of leeway. But we had to wrestle with what parts of using those sites is okay, you know, study help and what parts might be misconduct.

And it's much harder than just buying an assignment in a sense from a contract cheating site online. So we've developed a sort of a statement on what we consider the students need to be careful about. And it's mainly to do with the uploading and downloading. And we've actually then publicised that across the institution.

Whether students still really understand that I'm not sure, but we're trying our best to at least have our statement where we know, 'be careful, students'. It's this duty of care, you know, be careful when you use these sites because you can fool yourself into misconduct or you could, you know, blatantly take some stuff. But it may not be the most up to date, you know.

So we've had a lot of implications, I guess, on student behavior. We've had cases, you know, involving it, obviously. So the educative approach and then how you actually investigate those too. It's a big area. It's a newer area, I guess, for us to actually be tackling.

**Prof Judyth Sachs** [00:21:38:00]
And in terms of your research then, are you focusing on undergraduate and postgraduate students and are there differences between those two student populations?

**Assoc Prof Christine Slade** [00:21:48:01]
Well, we're actually doing two things. So Guy could talk to the survey we've done already of students, a mix of students, but we're also, Sheona from QUT is responsible for looking at social media sites and sites where students put up their opinions. And we're going to do a thematic

analysis of those sites and try and understand from the student's point of view the motivation, why they're actually using them.

Guy, do you want to say something about the survey?

**Dr Guy Curtis** [00:22:16:01]
Sure so the survey we've run had around about 400 students and they were principally undergraduates. So I don't think we had a big enough group of postgraduate to make a distinction in what their behaviors were. What we were seeing among the undergraduate was they were typically trying to find exam questions, exam answers, test questions, test answers, whereas they were uploading things like their lecture notes.

So this was there was a distinction in what was being uploaded versus what was being downloaded. They were sharing materials that they had in order to get the materials that they wanted. And with things like tests and exam answers, what's worrying there is that they're looking at things that they can directly use to answer assessment questions, not through their own study of the material and understanding it, but simply finding an answer to a question which is a bit of a concern, of course.

**Prof Judyth Sachs** [00:23:17:12]
Look there's an interesting question that was sent in from the delegates, and I'd just like to throw it to the panel. And the question is, am I naive to hope for positive academic integrity, that is trusting most students to do the right thing?

**Prof Rowena Harper** [00:23:30:17]
I liked that question too, when I read it. No, I think you're not naive because I think all the data shows that a majority of students do do the right thing. And I think that's what we need to keep our eye on, when all the large-scale studies show that the students who engage in contract cheating are still very much in the minority.

I think, though, I was just reflecting on that previous question, too. I think there's a huge grey area here where a lot of what I observe, for example, might be in a particular cohort. One or two students might post a question on a website like Chegg, to try and get an answer from a paid tutor. And then the students share that answer with 30 or 40 other students in the cohort.

So there's a large number of students who are using that answer, but only one or two got it directly from the website. And so I think there's a huge grey area there where some students clearly did deliberately contract out an answer to the question, but others got an answer from a friend. And I think, you know, there's an ongoing debate as to whether we should treat those two behaviors similarly, given that with my learning and teaching hat on: none of students have done the work, all the students have outsourced the answer from somewhere else. Just because a student paid for it, does that mean their behavior was worse? So I think no, no, you're not naive. I think to think that a majority of students are doing the right thing.

But I do think that what the right thing is is not necessarily a shared view among students and staff. A lot of students feel that those sharing of answers, that collaborating - what we might call colluding, that working together, a lot of students think that's fine. And I think that's a huge area that we haven't really tackled as well as we might've.

**Prof Judyth Sachs** [00:25:26:01]
So what do you think we need to do? Because students might see it as a semantic difference, but in fact, it's a fundamental difference. It's around values and it's around the whole purpose of assessment and learning. So where do you think we should start to clarify the language, but also really put a strong boundary around the expectations?

**Prof Rowena Harper** [00:25:48:23]
That that's a really, really difficult question. [laughs]

**Prof Rowena Harper** [00:25:53:01]
I think we probably need to do more within our learning and teaching environment to scaffold how students need to be working. So we tend to focus on the products that students need to produce and less on the process we want students to use to get to that product. So I think probably in every discipline we need to do more scaffolding around ways that that knowledge and learning get created in that discipline.

