

Cheating Years Ago

I graduated from the University of Windsor in 2001. Prior to the event I describe below, I had always conducted myself with integrity in school matters, never cheating in any way, and trying the best I could. However, I overloaded myself on several occasions, trying to make up for wasting my life for two years before going to University, and **I cut corners by cheating**. Recently I have been trying to clear my life of things that weigh on my conscience. I wrote this account of what happened entirely unsolicited, **nine years** after I cheated, because I felt like nothing that came from this degree would give me any happiness until I confessed and received a pardon. I hope students consider what I say carefully and **decide not to do anything dishonest** in their efforts to obtain a degree.

I took two courses in the Summer of 2000. **I was in a bind** to finish some essays and study for some exams and everything seemed to be due all at once. I had haphazardly written an essay for the first course, which was a correspondence course, and **wanted more time**. My brother who was visiting during that week took the envelope with the essay in it and somehow got it stamped at the post office with the current date even though it was unsealed and unaddressed. He did this to give me more time to write a better essay. I don't remember if the first part was planned, but later I took my essay (which I had taken extra time to write) and placed it in the officially stamped "mail," which I then gave to the front office. I told them I found it – like as if the mail carrier had dropped it – and was handing it in. They trusted me and accepted it with no problem. At the time I thought I was just using ingenuity to get things done and be successful. Also, while I was working on the updated essay, I believe my brother wrote an essay for me for my second course, which I voluntarily withdrew from shortly after. (He got me a well deserved D on that essay!)

This **confession** is my best recollection of the events. **I have learned from this situation** and have made an effort not to overload my life ever again so as to place myself in situations where I am tempted to **sacrifice my integrity**. I apologize for having done this and placing a mark on the integrity of getting a degree at the University of Windsor. I counted the cost of this before writing and was **willing to pay the full consequences** even if they were devastating. For me, this particular situation was an issue of mental consequences that come from guilt. Now that I have "come clean" about this, I feel free to go on with anything I choose career-wise without feeling unworthy to succeed and without sabotaging myself.

I really want students to **learn from the perspective of someone who is ten years down the road** from where they are, especially the students who are contemplating any type of dishonesty that will **shipwreck their consciences or their academic careers**. I thought I was being "resourceful" and doing what was necessary to succeed, not realizing that my conscience would keep record of my wrongs and cause me to self sabotage my successes that were tied to this degree.

What then is a degree worth in relation to success? Students might consider that the whole concept of University in this country was founded by people of faith with ideals of integrity and excellence. The system is ultimately designed to succeed by powers seen and unseen within a **structure of integrity**, with hope and faith for a bright future as its centerpiece. You cannot have hope and faith for anything good when your conscience tells you don't deserve it.

- 2001 University of Windsor graduate