Promising practices: how faculty members can encourage academic integrity in tests/exams and deter against cheating and/or plagiarism

This is intended to assist instructors, but does not substitute for knowing and following the senate policy found at http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/document.php?document=69

To deter cheating on tests/exams:

- CDs and TAs/invigilators should read over the Invigilator manual as page 10 describes the steps an invigilator should take if he/she suspects someone of cheating, page 11 provides an example of an incident report form. The manual and other supporting documents can be found online on the Faculty of Health governance website (link provided in the last bullet point of this document), or obtained from your program administrator, or undergraduate program director.

- Make sure to reinforce that invigilators circulate and actively invigilate.

- All electronics must be put away. You could go one step further and ask students to bring in a large zip lock bag for students to put all of their electronics in and then they can place the bag under their seat. This way you do not have to worry about a students' bag being taken from the front or side of the classroom. If to manage their time writing they need a clock on the wall, use the universal clock from the internet and broadcast it using the lcd projector (http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/canada/toronto).

- If you use multiple choice/true-false test questions and/or have students writing in lecture halls where they are tightly packed together, it is just good practice to develop multiple versions of tests by randomizing the test questions and creating the appropriate Scantron to go with it. You will need to instruct students to put their version of the test on the front of their Scantron to make sure there is no mix up between versions and your answer keys. You can even use different colors for the front page to ensure students are not sitting next to each other with the exact same version of the test.

- If you have a large class, you might want to check with your undergraduate program office and see if you can book an extra room so that your students are divided between two rooms. If you are going to do this makes sure you have enough invigilators for both rooms, and you have booked the extra room at the beginning of the term.

- Have your students engage in 'defensive test taking' (i.e., covering the Scantron form and/or their answer booklet while filling it in).

- There has been an increase in recent years of students being able to purchase copies of test bank questions, prior exams or assignments from online forums (e.g., OneClass, CourseHero). Selling of such items is considered as "encouraging or enabling another student to cheat" and as a result breaches the academic integrity senate policy (see Senate policy 2.10). It is possible students purchase these test banks because they are trying to gain an advantage over their classmates, or perhaps they are anxious about what types and style of questions they will need to answer on their tests. Either way here are some steps that could or should be taken to discourage this practice:

  o Publishers of test banks can request to have them taken down.
  o Course instructors can typically ask to have their own exams, assignments (their intellectual property) taken down.
  o The university can prevent these organizations from advertising on campus and in classes.
  o Some instructors don't use the test bank questions exactly as they are formulated.

- To make access to test questions to all students, some incorporate into their teaching periodically showing some similarly styled multiple-choice questions for core key concepts either in class or online in order to give all students exposure to the types of questions posed. Online in the Moodle course, instructors could give students the opportunity to complete mini-quizzes, poll the students' knowledge, and the student can take a 'pulse' on their own learning, and become familiar with multiple-choice questions. This will eliminate the need to purchase test bank questions. Instructions on how to create quizzes in Moodle can be found at https://moodle.yorku.ca/instructors/training/quizzes_creating_a_quiz_shell.html
  - Copyright protect your intellectual property (see http://copyright.info.yorku.ca/students-reuse-of-teaching-materials-from-york-courses/ for a statement to add to your course outline).
  - These aforementioned steps alone do not stop the flow of information into the online forums. This generation of students are used to sharing everything and often do not understand why sharing of prior tests, assignments, etc., is wrong. Therefore, there has to be an educational component with the instructor talking openly with the students about what academic integrity means for them. There are resources available to you and your students that may be suitable for helping you to have this dialogue with your students (a tutorial, quiz, prezi presentation) found at http://health.info.yorku.ca/current-student-information/academic-honesty/