I think that's the first point.

**Assoc Prof Christine Slade** [00:26:29:16]
Yeah, I was going to say that I first became aware of this educator's heart, I guess I call it when we, Susan Rowland and I, did those two national workshops around assessment design, to try and help academic integrity. And one of the answers that one of the biggest concerns when we asked the two groups was, they were very disturbed that these students weren't learning because they were cheating.

And I think for educators, that's an okay thing. And and then the other piece of work around the vulnerability of students. So we had the hardened cheaters, but we still do have those vulnerable students that really get sucked in or believe the messages which are lies from the sites online. So we have a big group of those. And I guess the third thing about that is Guy's research around, you can talk to this Guy but around why students don't cheat. I think that's very helpful to understand.

**Dr Guy Curtis** [00:27:26:04]
That gives me a nice segue into this this conversation. I'll get to the why students don't cheat thing in a sec, but I want to get back to that question of are we naive to think that our students aren't cheating? I've got to say, having been involved in lots of conversations and lots of, you know, looking at what people are talking about on blogs and Twitter and various other things like that,

there actually seems to be quite a bit of Pollyanna-ish thinking in North America that everything's okay because I'm a good teacher. My students possibly would never cheat. As a consequence of the fact that I'm a good teacher. And why would they do that to me? But that is too naive if people are at that point because we know any assessment is cheatable.

It's harder to cheat on some assessments than others for sure, but any assessment is cheatable. So if students want to find a way around doing it the right way, they can. But at the same time, there are many students who will do the right thing for the right reasons. So also, when we talk about academic integrity, there's different forms of academic integrity breaches.

There's things like minor plagiarism: not putting a reference on something that's paraphrased, or not putting quotation marks on something that's been quoted. And some of that comes down to, for example, knowledge of referencing rules. And when we look at again, some of the research I've done in this, students tend to do the things that they don't understand are wrong.

So they will not put a reference on something that's paraphrased if they don't realise that they have to, or they might resubmit an assignment or part of an assignment in another unit. If they don't understand that recycling of assignments or self plagiarism are prohibited at their institution. The things they understand least they do most. The things they understand most, they do least.

And they do understand, for example, that getting someone else to write an assignment for them is wrong. So while contract cheating is a serious problem when it occurs, it occurs at a lower rate than minor plagiarism. So I think we always have to be aware of that. And then again, with that trusting of students, I have some data as yet unpublished from a survey looking at some of the kinds of assessments that were commonly implemented early on during the coronavirus pandemic, like unsupervised online tests.

Now something like this is a self-report, so some students probably not telling the truth and covering up what they do, but almost 80% were saying, yes, they do Google answers if they're in an unsupervised online test when they they know they shouldn't. And nearly three quarters were saying, yes, they collaborate with others in an unsupervised online test when they're supposed to be doing it by themselves.

So look, if you make it so easy that people can do the wrong thing and quite often they will take that opportunity. But at the same time, going on to the Why Students Don't Cheat. Strongest reasons why students don't cheat is that they believe it's immoral and unethical. And that accounted for the majority of students.

So the majority of non cheaters. For students that might have had a tendency or predisposition to cheat, they were more put off by the possibility of detection and punishment. So we have to have our enforcement mechanisms in place to catch cheating and to to provide serious consequences for cheating when we find it. But there's a lot of students around whose goal at University is to learn. And because they're there to learn that, they're there to try and do the right thing as they go.

**Prof Judyth Sachs** [00:31:19:02]
There was a question before the symposium by a colleague from Massey University, and it's about the diversity of populations within universities. And how do you - how do you actually recognise and respond to the different experiences that our international students have, and help them to understand the logic behind what we expect of them, but also incorporate that into their study habits and in terms of their writing habits.

So how do you manage diverse populations within within the university as it relates to academic integrity? Is my reframing of putting a number of these issues together.

