

Office of Institutional Research

**Alumni Interview Research**

**The Earlham Experience and Academic Integrity**

**Summer 2007**

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## **Introduction**

Assessing the Earlham experience is not an easy task. A resource in attempting to attain a comprehensive assessment was pivotal in the process. The purpose of the following research is three fold: a) to identify possible gaps between the expectation and experiences at Earlham, b) to identify the strengths, weaknesses and changes that have taken place over time; to examine the influence of Earlham on alum, and finally c) to examine the increasingly problematic issue of academic integrity.

In order to assess the strengths of Earlham, it is necessary to investigate those who have taken an active part in the Earlham community. Contrasting the targeted alumni's expectations prior to attending Earlham and their impression after they graduated provides a strong indicator in terms of the success of the Earlham experience. This measure will provide some explanation as to the retention rates and other important elements for students from the past 5 decades.

The influence of Earlham on a student is extremely difficult to measure without student input. In this survey, the attempt is made to address the question of whether all of the resources that are available are being utilized in the best ways.

Finally, the troubling problem of academic integrity is addressed by former students. This report will be an attempt to shed light on the changes that have taken place in the students over the past 50 years; it is time to hear the students experiences in terms of issues of integrity. Issues with academic integrity have changed and it will serve to provide a historical perspective on the problem.

## **Methodology**

To address the three topics, two research assistants (Reina Arai and Carlos Litos Paredes) conducted telephone interviews. The interview consisted of three sections (I, II, and III) and 28 possible questions. Section I consisted of 7 questions, section II consisted of 12 questions, and section III consisted of 9 questions. All participants were asked the same questions in the same order.

The Alumni Development office compiled lists of names for the classes of 1957, 1967, 1977, 1987, 1997, and 2002. Alumni were called in alphabetical order in each of the classes to ensure a random sample of majors represented. Individuals who were reached were asked to participate in the interview which typically lasted 10 minutes (the range of the length of the interview was dependent upon the interviewee; some lasted as long as 3 minutes and others 80 minutes). After the completion of the survey, the participant was thanked for his/her time and was asked if he/she had any questions or comments.

Some participants were contacted via email due to a lack of a working phone number or because they were located outside of the country. All phone interviews were for alumni within the continental United States. Data was analyzed in order to form generalizations and to determine themes among the responses. For some questions, substantial

differences were visible and, therefore, responses are broken down according to class. Conversely, the results of some questions are combined because they yielded responses that were shared across the graduating classes

## **Participants**

Participants were all alumni from the graduating classes of 1957, 1967, 1977, 1987, 1997, and 2002. They were randomly selected to participate in the survey. A total of 170 alumni interviews were completed. From the class of 1957, 20 participants were interviewed. Thirty participants from each of the classes of 1967, 1977, 1987, 1997 and 2002 were interviewed.

### Section I – Experiences at Earlham

#### **1. What were the most important reasons you chose to attend Earlham?**

##### **Class of 1957**

The most common reason for students choosing Earlham ( $n=9$ ) was the Quaker affiliation. References from friends were also a common contribution for recruitment. A few students were drawn by the specific study (science and philosophy) or the opportunity for sports (cross country). Some individuals were familiar with Earlham through a family member or multiple family members. Many who did not know about Earlham through previous contacts liked the fact that it was a small school. One former student liked the location and another chose Earlham for the financial support it provided. One student said that he had no choice in attending Earlham.

##### **Class of 1967**

The class of 1967 chose Earlham for a variety of different reasons. Seven people stated that it was the Quaker affiliation that drew them. The visit to the campus drew some of the students ( $n=5$ ). There was mention of the academic excellence of Earlham, possibility of foreign study, and course offerings by a number of students. The atmosphere and values at Earlham were commonly noted. The small liberal arts college is able to provide its students with attention and a sense of self development. Others noted that they learned about Earlham through friends, Earlham representatives, counselors and family members. Some students ( $n=4$ ) noted that the location was ideal for their studies. One student chose Earlham for his financial support and because he was able to participate in collegiate wrestling. One person mentioned that he chose Earlham because there was no Greek system. Another enjoyed the trimester system.

