To: UBC Computer Science (CPSC) 110 Teaching Team

From: Terry Chou, CPSC 110 Teaching Assistant (TA)

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Subject: Proposal for Addressing the Issue of Academic Misconduct in CPSC 110

Introduction

Academic misconduct is a serious issue that affects the integrity of the academic community and can have negative consequences for individual students and the reputation of the institution. CPSC 110 is an introductory computer science course offered at UBC, it is designed to provide students with a foundational understanding of computer programming and problem-solving. The course covers fundamental concepts such as trees, graphs, search, abstraction, and recursion, and uses Racket as the programming language for learning these concepts. CPSC 110 is a prerequisite for many upper-level computer science courses at UBC and is a core course for students pursuing a major in computer science. The course is taught through a combination of lectures and labs and is typically offered in both the fall and winter terms. The CPSC 110 course is an important foundational course in computer science at UBC, and it is essential that academic misconduct is addressed in a fair and consistent manner.

Statement of Problem

The problem of academic misconduct in CPSC 110 has been raised by instructors, teaching assistants, and students, and it has worsened in recent terms. It has been reported that a significant number of students, close to 40%, have been involved in academic misconduct during lectures. The most common forms of academic misconduct include plagiarism, cheating on exams, and collaboration on assignments beyond what is allowed. These behaviors undermine the learning process and the integrity of the academic community. However, there is a lack of clarity and consistency in how academic misconduct is identified, reported, and addressed.

Proposed Solution

One possible solution is to establish clear guidelines and expectations for academic integrity in CPSC 110. This can include a code of conduct that outlines the consequences of academic misconduct, as well as guidelines for what constitutes acceptable collaboration and citation practices. Another solution could be to ensure that reports of academic misconduct are handled consistently and investigated thoroughly. This can be achieved by establishing a clear reporting process, training the TAs on how to identify and report academic misconduct, and ensuring that investigations are conducted in a fair and consistent manner.

Scope

To determine the feasibility of the proposed solution, I plan to investigate four areas of inquiry:

1. What specific guidelines and expectations should be established to promote academic integrity in CPSC 110, and how can they be effectively communicated to students?
2. What measures can be taken to ensure that reports of academic misconduct are handled consistently and investigated thoroughly, and how can TAs be trained to identify and report such incidents?
3. How can the consequences of academic misconduct be clearly outlined and communicated to students, and what steps can be taken to ensure that these consequences are enforced fairly and consistently?
4. How can collaboration practices be effectively taught and reinforced in CPSC 110, and what resources can be provided to students to support them in following these practices?
5. The effectiveness of Tas looking closely at students' racket starter files during exams as a means of preventing academic misconduct.

Methods

My primary data source would be to conduct interviews with my fellow TAs to gather their perspectives on the effectiveness of the proposed solutions and to identify any potential areas for improvement. These interviews would be particularly valuable as TAs play a critical role in enforcing academic integrity policies and can provide insight into how effectively these policies are being communicated to students. Additionally, I would use published academic articles and research studies as secondary data sources to provide a broader context for the issue of academic misconduct and to identify best practices and effective strategies used by other institutions.

My Qualifications

As a current CPSC 110 TA for the fourth time, my experience of working closely with students and instructors has given me a deep understanding of the challenges and complexities involved in promoting academic integrity, as well as specific issues and concerns that may arise in the context of CPSC 110. Additionally, my role as a TA has provided me with valuable insights into the effectiveness of existing policies and procedures related to academic misconduct, as well as potential areas for improvement. My experience in this role, coupled with my knowledge of coding and programming concepts, makes me uniquely positioned to contribute valuable recommendations for addressing academic misconduct in CPSC 110.

Conclusion

Clearly, action is required to reduce the incidence of academic misconduct in CPSC 110 at UBC, as it is the most fundamental computer science course for students who want to pursue the field of technology. By addressing the five areas of inquiry mentioned earlier, I can determine the effectiveness of different approaches to improving the overall learning experience for students. With your approval, I am eager to begin the research at once.