**Prof Rowena Harper** [00:32:01:18]
If I could talk to that one for a start. It's a great question, and I think it's an area that we're really only just starting to peel back the layers of and understand. For quite a while, the data has been suggesting that students who speak a language other than English are more likely to engage in paid contract cheating. And often that gets conflated with international students, and that might be a factor: students who are who new to Australia and new to our higher education environment that we have in Australia.

But the data often points to language differences as a key factor. In the large study that I co-led with Tracey Bretag a number of years ago, we gathered qualitative data as part of that study and our analysis of that that I've done in collaboration with Felicity Prendhurst, that's currently under review with with studies in higher education. And what that data shows is that one of the reasons that international students or students who speak a language other than English may be more likely to engage in paid contract cheating is because they're very actively and systematically excluded from the learning cultures that domestic students build among themselves.

It was very troubling data that we could see in the narratives of domestic students, domestic students saying "they cheat", "those international students, they're cheaters". "But we work really hard". But yet the domestic students described themselves engaging in behaviors that are clear, systematic, organised cheating behaviors where they share work at a scale that I think we've previously not seen.

So I think we we really, really need to think carefully and work much harder, I think, in the learning and teaching environment to integrate, to work on that social and academic integration of international students into the learning cultures in Australia. I think we don't work hard enough to foster and forge relationships between domestic and international students. We leave it to chance, I think in most universities, and I think that is having a direct impact on the patterns we're seeing in contract cheating behavior.

**Prof Judyth Sachs** [00:34:17:16]

So is that about rebuilding a sense of belonging, building a sense of a community where everybody is accountable and everybody is responsible and moving away from punitive and protective. And the work you and Tracey did a number of years ago was certainly around that. Given that we've known that for a while, what's getting in the way of that, you know, being integrated more into practice?

**Prof Rowena Harper** [00:34:44:10]
I think probably all teachers, tutors and lecturers, I think need to develop a skill set in creating an inclusive curriculum and an inclusive classroom. I think a lot of teachers just don't necessarily have a skill set in forging relationships between their students, the teachers tend to have a content focus rather than a relational focus among students in their class.

And so I think we just need to give people that toolkit to build inclusive classrooms. I think that will go a long way to addressing what we've seen in our data.

**Assoc Prof Christine Slade** [00:35:17:03]
I think that's really helpful, Rowena, I've just learned something there about- I hope you get that published soon, because that was one of the recommendations in our action plan was to actually support these students at both culturally and linguistically. And I think part of the reason that that and I'm speaking generally now, not just about our institution, but when we've talked about this, I think people feel that we're stigmatising international students, pulling them out as the most cheating group or something.

So we have this social barrier to say, Oh, you shouldn't be saying that because, you know, there's others that do and we know there are others that cheat. But to be able to turn that conversation around, like you're saying there and say, we need to make the more inclusive, there is social implications that people feel about that. But I agree with you.

It's - we need to actually sort of widen it from what we've been doing around language and we are aware of the cultures, but being able to tackle that and understand what to do about it, I think again is another collaborative conversation that would be very useful based on that research you're doing to find out just ways that we can actually do that, because it's hard to break down existing relationships with groups, especially when they're not on campus as much.

And we've always known about the shyness of some international students in a tutorial and things like that. So there's a lot of things to break down to create that inclusiveness.

**Prof Judyth Sachs** [00:36:55:18]
So at the end of the day, it seems to me that there are some structural things that have to happen in universities. There are some cultural elements that have to happen within the universities. There are some political elements in terms of the politics of resourcing, the politics of who's who has the loudest voice and who has responsibility. Where do you start?

I mean, we've got legislation now. We've got an improvement. But there's still the problem of academic integrity. This, you know, these these contracts, you know, they not only work with students, you know, these people are very pernicious in terms of they inveigle themselves into institutions through devious means, like access to emails, course materials and course content.

How do we it is there are there a number of interventions where we could actually have a pivotal point where we go in in the right direction rather than go into the direction of darkness? That was a bit of a good ramble, but I think, you know, it's a big question. It's a big issue. It's not being stopped.

There are commercial companies that are finding ways to to make profit out of out of students anxiety about getting their degrees. So where's the starting point from now on post-COVID and post this sort of pandemic online learning and intensification?