### **Class of 1977**

The class of 1977 responses emphasized the intrigue of the Quaker aspect of the school ( $n=13$ ). A third of the group stated that the overall feeling they got in visiting Earlham and the values that the school held were key factors in their decision to attend Earlham. This group chose to attend Earlham for its liberal arts philosophy, the size of the school and the reputation it holds. Some ( $n=7$ ) were interested in the various programs offered at Earlham (i.e., psychology, natural sciences, wilderness, off campus programs). Several of the students had family connections with Earlham and felt that it was an appropriate place for them as well. Some ( $n=2$ ) mentioned their appreciation for the location of the school. A few of the students ( $n=3$ ) were impressed by the personal attention they received when visiting and interviewing at Earlham.

### **Class of 1987**

A few of the most important reasons that the Class of 1987 chose were: the size of the school, the liberal arts educational philosophy, Quaker traditions, and the programs offered at Earlham. A few of the alumni liked the personal attention they received during the admissions process. The political stance at Earlham attracted some of the students. Other contributing components were: diversity on campus, the academic rigor, the fact that family had attended Earlham, the school's location, the attentive faculty, the community-inspired campus and the financial aid that was provided to the students.

### **Class of 1997**

The class of 1997 looked for different things in choosing a school. Although most chose Earlham for the same reasons that others in previous classes did, they were interested in other things about the college as well. Less of the group was interested in the Quaker traditional values ( $n=4$ ). More were interested in the financial aid they received, the feeling that they got during their visit and personal attention they felt they would get. However, some things do not change. Many respondents stated that they chose Earlham for the small, liberal arts education that had strong and interesting programs and that they liked the feeling and atmosphere of the school. Various other comments were noted, such as the fact that there was no Greek system, the school was run in the trimester system, Explore-a-College, and the political stance of Earlham.

### **Class of 2002**

The members of the class of 2002 were less concerned about the "liberal arts" aspect of the Earlham experience as they were interested in the specific programs such as the Biology and PAGS programs. In addition, more students mentioned their interest in athletics programs. The size, atmosphere and community feeling was still a draw to this class. Many were sold on the school after they visited the campus. More than any other class, this group mentioned the importance of the political and liberal ideals that the school seemed to embody. The scholarship and financial aide were notably beneficial for this group. Two respondents mentioned their gratitude for the lack of a Greek system in

which they could concentrate on community and personal values. Several students chose Earlham because of its location.

## **2. Did you feel your expectations were met?**

Most respondents responded by saying ‘yes’ to this question. Only a few participants, out of 170, did not show their satisfaction with the school. Some had suggestions in addition to their expression of satisfaction. One suggestion from a 1997 graduate was to make the courses more academically challenging. A 2002 graduate indicated that the college could make investments that support the community code. Respondents were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with Earlham on a scale from 1 to 10, 10 being the best. All respondents stated that their experiences ranked between an 8 and 10.

## **3. Was there anything that surprised you about Earlham?**

All but a handful of respondents stated that they either were not surprised by anything about Earlham or they were surprised at the opportunities with which they were provided. Some surprises that were disappointing included the close-mindedness of some of the students and faculty (stating that because most of the student body was liberal, it was difficult to voice opinions of the contrary), or the lack of superior athletic opportunities. Some had mentioned that their expectation of Earlham’s academic rigor was higher than what they experienced.

## **4. Did you ever seriously consider leaving?**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
1957	2 (10%)	18 (90%)
1967	3 (10%)	27 (90%)
1977	6 (20%)	24 (80%)
1987	6 (20%)	24 (80%)
1997	9 (30%)	21 (70%)
2002	10 (33%)	20 (67%)
<i>Total</i>	<i>36 (21%)</i>	<i>134 (79%)</i>

The data above suggests that the likelihood of seriously considering leaving Earlham prior to graduation has increased over the years.

## **5. If so, what reasons led you to consider leaving? Why did you decide to stay and graduate?**

Some students considered leaving because they felt that they were not getting a specific enough education. However, upon further consideration, most stayed because they were able to find benefits in the liberal arts style of education. Also, it was difficult for some students to adjust back to the college lifestyle after studying abroad. There were not many opportunities to get help with transitioning back to the college way. Similarly, respondents felt overwhelmed academically. Some of those students found their footing while others decided to take a break and then returned to Earlham.

Living arrangements, such as roommate issues, were reasons mentioned by some of the respondents. In a few cases, those students were able to stay because the conflict had been avoided by making new friends or by moving out.

The issue of location was a factor that students addressed. A few students did not adjust well to the remoteness of Richmond and felt that they would be better suited elsewhere. Most decided to stay because Earlham's community and atmosphere outweighed the location of the school. Furthermore, conservative students found the school and its liberal ideals a bit abrasive. The campus rallies for diverse opinion, however, some students considered the school to be mostly homogeneous.

