

Disciplinary Approaches to Academic Integrity

Dr. Anita Chaudhuri

Background

As post-secondary institutions in Canada continue to address the need for equity and inclusive policies for learning, the context of academic integrity (AI) has emerged as an area of interest.

Defined as “the cornerstone of ethical academic practice” (Bretag, 2020), AI informs “the values, behaviour and conduct of academics in all aspects of their practice” (Macfarlane et al., 2014).

Institutions such as, UBC recognize that an understanding and application of AI is critical for “collaborative and inclusive research culture... mentorship, scholarship, discovery and creativity” (UBC Strategic Plan, Strategy 10: Research Culture).

Why Academic Integrity Matters

Example 1: “...universities are reporting increases of up to 38 per cent in academic misconduct cases.” (Eaton, UCalgary News, October 2020; data references MacEwan University)

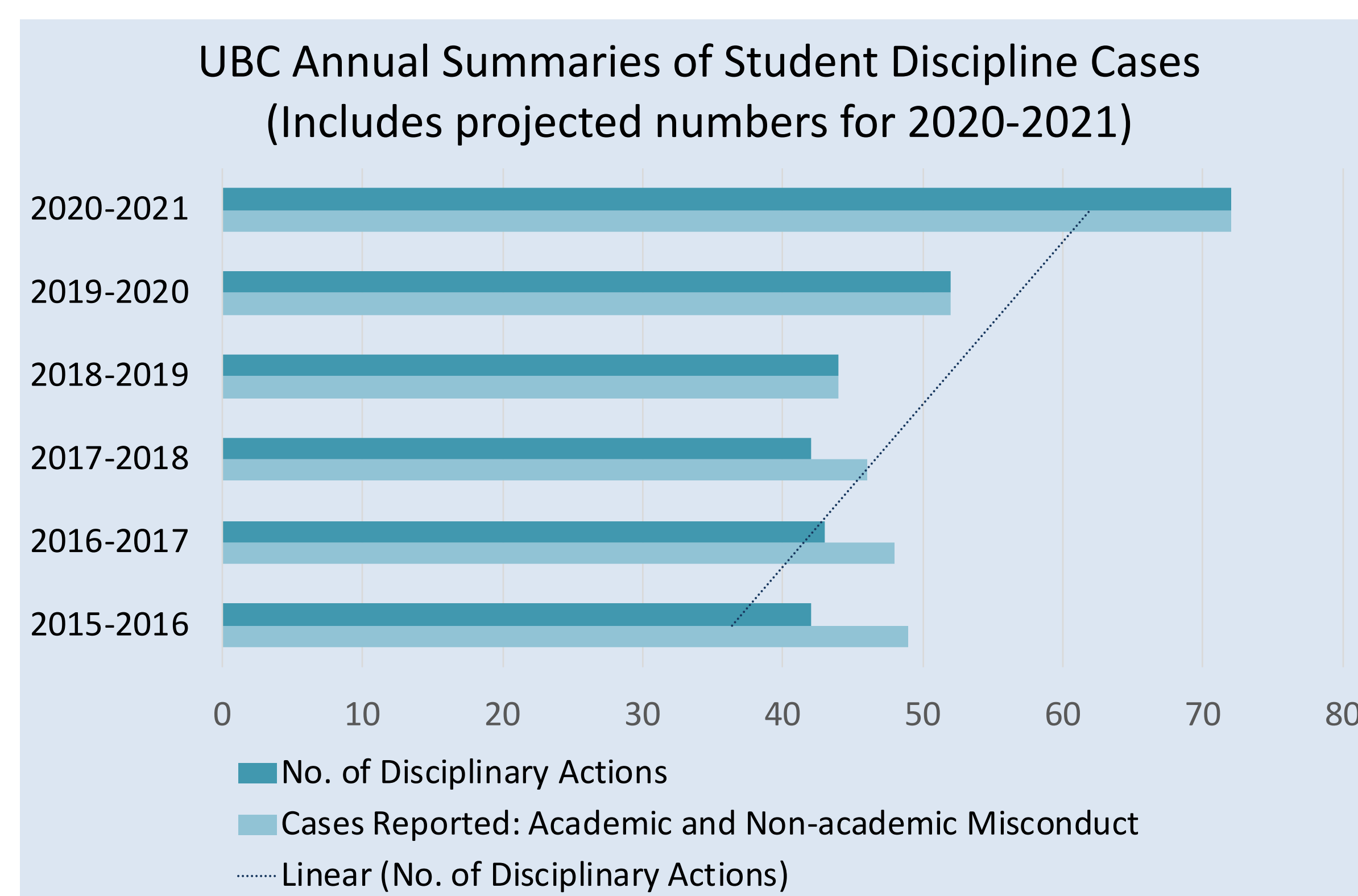
Example 2: “The academic incidents more than doubled compared to the same time period last year.” (CBC News, October 2020; data references Mount Royal University)

Example 3: “...during the Winter 2020 semester the school saw the amount of cases almost double.” (CTV News Regina, March 2021; data references University of Saskatchewan)

These three instances of recent data on academic integrity (AI) establishes the topic as current and critically important for post-secondary institutions situated not only in Canada but also globally.