**Dr Guy Curtis** [00:38:26:12]

Are we post COVID? That's I mean, that is a question because some of the changes that happened to higher education as a consequence of COVID - so more things shifting online, maybe less engagement on campus - are persisting and if they're any part of a problem of contract cheating or of students engaging with unethical non-university providers of higher education information, support services assessment and so on, that is a problem.

And so we probably need to think not necessarily entirely 'post COVID' yet, or even if we are post-COVID, are we ever going to be back to how things were in the past with mostly on campus engagement of students? Sorry to go off tangentially just for a second, I recently came across an artificial intelligence writing tool that can produce pretty good content and students can pay a $40 a month subscription and they can get large amounts of text written with a few presses of a button in the space of a few seconds that could pass for work submitted as assessments.

Now, a great solution to the problem of an artificial intelligence system doing writing for you, would be to have writing in class with incremental feedback and going through drafts and things like that. But the question is, do we get students into classrooms? Can we get students into classrooms? Will they turn up when their lecture materials are online?

How if they're getting sick, how do we support them coming back and doing those assessments at another time? This is sort of so much there to potentially unpack, but just to go back to the broader point of are there a number of interventions and where do we start? I think the point is there has to be a number of interventions because we can't just do one thing to try to stop the problem of contract cheating.

We need to attack it at multiple levels: educational enforcement, things like what the law does, attacking the supply of it. There I'll throw over to my other learned panelists.

**Prof Rowena Harper** [00:40:47:18]
Yeah, I agree Guy. I think those of us who've worked in the field for a while, we often think in terms it's sort of the four prongs of the approach that prevention, education, detection and management. So I think you really have to think holistically across all those areas. I think if there was a place to start some of the discourse at the moment among people who've been working and researching in this space for a while, is that universities do need to turn their attention for some for a while to the issue of detection, because we are not detecting anywhere near at the rate we need to be, to get a full picture of what's happening inside our institutions.

I think some great work that's been happening at UNSW, for example, I think has been leading the call for this. And I agree. I think that through detection you have more conversations with students about the kinds of behaviours they're engaging in and why. And then you- because contract cheating is although it's a global problem, it's also a very contextual problem.

It manifests differently in different countries, in different contexts, in different disciplines. And so I think through more powerful detection, you learn more about how it's manifesting in your own institution and across different disciplines, and then you can really start to tackle it as you're seeing it. I think towards detection, universities need to get much more sophisticated in terms of how they're leveraging their data.

We tend to leave it up to individual investigators to dig through things like LMS login data and those kinds of things. Whereas I think really we need to be compiling that data at the institutional level, have dashboards available for staff to refer to when they're doing investigations to make that process of detection and management much more efficient and much more supported in terms of data.

So that's where I think we need to start.

**Prof Judyth Sachs** [00:42:54:06]

What I'm also- in terms of the work that I've read of Elaine Eaton and her colleagues, her colleagues at Calgary, she talks about modifications in assessment design. Do you think that we actually have to start with that, rethinking the role and purpose of assessment? And you've brought it up a little bit, Guy, in terms of writing in class, would that be the place to start about rethinking assessment and having really- clarity around what the purpose of assessment is, what you expect them to achieve, and what you expect students to be able to deliver?

**Dr Guy Curtis** [00:43:36:07]
Yeah, assessment. Well, when we're talking about academic integrity, we're almost always talking about academic integrity and academic misconduct in the context of assessment. We don't think that students are cheating when they're reading a book or when they're not reading a book or they're watching a documentary instead of reading a book or something like that. So, so it really is around assessment.

Assessment design is important to helping provide students opportunities to do their own work. And there's things that we can do in the assessment. Many spaces. So we've got potentially some competing issues there. One is assessment security, which is about whe- the extent to which an assignment or assessment is cheatable, and then the other is academic integrity, which is the extent to which students still want to do the right thing within the assignment.

Sarah Eaton, who you mentioned, she and I are co-editors of an upcoming book on contract cheating. And one of the chapters provided in that book by Wendy Sutherland-Smith and Phil Dawson makes the argument that we could look at a theory of motivation, self-determination theory as something that we could consider in assessment design. It says that people are more internally motivated by things over which they have some control, feelings of autonomy, feelings of mastery.