Personal financial reasons made some students contemplate leaving. In some cases, Earlham was able to provide them with a better financial aid package. For others, students took breaks to work and continued their education. Institutional finances were also discussed by respondents. Some considered leaving because of the serious lack of funds and attention in the arts and music department. Students were held back in their musical exploration because of the lack of resources. The students that did stay mentioned that they found other interests and decided to stay at Earlham. Furthermore, respondents from the class of 2002 who had learning disabilities found that the resources in academic support for learning disabilities were sorely lacking.

## **Section II – Earlham's Influence Later in Life**

### **1. In what ways has your Earlham education been important to your life?**

There were trends in the common answers to this question. Some felt that their experience at Earlham was life altering; it was one that taught them about themselves and others. Most found it interesting to hear the different stories of their peers and discovered a 'community' lifestyle that they cannot seem to replicate elsewhere. Although it was not the majority, some were very lucky in that they found their future spouses at Earlham.

For many others, Earlham was a stepping stone in order to achieve their next goal: a graduate degree. These people stated that their Earlham education laid the foundation to the rest of their schooling and for their professions.

Academically, the most commonly stated response was the critical thinking skills that the alumni were able to develop during their time at Earlham. Many were impressed by how much they were able to learn in their classes and use those skills not only in classrooms but in other parts of their lives as well.

Some were forever changed by the climate of the political outlook. Many became tolerant or aware of things to which they had not previously been exposed and found their new environment exhilarating and liberating.

Most of all, former students commented that their education at Earlham shaped them into the people they are today and that they left Earlham knowing that they were citizens of the world, moving forward to create changes in the lives around them.

## **2. How well has your major served you professionally?**

The respondents are split into three categories for this question. The first category of alumni stated that they pursued a graduate degree in their area of interest because of Earlham's program. These people were happy with the experience and education they found at Earlham and decided that their path should be continued by pursuing a graduate degree.

Another category of former students stated that they did not continue in education but found their profession and career in their major field. Many alumni of biology and chemistry have worked in science related fields. HDSR majors have found their major extremely versatile and are able to adapt to various jobs. Some English majors have become English teachers, professors at prominent universities or editors.

The last category of alumni stated that they changed their course completely to pursue another path entirely. One history major, after graduating from Earlham, took a few detours and settled down in California teaching at an elementary school. Most, regardless of their path, stated that Earlham gave them the tools needed in order to proceed in their work. Critical thinking, verbal articulation and writing skills have been the most common tools that alumni have praised.

## **3. In what ways did your general education courses serve you both professionally and personally?**

Respondents indicated that Earlham's general education provided a deep literal and intellectual background for them. The broadness of the education allows them to explore different areas and gave them a chance to have new experiences. Often, respondents stated that the general education courses sparked their interest in various different subjects. The general education courses were described as a way to form a foundation for their academic career at Earlham as well as outside of the college community. On the whole, their experiences allowed them to become what they consider to be "well rounded people."

**4. Did you participate in an off campus program?**

<b>Class</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
1957	3 (15%)	17 (85%)
1967	12 (43%)	16 (57%)
1977	14 (47%)	16 (53%)
1987	20 (67%)	10 (33%)
1997	18 (60%)	12 (40%)
2002	19 (68%)	9 (32%)

**5. In which program did you participate?**

<b>Class</b>	<b>Program Location</b>
<b>1957</b>	Mexico City, France, Puerto Rico
<b>1967</b>	England, Colombia, Japan, Jamaica, Germany/Austria, Italy
<b>1977</b>	England, Colombia, Eastern Europe, Germany/Austria, London/France, Jamaica, France, Scotland
<b>1987</b>	Mexico, Germany/Austria, Colombia, Japan, Scotland, Kenya, Jerusalem, England, France, Spain
<b>1997</b>	Kenya, Vienna, England, Japan, Mexico, Colombia, Bahamas/Dolphin Islands, Kenya, Martinique, Germany/Austria, Jerusalem, Northern Ireland, Galapagos
<b>2002</b>	England, Northern Ireland, Mexico, Galapagos, England, Brazil, Border Studies, Menorca, Germany, Vienna, Greece, Jerusalem, Japan, Scotland, Australia

**6. What contribution did the off-campus experience make to your education or to your life?**

For many who participated in international off campus programs, appreciation for language and new culture was cultivated. Students are exposed to different perspectives on off campus programs that cannot be learned in books. The learning that one is able to do in books is exponentially demonstrated by experiencing it first hand in the culture that it was meant to take place.