The graph on UBC annual summaries of student discipline cases

- presents a five-year perspective on the number of academic and non-academic misconduct cases that were reported versus those that faced disciplinary actions at UBC.
- uses Eaton’s estimate from Example 1 above. The graph below approximated a 38 per cent increase from 2019-2020 to derive a projected number of cases.



Challenges

- How can we ensure that students understand institutional policies on AI and use them in their disciplines?
- What are some ways to implement AI policies so they are useful for diverse learning contexts?

Project Overview

This project is grounded in conversations on institutional-level academic misconduct related policies and procedures that are viewed as punitive measures. There is much discussion about how students need to be introduced to a learning culture that engages and expects them to apply “honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility” (ICAI), the six core values of AI, with “courage.”

This work in student engagement and learning contributes to discussion on how AI needs to be unpacked and made relevant to the student body before they are penalised for academic misconduct, plagiarism, contract cheating, to name a few.

Therefore, the objectives of the proposed OER are to:

- offer student-facing, discipline-specific content for undergraduates to become informed decision makers vis-à-vis their own learning practice and
- support classroom discussion and activities on AI.

The OER will address an undergraduate readership to develop understanding of critical concepts around AI.

The contributors will share their viewpoint on how to become engaging scholars and/ or professionals who are cognizant of AI. Instead of offering a rulebook full of AI policies in fine print, the chapters will reason why some of these rules are purposeful and help develop a scholarly disposition.

Expected Project Outcomes and Deliverables

Some of the chapters planned for the proposed edited collection will address the following:

- Citation in critical writing, acknowledging a lineage of ideas in Art
- Cultural understanding of ownership in written texts and the principles of academic integrity
- Collective responsibility of the group and of individuals in collaborative projects with regard to academic integrity
- Social media as an extension of the academic space, thinking about how student-scholars and professionals participate in argumentation and knowledge-making on online platforms
- Practical solutions to help students distinguish acceptable collaboration, tutoring, and “writing help” from practices that are more likely to be illicit and counterproductive to both academic integrity and learning in general
- Connection between academic integrity and professional identity
- Discussion around boundaries in terms of use and reuse of code, using pre-written code, standard libraries, etc.