If we build those into the design of assessments by, for example, doing things like giving students the choice of what they want to study or focus an assessment on, at least to some extent, that can be motivating for students to want to do the work themselves. So there's important considerations like that, in assessment design. But I'll throw to the others who are also I'm sure will have some very good ideas.

**Assoc Prof Christine Slade** [00:45:29:15]
I've been working in this space for a long time now, actually it's nearly seven years. And I can remember when it first was the challenge which we, we actually published on that as to what were some of the initial things people were talking about that you could do to sort of strengthen, I guess, academic integrity in assessment design.

Now since then, we've come a long way with Phil Dawson's helpful division of, what you were saying, assessment security, which is very useful, I think, to use as a tool with academics and staff to help them understand. We continue to do professional development workshops regularly around assessment design because I think not only does it help academic integrity, but it helps the design anyway.

I guess what I would like to see, after this span of time, is the integration of academic integrity as a principle of assessment like in the suite. And I know we've had to concentrate on it for a long time, but it really should now become one that's just permanently there, you know, like validity, reliability, transparency, all the others, because it's something that's going to stay with us.

I think in all the questions that we've basically had- so I guess I'm the one who, you know, we have all this fantastic research, but you have to translate that into practice. And it's very difficult. And I guess the approach that I've suggested to our university, which we've been running with all this time, is eight pronged approach.

So you have to start right from policy and go right to, you know, through support systems, assessment design, technology, which, you know, is a bit slower perhaps. But if you don't have all these areas running together and the communication between all the different parts of the

university, because academic integrity goes right across everything and it's hard to know what each other is doing.

If we don't work as a unit and talk to each other and have that all flowing together, I think our chances of addressing a lot of things are quite poor. We'll address one bit here and then we'll find something else happening. And so I guess the research is so important because it helps understand what's an evidence-based way to go.

But we also had a lot of people in the sector who are trying to manage in their ve to actually deal with all of these sort of things. So it's really good to see we're marrying up the two. It's good to see in the applications that I've seen for the award that we have more team or more that is, you know, a team groups that are actually getting together and collaborating on that. So I think assessment design is one part.

**Prof Rowena Harper** [00:48:05:12]
If I can build on what the other two said. I think there's some really interesting research coming out of CRADLE at Deakin around assessment design. And one of the things that they're suggesting is that universities think more about programmatic assessment. So that is programmatic assessment involves a much, much more widespread use of formative, iterative feedback for students. And then using only some of these high stakes tasks at key points in a degree. I think that's a really interesting thing to consider.

But there are so many pragmatic barriers inside universities that stop that from happening. So, you know, the argument is that we authenticate learning at the degree level. We give out degrees, we don't give out units. However, you know, if a student has been cheating all the way through a course and we only pick them up once a year, then that forces the student to go back and redo an entire year rather than a single unit.

Students also expect to get credit for units if they want to move to other universities or move to other courses. So there's a lot of these very practical kind of barriers around that that we'd need to unpick if we were going to think about moving to more authentic, to more to more programmatic assessment.

**Prof Judyth Sachs** [00:49:25:03]
Look, and this is the final question before I invite Jack to talk to us about the award. So Felicity Prentice asked, if there are suspicions of misconduct, what factors influence staff members' decisions to follow through with formal reporting?

**Prof Rowena Harper** [00:49:44:21]
Well, that's something that Tracey Bretag looked at in our study when we surveyed staff at eight Australian universities, there are a few. The key one that staff said a few years ago when we conducted the survey in 2016, the staff said one of the reasons they tend not to report suspected contract cheating is they think it's impossible to prove.

So they think there's no point reporting because the case won't stand up anyway. And another reason staff said they won't tend to report is that they felt like they upline manager just wouldn't support them in doing so, so that it would get knocked back by somebody saying 'We don't have enough time, we don't have enough resources' or 'we need to retain these students, so let's just turn a blind eye', those sorts of things.

So yeah those were really two key reasons why staff said they tend not to and it was a quite a significant proportion of staff who said that they had suspected contract cheating at least once in their time assessing but didn't end up reporting it. So that is another area that universities need to work on.