Many students had never traveled internationally before their program with Earlham. Using the semester program as a spring board, many former students feel comfortable and confident traveling the world, negotiating their way through various situations. Some, who had never been back, found that their experiences were so profound that their love for the experience had influenced their children. For some, the experience has been the precursor to their careers. Those who have acquired a new language are sometimes able to find jobs due to their skill.

**7. Have you spent any further time in that country?**

<b>Class</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
1957	3	0
1967	5	7
1977	8	6
1987	15	5
1997	8	9
2002	4	15
<i>Total</i>	<i>43 (51%)</i>	<i>42 (49%)</i>

**8. What influence did your experience living in community at Earlham have on you?**

**Class of 1957**

For the class of 1957, job opportunities were considered a good experience. Their work study opportunities gave them an opportunity to develop different relationships with people. Additionally, the experience of living in community introduced them to other ways of thinking and living such as pacifism and social responsibility. They also acknowledged the community's ability to function and prosper with diversity. Regarding the topic of diversity, one respondent stated, "It is always good to look at people's strong points, to not be afraid to interact with them only because they are different."

**Class of 1967**

Several respondents indicated that the decision making skills they acquired from living in the community have been helpful. Some of the alumni valued the friendships they were able to develop while living in the Earlham community. Living in a campus theme house was considered a nice transition by some of the respondents because it allowed them to develop a sense of independence. Living in the community also allowed them to develop an increased amount of appreciation toward diversity. Their ability to interact with others was summarized by one respondent who stated, "I learned in general to get along with others in the community as well as in society."

**Class of 1977**

In general, respondents noted the positive and wonderful friendships that they were able to develop with people while they were at Earlham. For many, the friendships they developed while living in the community are still important elements of their lives. Some acknowledged the cultural environment that seems to be a unique attribute of Earlham. A significant amount of emphasis was placed on the size of the community that contributed to the feeling of closeness and open communication.

### **Class of 1987**

Respondents from the class of 1987 emphasized the open-mindedness, tolerance, and accepting qualities of the community. The accepting attributes of the community helped foster a sense of “interdependence.” In general, respondents feel as if their experience in the Earlham community allowed them to develop a greater appreciation for their present communities.

### **Class of 1997**

A central theme for respondents of the class of 1997 is communication. They acknowledged the good communication that occurred during their time in the Earlham community. Therefore, many respondents have incorporated good communication skills within their current communities. For some, the conflict resolution skills that were inherent throughout the living community were extremely influential. In summarizing the living community, one respondent stated, “It gave me guidelines about how to live with people. I learned to work with people who have different opinions. I also found that consensus is an invaluable skill. I learned to listen and understand other people.” Differing opinions were not an obstacle for the class of 1997. They were still able to effectively live and work together.

### **Class of 2002**

Respondents indicated that they have a significant amount of appreciation toward the community at Earlham. Tolerance, acceptance, the importance of political correctness, and the value of Quakerism were recurring themes among the respondents. One respondent highlighted the general beliefs of respondents of the class of 2002, “I think that my experience with the Earlham mind set and people in its community were the most valuable parts of my time in college. I was exposed to a much wider variety of cultures, religions, sexual orientations, and nationalities than I would likely to have been at any other institution. I think that, while some of the values and/or practices of the Earlham and wider Quaker community are more difficult to uphold in the outside world and some may even be unrealistic, it was a very formative time for me and it helps guide some of my behaviors after leaving Earlham.”

## **9. What influence did your relationship with faculty have on you?**

Although some students never encountered any type of relationship with professors other than the faculty-student relationship, some alumni noted their excitement and appreciation for the more personal relationship they had with their professors. Some alumni named specific professors who were especially influential.

For a majority of alumni, the relationship was exclusively academic and they felt that the professor would be present should they be called on for assistance. Some replied that they made choices concerning their careers based on the opinions of their professors.

Others described the type of relationship they had. For example, the most commonly noted was the fact that professors took personal interest in their students and let the student know that they were paying attention to what he/she was saying. This let the student know that what they were saying wasn't just a comment that a student stated, they were not a number in a crowd, but a person in the eyes of the professor.

