Last summer, the Academic Integrity Office (AIO) revamped its fall orientation programming with the goal of reaching more students more effectively. Rather than making individual presentations to the relatively small number of classes we could attend, we began focusing on developing and distributing tools to help faculty and instructors promote academic integrity in their own classrooms.

We will continue these efforts during the 2015-16 academic year. The reason for this approach is twofold: First, my experience at AIO and research on effective teaching underscore the need for students to hear directly from faculty and instructors on this topic. Students are most likely to hear and absorb messages about academic integrity when those messages come from the instructors who design, teach and grade their courses. Second, we are a staff of two. We can reach many more students by providing instructors with tools and information than by leading classroom discussions ourselves.

To this end, we are providing faculty and instructors with an updated set of materials aimed at engaging students in discussion of academic integrity. Some materials will be familiar from last year. Others are new. As was the case last year, we provide a list of recommended topics for discussion and related information and/or material to assist you in addressing each topic. The goal is to provide a menu of topics and material from which you may choose what you find most interesting and most relevant to the courses you teach.

I invite you to modify these topics and materials to make them as relevant as possible to your courses – and to credit AIO and include citations we’ve provided when presenting enclosed material to students, whether in written or oral form. Many students note and puzzle over instructors who emphasize the importance of citation in written assignments but do not consistently include citations in their own class presentations.

Finally, I encourage you to raise academic integrity in small “doses” over the course of the semester rather than designating one class session for discussion of this topic. Doing so will better convey to students the importance you place on academic integrity and will increase the odds that short classroom discussions and occasional reminders will catch students when they are most likely to listen attentively, that is, shortly before an assignment is due or an exam is scheduled.

Please do not hesitate to contact AIO with comments, questions or requests for additional information by emailing or calling us at aio@syr.edu or 443-5412.