We certainly need to strengthen detection, but once those staff at the chalk face are detecting, we need to make sure they feel supported with really efficient and robust processes for managing breaches so that they will actually go on and report everything that they're detecting.

**Assoc Prof Christine Slade** [00:51:11:04]
So we've actually developed a strategy to try and alleviate some of that concern with a contract cheating marker's guide. So it's the tutor, it's a very short guide, but it's got a lot in it. But we don't want the tutors to spend a lot of time having PD if they're not going to get paid for it, that sort of problem.

And then the course coordinator or unit coordinator then verifies if they think there is a problem and then it shifts up to a service role for academic integrity officers. And then on because we're trying to share the responsibility to avoid that type of problem that you're saying. And it does take a lot of time to to, you know, to investigate.

So I think we have to have these systematic structures and processes and things to also help what you're saying there, to change the tide of wanting to investigate.

**Prof Judyth Sachs** [00:52:05:00]
And I'm going to just just very briefly -

**Dr Guy Curtis** [00:52:07:13]
Sorry, really quickly jump in and say the work that Carmela De Maio did on her PhD at Curtin, which was on staff perceived barriers to reporting academic integrity breaches, is really worth a look for people who've got the time to look at it. And among the things that was mentioned, workload: that staff believe it'd take them so much time to go forward with any academic misconduct cases.

**Prof Judyth Sachs** [00:52:31:24]
And Carmela's even here. So she thanked you personally. So, Jack, can I invite you to take us to the probably the most pleasurable part of my work as the Chief Academic Officer at Studiosity? And can you just talk to us about the Tracy Bretag Award and finally announce who the winner of the award is?

**Jack Goodman**[00:52:57:11]
Very happily Judyth, and thank you to the panel. This is obviously a topic of enormous importance as witnessed by the fact that we can we could probably continue for another 30 or 40 minutes or longer and the hundreds and hundreds of people that are viewing this right now. So thank you, everyone. We come to the point where it is my honor to announce this year's winner of the Tracy Bretag Prize for Academic Integrity.

And I'll just say a few words about Tracey. Most of the people participating in this webinar know Tracey, for those who don't, she was a professor at UniSA and a leading investigator in the field of academic integrity, and she led a major Australian study entitled Contract Cheating and Assessment Design. In fact, with Professor Harper here today. And Tracey traveled nationally and globally to speak on the importance of universities taking a really strong stand regarding educating their students about academic integrity and enforcing the rules with vigor and strong sanctions.

Without Tracey's important contribution, it's unlikely we would be here today exploring the implications of Australia's aggressive new academic integrity legislation. In early September 2020, not long after the Australian Parliament passed its landmark legislation, it occurred to us that Tracey deserved to be remembered for her essential work in this field. So I wrote to her asking for permission to create an annual Academic Integrity Award named in her honour.

And on the 13th of September of that year, she wrote back with typical humility, expressing her deep gratitude and full support for the idea. With her blessing, we announced the Tracy Bretag Academic Integrity Prize, and this is the second year we've awarded it. And this year we had a

record number of applications for the prize, 39 applications, in fact, from 20 universities. They were incredibly high quality and it was a very difficult process that the panel went through, reviewing them, special mentions to the projects by teams from the University of Waikato, New Zealand, the University of New South Wales and Flinders University.

Now to the top three finalists who you may be aware of as we have announced this. The finalists: the first finalist was from the University of Southern Queensland, Dr. Jasmine Thomas with Rian Roux, Renee Desmarchelier, Luke Drury and Daniel Chalker, for a project related to the establishment of the Academic Integrity Unit to manage three central pillars of education, prevention and detection.

Second finalist is from Griffith University: Danielle Logan-Fleming, Popi Sotiriadou for Interactive Orals, an authentic, scalable type of assessment designed to promote academic integrity. Interactive orals offers opportunities for genuine, unscripted interaction between a student and an assessor and allows students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills verbally in a setting that's authentic to a workplace or industry scenario.

And finally, from Queensland University Technology and Swinburne University, the UPASS team of Rick Somers, Sam Cunningham, Sarah Dart, Sheona Thomson, Caslon Chua and Edmund Pickering. Their submission involved the development of an innovative tool called UPASS to detect potential misconduct by preventing students from sharing mathematical and programming-based assessments. UPASS is open source, it's available for free and has been trialed at five Australian universities.

