Academic Integrity Among Graduate Healthcare Students

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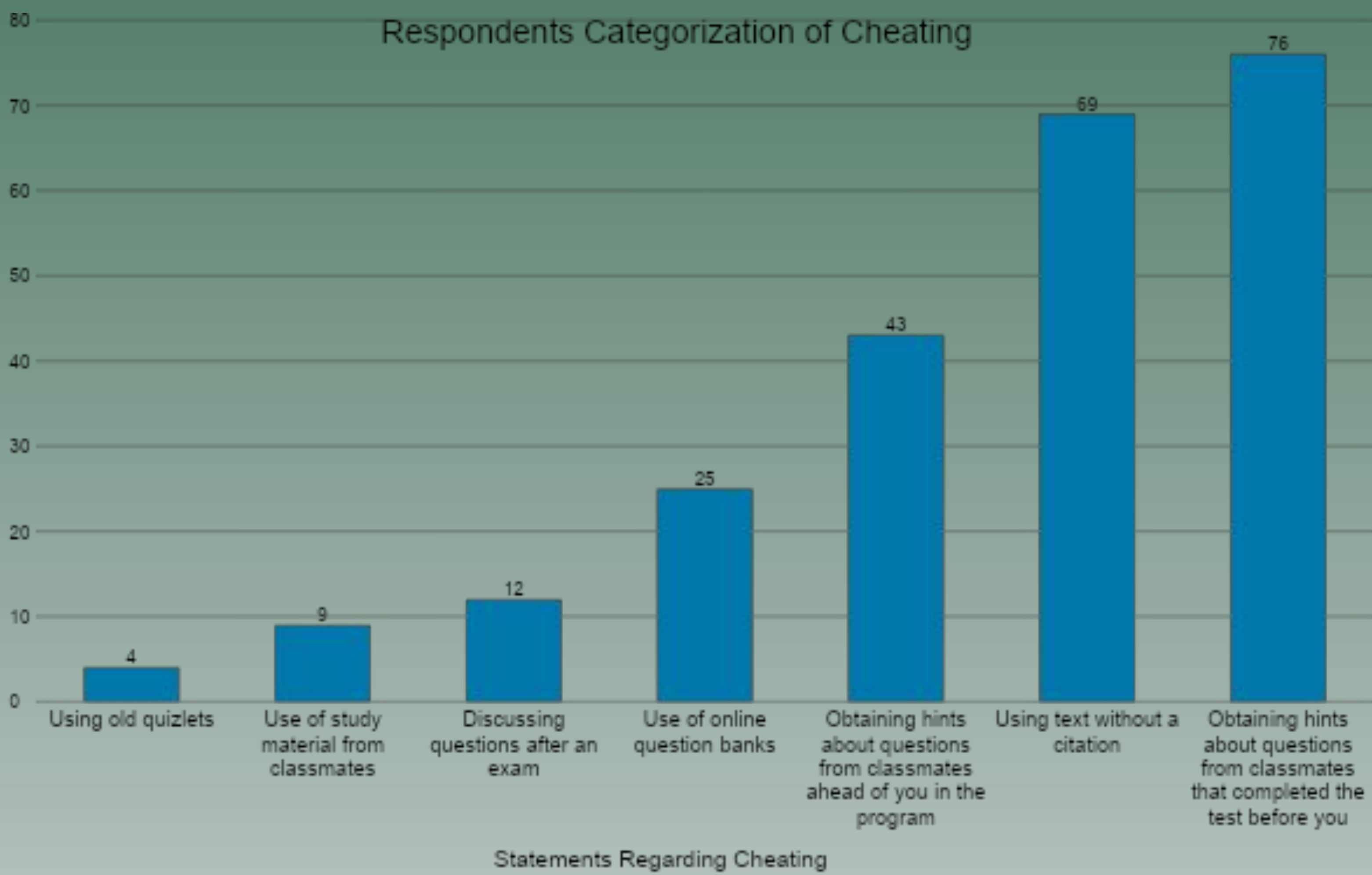
Background

