Festschrift
for Tracey Bretag
The difference between movements that gain traction and those that spin their wheels often comes down to their champions. That’s certainly the case for academic integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, and research misconduct had been acknowledged for decades but rarely garnered public or media attention. At least that was true until the past few decades, during which time leaders emerged. Luckily for us, one of those leaders is our own Tracey Bretag.

We know and admire Tracey for her ambitious, comprehensive and oft-imitated research agenda, for founding the International Journal for Educational Integrity, for editing the Handbook of Academic Integrity, and for being an inexhaustible advocate for the cause — but those things, impressive as they are, don’t explain how essential Tracey has been in furthering the academic integrity movement in both the macro and micro senses. What follows is just a tiny sampling of sentiments from many people around the globe for whom Tracey Bretag has served as an inspiration, a mentor, and a role model. Not surprisingly, I’m among the many people Tracey has inspired.

I met Tracey at the third Asia Pacific Forum on Educational Integrity (APFEI) at her home institution in Adelaide. I was no one in the academic integrity world, and Tracey was a keynote speaker, yet when we were introduced, she did what Tracey does — gave me her time, her advice, and her ear. Within a few hours, we were sharing not only hypotheses and plans for reforming higher education, but also stories about our daughters, our home institutions, and our career trajectories; Tracey simultaneously let me into her life and took up residence in my heart. As she delivered her address, two things resonated throughout the auditorium: First, how passionately Tracey felt about our responsibilities — those of all educators — to identify, address, and respond to academic integrity breaches — but also, simultaneously how much she cared for, identified with, respected, and wanted to help students. That critical insight — that it’s not only possible, but necessary to do the work of advancing educational integrity while at the same time, being mindful that the reason academic integrity is so fundamentally important is because it is our job to help students learn — is one of Tracey’s most profound gifts to me and to all of us.

After that first conference, our exchanges continued. We had conversations and even (collegial) disagreements that spanned the years between conferences in Australia, the UK, and US. I learned about her life, which included sailing around the world with her husband Phillip, I learned that the fierceness that propels her research is overshadowed only by the fierceness of the love she has for her family, especially her sister Reece, Granddaughter Kiera, and children, (son) George and (daughter) Reece. Unlike...
so many of us who wear our overly busy, perpetually tired states of being as a badge of commitment to our work, Tracey explained that her approach was to throw herself 150% into work while at work, and then, when at home, to put work completely aside—so she could, as she put it, enjoy playing with her granddaughter as they rolled around on the floor like otters. Before work/life balance was a buzzword, Tracey set the example, giving another indispensable gift, particularly for a community who, because of the perpetually evolving nature of our work, can be especially susceptible to burnout.

There are so many other gifts Tracey gives us that if I tried to enumerate, each of them in its own paragraph, her editor persona would tell me to make this more succinct, so I will attempt to cover maximum gifts in minimum space: Tracey shows us that challenging, large-scale endeavors that make a difference are worth doing, and that small efforts and gestures are also significant, particularly in the aggregate. She shows us that each of us is an ambassador for the cause and that no matter how dire the integrity breaches or how entrenched the corruption, progress is always possible. She shows us how to uplift each other and celebrate our victories, and at the same time, never take our eyes off the ways in which the academic integrity landscape evolves in response to our efforts. She reminds us that academic integrity is a holistic effort and a cultural issue rather than individual “bad actors” simply choosing to misbehave. Tracey never lets us forget that educational isn’t a “them” thing, but an “us” thing that applies to everyone in academia, and that what we do is more important than anything we can say.

Most of all, Tracey is an example of how to speak truth to power and fight the righteous fight, but never forget that the goal isn’t to score a victory, but instead, to improve both educational experiences and educational cultures while continuing to embrace scholarship, reform education, improve society, love family and love life without holding a single thing back. That’s what makes Tracey a champion—being willing to throw herself into every endeavor 100% and in that process, show us that that’s exactly what we need to do to. We are so very fortunate to have her leadership, her passion, and her example to lead us and inspire us in this work. You are a shining star, Tracey. Thank you so very much.

With gratitude, admiration, and love,

Teddi Fishman
To an Absolute Legend of the Academic Integrity World

Firstly, clearly Tracey is an absolute legend in the academic integrity world!

Tracey has always encouraged positive initiatives to promote academic integrity, or, her preferred term “educational integrity” which rightly encompasses all stakeholders and educational processes within an institution.

In 2012 I was delighted to work with two behemoths of academic integrity (in the nicest possible sense of the word!) namely, Tracey, and also Teddi Fishman, the then Director of the International Center for Academic Integrity, to establish an alliance of our 3 integrity conferences; the ICAI annual conference, the biennial Asia Pacific Conference on Educational Integrity and the International Integrity & Plagiarism Conference which ran in the UK from 2004 to 2014. Tracey was always extremely supportive of our conference in the UK and thrilled delegates with her passionate and research-led keynotes and words of wisdom, winning her many great friends in Newcastle and beyond!