So well done and congratulations to all three finalists. And I know everyone's waiting for this moment. The winner is the UPASS team from QUT so congratulations to UPASS, and QUT it's a wonderful result. So as project lead, I'd like to invite Sheona Thomson to say a few words about about your project or any predictions you might have for academic integrity going forward.

**Sheona Thomson** [00:56:47:06]
Oh my goodness. I was sitting here so nervous, Edmund is also in the room. Ted Pickering, if you want to bring him on as well but no, it's an extreme honour to receive this award. We got a second tranche of money from Act It this year. So we've created a website to be able to share the tool access to the tool more widely so keep an eye out for that.

It's, we've changed the name from UPASS, because that was a kind of confusing acronym I think for the for a general audience. And yeah Assignment Watch is what we're called now. And hey, there's Ted. Hi, Ted.

**Edmund Pickering** [00:57:32:18]
Hey Sheona. This is fantastic news.

**Sheona Thomson** [00:57:35:21]
Yeah. So acknowledgments to the team. Caslon at Swinburne and Rick and Sam and Sarah. It's a great experience to work together. I'm very non-technical. My background is architecture, so it's been great to work with this, with my colleagues in a very different field. Yeah. And we're really, really thank you so much. Very honoured to receive this.

**Jack Goodman** [00:58:02:15]
Well, congratulations, Sheona and Ted and the rest of your team. It's wonderful project that you've done and you more than deserve the prize. So well done.

**Edmund Pickering** [00:58:13:05]
Cheers Jack. Do you mind if I give a quick couple of comments as well?

**Jack Goodman** [00:58:18:10]
Yes, sure. Please go ahead.

**Edmund Pickering** [00:58:20:04]
So I just wanted to say with that, while I've got the opportunity and it's a bit of an audience in this project, we did develop a tool that we can use to monitor for assignment content that gets uploaded to Chegg and other academic misconduct sites.

And I think there's been a lot of really good discussion about these sorts of websites today and the importance of detection, which to me is really important because detection for me is about awareness, it's awareness for us to understand the state of the problem and to be nimble. But also it gives a mechanism to take educative responses to students.

And what I wanted to say with that, and probably the most important and exciting thing is that not only is our tool freely available, the source code freely available, but we've actually just in the process of releasing it through a fully supported website available to Australian academics. It's the name of the tool we've changed to Assignment Watch and the website's gonna very soon be released and it's going to be free to Australian universities for one year while we've got some funding money.

So watch this space and I will in the coming month or two send out an email to the Australian Academic Integrity Network notifying them of that.

**Jack Goodman** [00:59:33:06]
So that is that's fantastic news, Ted, and thank you for that update. And we will also circulate some information about that. If you provide that to us after the webinar to all the attendees, I'm sure they're going to want to follow up with that as well.

I might now, just now that we're just at the end of time, just pass this back to Judyth to see if she can wrap this up in a bow in 30 seconds or a minute. Thank you, Judyth.

**Prof Judyth Sachs** [00:59:55:23]
And look, I'd just like to make a couple of observations is I think we have made some movement in the area of academic integrity. There's still a lot of work to do. But the practice and the conversations and the networks that I've been watching develop through the chat site, I hope that they are sustained and maintained because in fact that's exchange of ideas and that the creation of and expanding the network through these conversations I think is really important.

And the final thing is, I'd like to say is that last year when we presented the award at the Universities Australia Conference, we didn't have anybody in the audience to to celebrate the winners. How fantastic that this year we have over 240 people who are celebrating the success of QUT. So QUT, congratulations on your award and thank you for acknowledging that a tool will be available for free for 12 months and hopefully government or your university might pick it up to keep it going.

So keep an eye on this site and. Later in the year, we'll be having a couple of other symposia. So thank you for your time today and go well and don't be naive about academic integrity. It is the foundation of the quality of what we do in universities and it refers both to us as individuals, but also the society in which we live.

So enjoy your day. And if you haven't had COVID yet, look forward to having it. Not. Thanks very much, everyone.

**Jack Goodman** [01:01:36:05]
Thank you, everyone.