Don't Let the Integrity of Your Work Be Questioned: Academic Integrity and the Library

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I recently read an enlightening series of articles in a major news magazine. In one of the articles, however, a broad historical assertion struck me as questionable. I did some research and found that the statement was inaccurate or at least debatable. There was no citation attributing the statement to a source. Because the article was an historical piece not within the first-hand knowledge of the reporter, I found the omission of a source citation, and the apparent inaccuracy, particularly troubling. My discovery tainted the rest of the reporting on an otherwise eye-opening topic.

As a librarian, part of my job is to teach students the importance of careful research, accurate reporting and appropriate citation of sources. Students need strong and honest information-seeking skills to succeed.

Yeshiva University's academic integrity policy provides a foundation for these objectives, but the library's goal is more robust: we want our students to become successful and productive citizens, employees and leaders in society. An important starting point is teaching students to approach their research with rigor and integrity, enabling them to construct convincing and well-supported arguments.

Student research—like faculty research—involves aggregating information that ultimately inspires original thought. Credit must be given *any time* a writer cites facts or uses other people's words or ideas. Proper citation of sources helps the reader evaluate the foundation and reliability of the facts or ideas and gives credit where credit is due, making clear which ideas the writer gathered from elsewhere and which are original. Citations also point a reader to sources for further scholarly investigation.

How do libraries help cultivate academic integrity? YU librarians are passionate about our work and enjoy helping patrons conduct research to support the best possible written product. We have created a guide that covers proper attribution of sources and includes information about avoiding plagiarism, a variety of style guides, citation generators, citation

managers and more. We also teach students how to evaluate resources. In the digital age it can be easy to find information. But how can one know what is accurate and true? A librarian can help!

As a librarian, I want to help students do their best original work with the utmost honesty. The accuracy and integrity of a finished project should never be open for question.