To some students, the professor's impact was profound, however, the relationship was concluded when the student graduated from Earlham. Most who stated that they had not communicated with their professors were regretful that this was the case.

Some alumni call the relationship that they had with professors a friendship. On several occasions, alumni mentioned instances in which they would return to campus after a long absence to stop into a professor's office or to stop by their home. Many would share news of their lives with past professors.

## **10. Is there anything about Earlham that you would like to see changed?**

### **Class of 1957**

In general, respondents indicated that there could be more political representation on campus. For instance, there should be a good balance between liberalism and conservatism. Furthermore, the issue of balance was a central issue for the class of 1957. They suggested that the student body could be more representative regarding where students are from (more effort should be directed toward attracting Midwestern students). Availability was also a concern for respondents. Regardless of socioeconomic status, students should have access to Earlham.

### **Class of 1967**

Respondents from the class of 1967 addressed a variety of issues. Most prominently, the respondents address the overarching trends that are present within the college community. One respondent adequately summarized the general view toward a certain trend, "There needs to be more real world experiences for Earlham students. There needs to be a greater focus on real politics and businesses rather than simply addressing social issues as problems. The view at Earlham is seriously skewed. The perspective needs to be more realistic rather than to criticize the system." Furthermore, respondents generally acknowledged that Earlham must continue to maintain its "academic luster." One individual stated that, "The selective and competitive school has seemed to have lost the academic rigor it once had." Among the other suggestions was the idea that Earlham should have a library science major. In addition, one respondent indicated that the student publications should be of better quality.

### **Class of 1977**

Respondents from the class of 1977 began to acknowledge the relationship between the Earlham community and the Richmond community more than previous classes. A feeling of isolation was suggested by most of the respondents. One respondent stated, “I felt that it was sometimes isolated. Earlham doesn’t have much to do with the community of Richmond. Having more volunteer opportunities would be good. People would be less inclined to think so low of Richmond residents.” Additionally, one respondent suggested that the fine arts department could be strengthened if the college decides to extend more support in that direction.

### **Class of 1987**

Again, respondents from the class of 1987 touched upon the relationship between the Earlham community and the Richmond community. One respondent stated, “The relationship with the city of Richmond could be better. There was not much interaction while I was there.” Some concern was centered on the cost of tuition. The rising cost of attending college was seen as a possible obstacle for some students. In addition, several respondents suggested that there should be more student participation regarding decisions made at the college. Another concern of some members of the class of 1987 was the students’ ability to transition to the work world.

### **Class of 1997**

The college’s alcohol policy was a significant theme among respondents. One respondent addressed the issue by stating, “What do you think about what is going on with the alcohol policy? I think it’s a joke. Do you want your students to take it as a joke? One of my friends got busted for drinking a glass of red wine over dinner with his girlfriend because it was their anniversary. But people are allowed to go on the HASH?” Similarly, another respondent stated, “Reevaluate the alcohol policy. By having the policy (that nobody reads anyway), drinking becomes “taboo” and then people do it more often. Turning a blind eye is a silly idea.” Another theme among participants was the need for a more developed Service Learning and Career Development Center. A member of the class of 1997 stated, “Earlham **must** have more career guidance. The lack of career development is all too obvious. Earlham does a great job persuading students to look into attending graduate school but there is a lack of job opportunities.” One respondent suggested that the Service Learning and Career Development Center could be strengthened with professor involvement. Additionally, there was some concern regarding the tight-knit social groups that form at Earlham. Several respondents indicated that they felt separated from the rest of the students because certain groups “clump together.”

## Class of 2002

Like previous years, the class of 2002 acknowledged the troubled alcohol policy and the relationship between Richmond and Earlham. Emphasis was placed on the academic rigor within the college and suggested that it could be more demanding. Furthermore, respondents highlighted the environmental awareness on campus. Regarding the environment, one respondent stated, "I was very disappointed to see that minimal efforts were put into making the new buildings 'green,' with such progressive example of that type of construction on other college and university campuses." Finally, some respondents touched upon the abundance of racial, ethnic, and religious diversity on campus and the lack of diversity regarding thought, politics, and social perspective. One respondent stated, "I would like to see a much greater diversity of thought, political, and social perspective. I want Earlham to be daring intellectually and administratively. We take too few risks and rest too complacently in the way we've always done thing. We could be a less sleepy and much more exciting place"