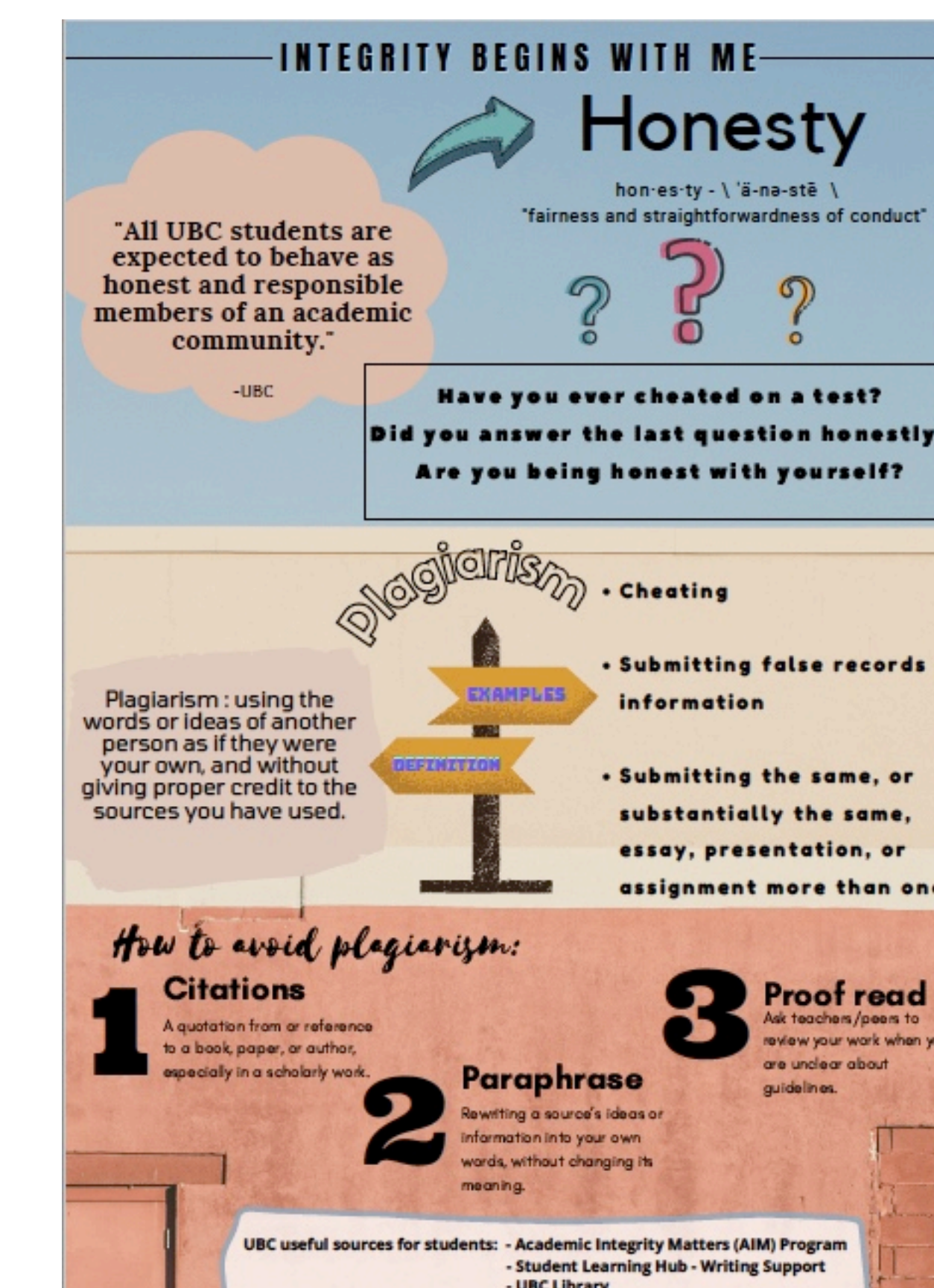


Figure 1

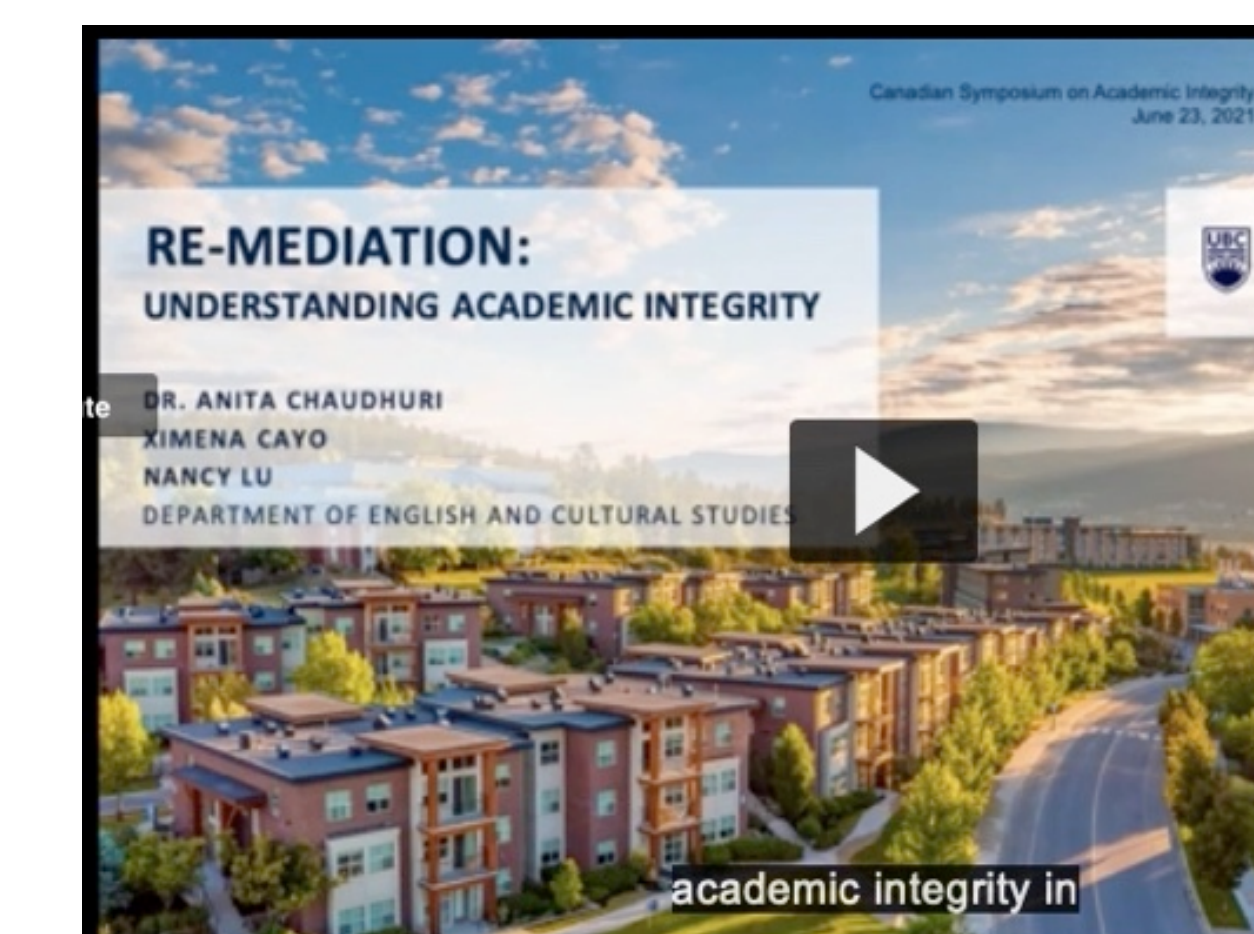


Figure 2