- Use an Academic Integrity statement on the front of the exam to discourage cheating. For example:
  Name_____Course code _____
  Please sign below to agree to the following:
  All items that I wish to use during my exam are now on my desk in front of me, this includes writing utensils, drink/snack, sweater, and tissues.
  All plastic bottles (e.g. water/juice) have their labels removed, and any other containers that I would like to use have been pre-screened by an invigilator, including eye glass cases.
  Unless agreed to by my course instructor, I do not have a cell phone or any other electronic device on my desk.
  I will not seek/receive any additional help from another student on the exam, and will not give another student additional help on the exam*. I will keep my responses out of sight of other students. Any potential violation will result in a charge of breaching academic honesty, and could result in a '0' on the exam.*
  Signature _____

To discourage plagiarism:
- Double check the URL link on your course outline to the senate guidelines as many folks are using an older link.
- For written assignments you could use Turnitin, a text matching software, as an educational tool for students see how much of their writing overlaps with other published content (for details about Turnitin see http://computing.yorku.ca/students/technology-used-in-courses/assignment-submission-turn-it-in/turnitin-plagiarism-prevention/). The teaching commons has two webinars about using Turnitin as a teaching tool and they can be found at http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/2015-2016-webinar/

- Educate your students about good practices in writing for avoiding plagiarism and provide examples of what is acceptable or unacceptable.

- Show students SPARK (online Student Paper and Academic Research Kit), link it to your Moodle course site if it has not already been done, as it has learning modules for students on Academic integrity (http://www.yorku.ca/spark/index.html)

- Have students complete the online YorkU academic integrity quiz found at http://www.yorku.ca/tutorial/yquiz/acad09_nologin/quiz/acad09_nologin.quiz

- Use an academic integrity declaration statement on the front of the paper that students include when they submit their paper. For example,
  I _____ (name) in _____ (course code) certify that,
  - *I have read and understand the senate policy on academic honesty ((http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/document.php?document=69),*
  - *I have read and understand the referencing and citation guidelines required to be used when writing this assignment,*
  - *Other than the citations, this assignment is entirely my own work,*
  - *This assignment and/or substantial parts of it have not been submitted for assessment in any of my courses, unless acknowledged in the assignment and with permission of my course instructor and/or tutorial leader.*
  - *I understand that this assignment may undergo electronic detection for plagiarism and a copy of the assignment may be retained in the database and used to make comparisons with other assignments in the database in the future.*

To discourage purchasing essays through a third-party:
- Use a multi-pronged approach in order to design-out the opportunity to cheat by
  -avoiding re-using the same assignment each year
  -avoiding using standard assignments from textbooks
  -including an individualized element (e.g., different data sets).
  -assessing process as well as product (e.g., have the students hand in drafts, hand in an annotated bibliography, hand in the articles they used, etc.)
  - making assignments visible to "spider/web crawler software" and search engines. If your assignment has been posted on one of the known websites (e.g., Lashzone, Essayexperts), that assignment can be traced back to your course if you have used identifying details in the title and the body of the assignment (course code, CD name, watermarks, email address, etc)

In summary,
- Take a moment in your class to discuss the culture of academic integrity (AI) in higher education. Update your course outline with recent URL to SPARK modules on AI. Talk about what is and is not acceptable, and how to prevent against breaching academic integrity. Reinforce with your students that cheating is not a "victimless crime" (e.g., ends up reducing the value of the degree). There are resources available to you and your students that may be suitable for helping you to have this dialogue with your students (a tutorial, quiz, prezi presentation) found at http://health.info.yorku.ca/current-student-information/academic-honesty/
- Copyright protect your intellectual property (see http://copyright.info.yorku.ca/students-reuse-of-teaching-materials-from-york-courses/ for a statement to add to your course outline).
- There is an academic integrity resource website provided through the Teaching Commons looking at a number of different topics that includes designing assignments/courses that foster academic integrity etc., see http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/resources-2/teaching-strategies/academic-integrity/
- There are additional resources provided by the Faculty of Health where you will need to log in with your passport york account and found at https://osas.health.yorku.ca/course/view.php?id=33 or go to the Faculty of Health homepage, scroll down and click on 'Governance', enter your passport york information, then you should be able to click on 'Academic Integrity'. On this site you will find copies of this document, as well as other resources mentioned above. You will also find the invigilator manual, as well as protocols/procedures if you detect a breach. This latter information is not information to be released into the public domain to students.