### 11. Have you ever or would you ever recommend Earlham to a prospective student?

Class	Yes	No
1957	16 (80%)	4 (20%)
1967	30 (100%)	0 (0%)
1977	27 (90%)	3 (10%)
1987	27 (90%)	3 (10%)
1997	28 (93%)	2 (7%)
2002	25 (83%)	5 (17%)
<i>Total</i>	<i>153 (90%)</i>	<i>17 (10%)</i>

### 12. What would you tell them about Earlham?

In general, respondents had a wide variety of responses. Many indicated that they would tell prospective students that Earlham is an excellent liberal arts college that utilizes Quaker principles and values. Many would highlight the good student-faculty ratio as a way of emphasizing the schools focus on personal attention, intimacy, and sense of community. Several respondents indicated that they would highlight Earlham's focus on teaching rather than research, the interdisciplinary programs, and the study abroad programs. Finally, respondents stated that they would discuss the impact that Earlham had on their lives (provided a solid foundation for later years, leadership development, and self awareness).

## **Section III – Academic Integrity**

### **1. Please describe your understanding of Earlham’s academic integrity policy.**

#### **Class of 1957**

Of those in the class of 1957 who remembered anything or commented about this question remember the honor code as being “self monitored” and an “individual responsibility.” Others simply mentioned that they did not remember the academic integrity policy but remembered the atmosphere supported an honest environment. Most stated that they expected each other not to cheat to get ahead. Some compared themselves to the present and stated that there was not that great a pressure to *have* to do well. Some alumni ( $n=2$ ) stated that students should be confronted when caught cheating before the incident is reported to the professor.

#### **Class of 1967**

The members of the class of 1967’s most commonly recalled fact about the honor code was that students were expected not to cheat or plagiarize. Some said ( $n=4$ ) that the code was well respected and that the standards were high. One remembers it as being a privilege and an individual responsibility to abide by the code. A few alumni remembered the protocol when there was a problem: two people stated that the student who is seen cheating should be confronted before reporting them to the professor. Others ( $n=3$ ) simply stated that they would “take action” should they witness a violation of the honor code. When asked about the details of the honor code, 9 people did not remember and 4 stated that professors did not proctor tests.

#### **Class of 1977**

The class of 1977 remembers a variety of facts about the honor code. Only two of 30 people did not remember anything about the code. There were 16 instances of people stating that the honor code meant that people did not cheat and did their own work. Others ( $n=6$ ) called it an individual responsibility and a test of personal integrity. Only one former student recalled that “faculty would spend a significant amount of time on making sure students understood the [expectations].” Individuals added that the honor code was a part of the Quaker value of integrity and that one should live honorably by not cheating. In the opinion of some students ( $n=3$ ), the honor code, which held the students to a high standard, was respected and cheaters were not tolerated. One person mentioned that the fact that the school trusted students was a great motivation to stay truthful. On the whole, the code was self administered and regulated not only to follow rules but to not disrupt the peace of the community by committing an act of dishonesty. A few remembered that the tests were unproctored and that should they witness a violation, they were responsible for confronting them and reporting the violator.

### **Class of 1987**

Only one person out of the class of 1987 did not remember anything about the honor code. Many individuals ( $n=16$ ) emphasized that one was not supposed to cheat. Similarly, 8 former students stated that they must be “honorable, honest and act with integrity.” Other students thought that when one made a mistake, they should admit to them and that cheating the system only meant that he was shortchanging himself. On a few occasions, students mentioned that the code was a high standard that was enforced by the community at large. Two students mentioned the gravity they had felt when they realized that they were being trusted by the college and treated as an adult when professors left the room for exams. One mentioned that the times have changed and the “present situation” coerces more students to plagiarize and cheat in order to get good grades. It seems that maintaining the honor and peace in the community was significantly more important than it was to be dishonest to attain better grades.

### **Class of 1997**

Many students in the class of 1997 recalled there was an honor code but most of them did not know the specifics. The majority stated that it was essentially common sense not to cheat or plagiarize and they knew they were expected to do their own work. Some ( $n=4$ ) stated that they never came in contact with the written expectations of the code. Four people did not remember anything about the academic integrity policy. Like other years, people remembered that students were expected to be on their honor and work diligently. Two former students mentioned the Quaker influence in the atmosphere and the code. The code was self policed according to one and it was taken seriously ( $n=2$ ). Only two people stated that one was responsible for confronting a peer after witnessing a violation of the code. Seven people stated that they felt very responsible when the professors left the room while testing took place.