In personal terms, I have always been hugely appreciative of Tracey’s guidance and insight and am honoured to be able to share my appreciation of her work which has brought awareness and understanding to so many people in our ever-growing global educational integrity community!

Best wishes,

Gill Rowell
Turnitin
United Kingdom
I believe it was in 2011, in the early stages of the Impact of Policies of Plagiarism in Higher Education across Europe (IPPHEAE) project, that I came across research in Australia led by Dr Tracey Bretag. As this research was very relevant to what we were planning to do in Europe, I sent an email to Tracey, not really expecting to hear back. How wrong I was. Immediately she found the email, Tracey responded with great enthusiasm and became a critical friend and supporter of IPPHEAE and all subsequent projects we’ve been involved in. Since our meeting in Brno in June 2013, recorded in the photo above, together with some of the IPPHEAE project team and Jude Carroll, we have communicated regularly and met many times. I always look forward to being in her joyful company. Her guidance forced me to question many preconceptions about institutional policies and terminology and shaped the direction of travel for my research.

I will always be personally grateful for her patience, encouragement and support for my writing, which led to the successful publication of several well-cited journal papers and two book chapters. Tracey remains an important friend and ally in the journey towards integrity, but also in my personal journey. Moreover, as this ENAI award recognises, Tracey’s leadership has been crucial in supporting colleagues and researchers throughout the world. The importance of her input to national policy in Australia cannot be overstated. In addition, her term of office as President of the International Center for Academic Integrity is clear evidence of her global impact. This award is very well deserved and perhaps rather overdue.

With very best wishes,

Irene Glendinning
Coventry University
United Kingdom
I first met Tracey in 2014 at a conference in the UK when she chaired my presentation. After the session, I talked to her about my aim of organizing an academic integrity conference in Turkey and invited her to deliver a keynote talk. She enthusiastically agreed to do this without any hesitation. I managed to organize this conference in 2018 and had the privilege to host her in my country. As expected, Tracey acted as a prominent figure at the conference and contributed significantly.

After the conference, she visited my university and met with my postgrad students and colleagues and enlightened us with her brilliant ideas. One of my PhD students is now working on academic integrity policy development by benefiting from her model. I am sure her ideas will have a huge impact on our academic integrity policies.

I am so proud to have a copy of her masterpiece “Handbook of Academic Integrity” that she signed for me in my office. As you see in the photo, it was a real pleasure to visit Gallipoli battlefields of WW1 and at the memorials to Turkish and Australian soldiers with her.

Salim Razi
Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University
Turkey
Connecting Australia and Dubai

Professor Tracey Bretag is one of the most selfless, honest and passionate persons you get the honour to meet and call a friend ever so rarely; who, being just who she is, forces you to look at the world once again kindly, with trust and hope.

Tracey has been instrumental in changing the face of research, interest and awareness of academic integrity globally. She showed courage leading an area that so many shy away from, even today. From leading an academic journal to directing an international centre, a university office of academic integrity, to leading umpteen research projects and campaigns, Tracey has tirelessly worked to remove the stigma and taboo against misconducts and bring crucial knowledge and studies that have helped us understand the multi-faceted face of academic misconduct.

Her contribution hasn’t only been academic or scientific.

I know I speak for many in our field that Tracey has single-handedly helped boost many of us, our confidence and our careers through patience, love and mentorship. I have never seen her shy away from helping someone, or turn away from advising and guiding someone, or calling on someone’s nonsense.

I had the opportunity to once speak to Professor Donald McCabe, to me the “father” of academic integrity movement who in his candid manner guided me towards researching academic integrity.

But I am humbled and honoured that I got to know, love and call the “mother” of academic integrity a mentor and a true friend.

Thank you Professor Tracey Bretag for everything you are, for everything you have contributed and done for everyone and for academic integrity!

Zeenath Reza Khan
University of Wollongong in Dubai
United Arab Emirates
Fairy Godmother Tracey

Once upon a time, there was a baby, who later grew up into three separate individuals—conference Plagiarism Across Europe and Beyond, European Network for Academic Integrity and Mendel University Academic iNtegrity Team (ANT).

Like any other baby, also this one (rather a three-headed monster, isn’t it?) has its fairy godmother. Luckily for this little one, it was the most cheerful and positive fairy godmother, Tracey Bretag, whose first gift was a never-ending catchy enthusiasm.

