

# *The Ethical Professor*

Volume 9

## **Tools for Combating Plagiarism/Cheating**

In our last Ethical Professor, we discussed ways of helping students to act in accordance with the Honor Code they are now required to sign:

*In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Santa Monica College Honor Code, Code of Academic Conduct, and Student Conduct Code. I will conduct myself honorably as a responsible member of the SMC community in all endeavors I pursue.*

There are times when a student plagiarizes not out of dishonesty, but from a lack of understanding about what plagiarism actually is. It may be useful to take a bit of class time to explain what plagiarism is and to emphasize that there will be consequences for academic dishonesty. Mona Martin, SMC Librarian, provided us with these links that teach this information.

1. <http://www.smc.edu/apps/pub.asp?Q=704&B=3> (SMC's own library website)
2. [http://www.plagiarism.org/learning\\_center/what\\_is\\_plagiarism.html](http://www.plagiarism.org/learning_center/what_is_plagiarism.html) (from The Learning Center, which helps teachers and students learn more about what plagiarism means in the information age.)
3. <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resources/589/01/> (from The OWL at Purdue)
4. <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/05> (This one is a good resource for teachers.)
5. <http://webster.commnet.edu/mla/plagiarism.shtml> (from Capital Community College)

Another helpful approach to the problem of cheating comes from Eric Oifer, who gives credit for this idea to a professor he studied with many years ago: "In addition to telling my students that sources need to be cited so I know they are doing their own work, the primary purpose for citing sources is to inform the reader where to go to if she is interested in doing further reading on a topic raised in your paper. I tell them that academic papers are part of a continuing conversation. Providing the sources for the ideas and information contained in a paper is a way to enhance and participate in that conversation."

One more source of help as we work to guide our students in their development as ethical human beings is the new SMC Honor Council website [[http://www.smc.edu/apps/comm.asp?\\$1=156](http://www.smc.edu/apps/comm.asp?$1=156)]. The committee that created this website has done some careful thinking about what constitutes honorable behavior on the part of our students. Included is a guide for how to make our syllabi support students in following the Code of Conduct they agree to when they join our community.