### **Class of 2002**

The Class of 2002 most commonly mentioned that students, under the code, were not supposed to cheat and each was to do his/her own work. They also remembered that all of their tests were not proctored ( $n=7$ ) and they were given the trust of the professors to act accordingly. It was inherent and the code was self governed and there was a high standard of ethics. Only three people did not remember anything. Some stated that they never read the actual academic integrity policy ( $n=2$ ).

**2. In so far as you understand it, is the honor code the same now as when you attended Earlham?**

Most of the respondents in the classes of 1957, 1967, 1977 and some in 1987 stated that they “did not know,” “cannot answer because [they] don’t know,” or simply did not know the academic integrity policy in the first place. The members of the class of 2002 were more assertive about their answers. Perhaps their confident answers were due to the fact that they still had ties to the school or because it had only been 5 years, they were able to state more clearly that they were confident that the code had not changed.

**3. Do you feel that Earlham’s honor code is important to the college?**

For the most part, every class had a majority of alumni who agreed that the honor code was an important part of the college. Many stated that even if they had not known about the code during the application process, they were happy to have found that there was such a code to add to the community environment at Earlham College. Many stated that the academic integrity policy is essential for any college. They further asserted that by having a written policy, it is a stance against violations of honesty.

However, for each class, there were a few who did not see the honor code as being important or did not know whether it was relevant. Some of the respondents who stated that it was not important elaborated and stated that they believed that in having an honor code, it meant that the school assumed that students would inherently cheat.

**4. To what extent did you feel Earlham’s academic integrity policy was successful?**

The large majority (86%) of the respondents responded to this question saying that they believed the policy to be successful. There were, however, varying degrees of how satisfied each was with the success of the policy. In the classes of 1997 and 2002, there seemed to be more instances of participants stating that the policy was successful for the majority even though they had witnessed a violation of the code. They believed that on the whole, students were truthful and the violations were minimal. The majority of respondents believed that the academic integrity policy was successful in its mission.

**5. Where you ever aware of anybody violating the honor code?**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
1957	6 (30%)	14 (70%)
1967	4 (14%)	25 (86%)
1977	10 (33%)	20 (66%)
1987	10 (33%)	20 (66%)
1997	13 (43%)	17 (56%)
2002	15 (52%)	14 (48%)
<i>Total</i>	<i>58 (35%)</i>	<i>110 (65%)</i>

According to the alumni responses, there has been an increase in the violations of the academic integrity policy. It is possible that students in more recent years have become more aware of academic integrity and the violation therein. As previously stated, respondents from the classes of 1957, 1967, 1977, and 1987 were not highly aware of the academic integrity policy.

#### **6. Did Earlham's academic integrity policy affect your decision to enroll at Earlham?**

Most of the respondents stated that they were not aware of the policy before they had enrolled at Earlham. Some were not sure that a written policy had existed even after their graduation. In some cases, when they enrolled, students knew about the overall philosophy and assumed that academic integrity was a part of the policies ( $n=13$ ). However, some alumni ( $n=4$ ) mentioned that they were fully aware of it and the policy had added to their desire to be a part of the community of Earlham.

#### **7. What would you say to a prospective student or a newly enrolled student about academic integrity as it relates to Earlham?**

The large majority of the respondents stated that the academic integrity policy was an important part of the college process and that it is best to honor it. Respondents asserted that they would highlight the importance of academic integrity at Earlham. One respondent stated, "The policy is important because if you base your education on dishonesty, what do you really have? If you have not worked for it, what do you really have in the end?" Several respondents indicated that they would emphasize the importance of taking ownership for one's own work. Taking ownership was addressed when a respondent stated, "It is a student's responsibility to take ownership for one's own learning. When one is trusted, he/she will do the right thing. You could cheat when no one is looking and probably get away with it. But you can't always get what you want by just going the easy way." On the whole, respondents feel as if academic integrity is an integral component of Earlham. They acknowledged that plagiarism and cheating do not have a role in achievement.

#### **8. How does Earlham's approach to/philosophy of academic integrity relate to Earlham's Quaker identity?**

Most who had a contribution in terms of this question stated that the two were related. The two common responses were a) Quakerism emphasizes the importance of individual responsibility and a person's inner light and b) Quakerism, unlike some other religions, does not coerce individuals to sign a document or swear that they will not cheat. The two responses are inevitably intertwined; however, there were other responses from alumni. Many also believed that Earlham College, being a Quaker school, stood by their honor code which is very much in keeping with the Quaker identity. Many mentioned that being a part of Earlham was being part of a community of equality, simplicity and honesty. The students are trusted by the faculty and by the college which is, in large part, related to the tenants of Quakerism.