Tracey was a first keynote speaker at the very first conference Plagiarism Across Europe and Beyond in 2013, and in the upcoming years she was officially opening many of the conferences—always full of energy and starting with a huge smile: “One of the things I love about this conference is the social programme! Because we have the chance to get to know each other, we will become colleagues, collaborators and friends.” Reminding us that it’s not only extremely important to work in the field of academic integrity, but it’s also networking and personal relationships that matter.

Tracey embraced the idea of ENAI with whole-hearted and encouraging words and once again with a huge smile. Her enthusiasm (and also her professional guidance) helped to grow the idea into the current network with so many activities.

For us, members of the Mendel University’s Academic Integrity Team, it’s quite difficult to separate ourselves from ENAI and the conference, so we would like to express huge thanks for all the inspiration and support we have received from Tracey in all our activities!

Academic iNtegrity Team (ANT)
Mendel University in Brno
Czech Republic
Tracey—Our Family Friend

Sometimes it is not possible to separate work and family life. Particularly if one travels to the opposite side of the globe to visit a colleague, who is also a great friend. And that’s how a friend of Tomáš became a great friend of the whole Foltýnek family.

Tracey helped us as so much—by recommending great places to visit, by giving us advice on all the Australian poisonous creatures, by lending us the gear we needed. Thanks to her, we will remember our visit to Australia for the whole life. Vojta celebrated his first birthday at Tracey’s place. Venda still remembers feeding wallabies. Tomáš grew professionally thanks to the UniSA experience. Helena was glad to visit Australia, her second home.

I have many great colleagues that I trust and I like to work with. Very few of them became real friends. Friends, which I can rely on. Friends, which my family happily spent a weekend with. Friends, which make the separation of working and family life impossible. I am proud that Tracey is one of them.

Tomáš Foltýnek
and his family
Czech Republic
Another Person Passionate About Plagiarism!

There is no way that Tracey Bretag is retiring or anything upon receiving any such award! She is a bundle of energy, bubbling over with great ideas and good stories. And so focused on how we should go about AVOIDING plagiarism by teaching students the proper way to use the works of others.

We have met often at conferences—and she even dropped in on the seminar given in honor of my 60th birthday as a special guest. We so enjoy chatting about everything under the sun during the social time at conferences. Our experiences at the vegetarian quarantine table at the Hong Kong WCRI conference with 12 different dishes, all mushrooms of some sort or another, are not to be forgotten!

When did we meet? Perhaps it was at one of the plagiarism conferences in Newcastle. We connected immediately, overjoyed to find another person so passionate about plagiarism! The work she did on editing the “Handbook of Academic Integrity” was enormous, herding all these academics and getting them to submit good chapters more or less on time.

As editor of the open access International Journal for Educational Integrity, she focuses on bringing timely, well-researched papers about how academic integrity can be fostered in educational settings. I’m always looking forward to the next issue.

Debora Weber-Wulff
HTW Berlin
Germany
An Inspirational Friend

Anyone who has met Tracey, has read her publications, but especially has heard her speak in any public forum can attest to how truly inspirational she has been, is, and will remain in the area of academic and educational integrity more broadly. Her name has become synonymous with the terms. I am one of the many to be grateful to have had our paths cross.

I first heard Tracey speak as a keynote at an International Integrity and Plagiarism Conference in Newcastle approximately a decade ago and have had the good fortune even to exchange small talk on subjects ranging beyond our academic interests, including our common backgrounds in English and her love of Greece. It was always Tracey’s exuberance that shone through—whatever the topic of discussion!

But her insight and breadth of understanding on the integrity topics she writes on and speaks about are what bring us all together.

Tracey: what you do, how much you do, how well you do it! Inspiring!

Were it “just” your work as a brilliant scholar, speaker and educator that were being paid tribute to at this moment by your colleagues, the award would be well justified. But for many of us, it goes beyond: to want to acknowledge—deeply and sincerely—your continuously shining a beacon in these areas, but also your personal traits. You have naturally drawn so many—as does a magnet, or as flies irresistibly drawn to a fire—to want to serve even more, individually and collectively, the values these areas encompass.

Whether coming from the ENAI community at this moment or the wider global academic integrity communities, we salute you. What extraordinary lifetime achievement! May you continue to inspire us all!

Evangeline Litsa Mourelatos
Deree, The American College of Greece
A Tribute from Lithuania

I met Tracey in person in the ENAI conference in Brno about three years ago. She attended the project meeting in which I presented the progress of the project output I led. She vividly suggested ways how some outputs could be further improved and contributed greatly to the overall discussion.

Tracey was very supportive, engaged in sharing experiences and lessons learnt, and encouraging in urging for other facets of academic integrity to be considered.

This is what I appreciate about her the most as an inspiring super-leader in the promotion of academic integrity.

Best wishes,

Loreta Tauginienė
Hanken School of Economics
Finland