Violations of academic integrity occur at all levels of academia. However, dishonest behavior in healthcare education threatens healthcare providers abilities to provide care in clinical practice and ethical standards. Existing literature on academic integrity has focused on the in person setting but there has been a shift to online learning since the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, advances in artificial intelligence (AI) has opened a space in academics for dishonest behavior among students. This new landscape introduces new challenges that must be addressed to preserve academic integrity.
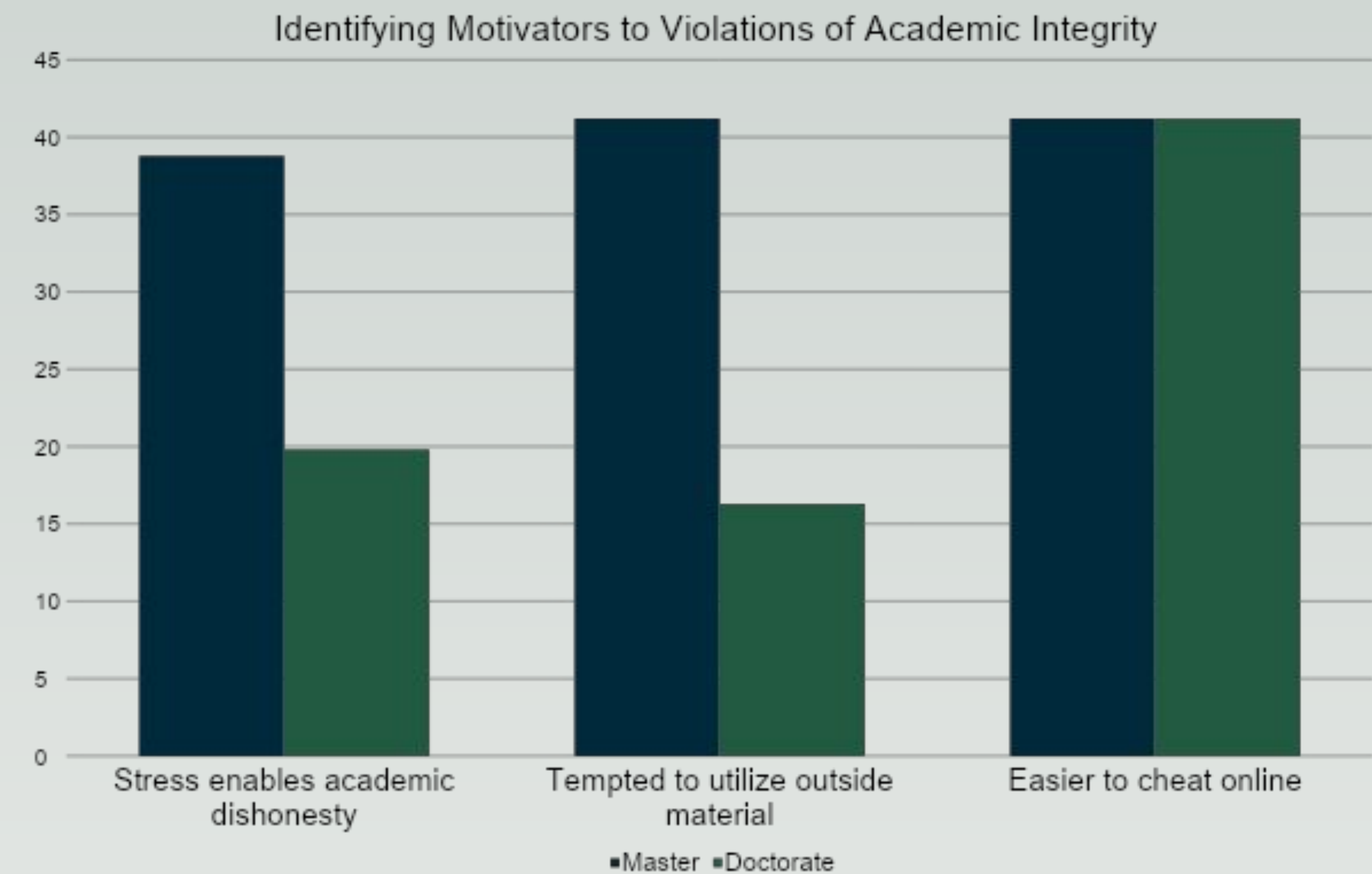
Research Questions

- How is academic integrity defined by graduate students in the medical profession?
- What are potential motivators for violating academic integrity?
- How prevalent are violations of academic integrity?
- How have remote learning and AI affected academic integrity?

Methods

- IRB Exempt status obtained
- Sampling Frame
  - Currently enrolled Rosalind Franklin University students, all colleges
- Data collected via Qualtrics survey
  - March 25, 2024 – April 22, 2024
  - All responses were anonymous
- A total of 175 responses were collected out of a total number of 1,940 students that were invited (9.02% response rate)
- A total of 113 competed surveys out of 175 responses were collected (64.5% completion rate)
- Responses consisted of quantitative and qualitative data
  - Quantitative data: analyzed through descriptive statistics
  - Qualitative data: analyzed through grounded theory method

Respondents Categorization of Cheating

Reports of Personal and Known Academic Integrity Violations

Response to Violations	Yes (%)	No (%)
Since the COVID-19 pandemic, I have violated academic integrity when I otherwise would not have.	9.7	90.3
In the past, I have taken and used information from another student when I otherwise would not have	15.9	84.1
In the past, I have taken exam notes with to pass on to other students	2.7	97.3
I personally know someone who has cheated on an exam in my program	35.4	64.6
I personally know someone who has copied or plagiarized a paper in my program	15	85
In the past, I have committed acts of academic dishonesty even if I have not been caught or disciplined	21.2	78.8

Identifying Motivators to Violations of Academic Integrity

Results

- Demographic data was collected
  - 38% Chicago Medical School, 19% College of Health Professions
- 30% of participants responded they would be over $250,000 in debt by the time they graduate
- The majority of respondents (46%) included the utilization of unauthorized testing material such as notes, books, or internet resources as cheating
- 71% of participants responded "yes" to using remote proctoring for testing
- 21.2% of participants responded "yes" to committing acts of academic dishonesty
- Students generally value "doing your own work" (40.7%) and "being honest" (28.3%). However, discrepancies exist, such as 60% not viewing sharing answers as cheating.

Discussion

- The survey sample closely reflects RFU's student demographics, with a slight overrepresentation of nursing students likely due to survey distribution by a faculty member from the College of Nursing.
- Students agreed that their program takes violations against academic integrity seriously. However, students indicated that they are still able to cheat with remote proctoring.
- It appears that when students are faced with obvious cheating, academic integrity is upheld. When there are gray areas, the lines become blurred.
- Programs and the university as a whole should educate students about what constitutes cheating and consequences.

References