## **9. What, if anything, do you suggest be changed about the academic integrity policy?**

### **Class of 1957**

Respondents, for the most part, did not produce many suggestions regarding changes that could be made to the academic integrity policy. Some reference was made toward the use of technology, “If it does not include safeguards against using technology to cheat on tests or research then it should probably be changed.” Some respondents indicated that as long as honesty is at the heart of the policy, there is no need to change the policy. On the other hand, some indicated that the college should continuously review their values as the years pass.

### **Class of 1967**

Again, the issue of technology was touched upon by respondents. Several considered the rising presence of technology may hinder the academic integrity of the college. Another recurring theme was the manner in which students report violations of academic integrity. One respondent stated, “There needs to be a safe environment to confront somebody if you witness an act. Peers should be able to confront each other in a non-threatening environment.” The foundation from which the policy is drawn from was addressed by one respondent, “The policy may need to pull from other ethical foundations, not just Quakerism. Not all of the students are Quaker and can allow the meaning to not be as significant. They need to be able to believe the things that they are being told and relate to them in different ways. If they can’t relate to the foundation, they won’t abide.” Flexibility was suggested by some respondents. They indicated that, over time, students change and the institution should readily respond in ways that steadfastly maintain high expectations of the students.

### **Class of 1977**

Respondents suggested that the academic integrity policy should be more clear and understandable. They indicated that consequences should be strongly outlined and the institution should not hesitate to follow through. In order to make the issue of academic integrity more prevalent within the college community, one respondent stated, “There should be a convocation set aside for new students in which a professor or administrator could talk about the importance of honesty in a functioning society. Students that did not grow up with that sense will get a foundation and basis of the honor code. For the most part, people believe that one has to be honest as long as it is useful to them. The idea of reputation does not seem to be very important any more. This could all be addressed if the college was more vocal.” Overall, respondents from the class of 1977 indicated that an increase in awareness is a significant change that must occur within the college community.

### **Class of 1987**

For some unidentifiable reason, respondents from the class of 1987 were not vocal about changes that could be made to the college's academic integrity policy. The few respondents that did make a suggestion indicated that the issue could be emphasized more during the admission process.

### **Class of 1997**

Similar to respondents from earlier classes, respondents from the class of 1997 indicated that the policy needs to be discussed more, adapt to the students over time, and broadened with regard to the foundation/roots. One respondent stated, "The honor code should be discussed more and should be more explicit, but sometimes it seems that it is not possible to do so. Not everything is black and white. There needs to be a discussion that covers why one shouldn't cheat. When you choose Earlham, you have made a choice already (whether they know it or not) and the choices from there must be deliberate. Cheating denies the ability to perceive truth."

### **Class of 2002**

Like earlier classes, respondents from the class of 2002 indicated that the policy needs to be discussed more, adapt to the students over time, and broadened with regard to the foundation/roots. They also suggested that professors should increase their involvement with the issue. Also, respondents touched upon the idea of having students sign an agreement like other institutions. One respondent addressed the issue of signing an agreement by stating, "Many people come in with different morals and it should not be assumed that everybody who comes to Earlham would agree that it is wrong to cheat. A signed code would clarify the agreement."

### **Summary of Section III Academic Integrity**

Although most students found the honor code to be important, not many knew or remembered the contents of the academic integrity policy. Even during their time at Earlham, the full expectations of the code were not as clear as they could have been. Respondents suggested that there should be a clearer protocol for discussion of the policy and adhering to the academic integrity policy.

As the findings have shown, the cases of violations of the honor code have increased in the recent past. Some respondents believed that the reason for the increase was due to the fact that students in the present are under more pressure to do well in order to succeed in their future, which may lead them to take undesirable methods.

Many suggested that the code be changed to incorporate the changes in technology and the violations that may take place. While others simply suggest that the honor code was never explicit and hope that it will become more visible in the community as well as in classes. If the expectations are not clearly stated, how are they to be followed? It is clear

that having the honor code written in a handbook does not constitute as being a very visible piece of literature; only a few people had mentioned they had read the contents of the honor code or the academic integrity policy.