

[In these minutes: Turnitin.com, orientation, faculty responses, scholastic dishonesty]

STUDENT ACADEMIC INTEGRITY COMMITTEE (SAIC)

MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2001

10:00 – 11:30

238A MORRILL HALL

[These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate or Twin Cities Campus Assembly; none of the comments, conclusions, or actions reported in these minutes represent the view of, nor are they binding on the Senate or Assembly, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.]

PRESENT: Nicholas Velkov (Acting Chair), Mark Bellcourt, Steve Brandt, Shawn Curley, Betty Hackett, Laura Coffin Koch, Robert Pepin, Daniel Svedarsky.

REGRETS: Dorothy Anderson, Carston Wagner.

ABSENT: Amber Benning, Yev Garif, Angelita Reyes, Andy Uttke.

GUESTS: Linda Ellinger, LeeAnn Melin.

The announcement was made that Professor Anderson could not be at the meeting, so Nicholas Velkov agreed to chair the meeting.

1. TURNITIN.COM

Linda Ellinger noted that there has been less use of the service than originally hoped; only 29 people in 34 classes have signed up and only seven classes actively use it, while 14 classes have never used it and 11 people only used it once or twice, most likely to test the program. In total, 233 papers have been submitted.

When a paper is submitted, the instructor receives an output listing the probability of plagiarism, the scale goes from blue indicating no plagiarism to red indicating a high probability. From the papers submitted, 146 were blue, 74 were green, 6 were yellow, 1 was orange, and 9 were red. Of the nine red, she knows that at least three were experiments.

The seven active users are from the following colleges: General College, the Institute of Technology, Nursing, Biological Sciences, and Natural Resources. An e-mail will be sent to these users at the end of the semester asking for their feedback.

Q: Did these instructors include using Turnitin.com in their syllabi?

A: This information can be asked at the end of the semester.

Q: Is any feedback reported to the students?

A: No. Students just upload their papers. The instructor is the only one who can access the results.

Linda Ellinger this program does not solve every problem. It does help an instructor pinpoint the source of the plagiarism, but the instructor still needs to deal with the prevention and sanctions when students are caught.

Betty Hackett noted that of the dozen plagiarism cases reported this fall, no one has reported that the plagiarism was caught because of using Turnitin.com.

Q: What is the objection to using the service?

A: Some faculty feel that it is unethical, promotes a 'gotcha' mentality, and pits faculty against students.

Q: Are there statistics on which students plagiarize?

A: While some of the figures indicate more freshmen plagiarize, inadvertently, there are not specific statistics.

2. ORIENTATION

LeeAnn Melin, Director of New Student Programs and the First-year Experience, addressed the orientation program on the Twin Cities campus as it relates to student academic integrity. She said that last spring she worked with OSAI to create a two page insert in the Gopher Guide that addresses the topic.

During orientation, the orientation leaders highlight this material, discuss it during a the first night activities, and spend more time discussing the topic in the collegiate meetings. How the topic is discussed varies by college, but most spend 5-20 minutes on the topic. General College and Liberal Arts also distribute supplemental materials regarding student academic integrity while Carlson uses case studies. Because of the variation in programming, she would appreciate this committee providing more guidance on topics and the time spent on issues.

Following orientation, an evaluation is conducted. One of the questions asks if "the discussion about academic integrity helped me understand what is expected of me academically at the U of M." This years' results indicate that 80% of students agree or strongly agree with the statement.

Projects to improve student academic integrity at orientation include more guidance on what to discuss and an expanded section in the gopher guide on helping students succeed.

LeeAnn Melin then turned to the welcome CD that is sent to all new students. In the past, the CD was to get students connected to the internet and e-mail prior to arriving at the University. The

CD is being reworked to provide a transition between high school and college. The question during designing is where to place information on student academic integrity and how to design it in a positive sense. Currently, the Student Conduct Code is even buried, so all these aspects need to be looked at together.

Committee members said that it can be hard to get students to listen during orientation so materials need to be presented at different times so that students remember. It is then up to the instructors to follow-up on these skills in the fall and extra programming during the first few weeks. Most of the programming efforts have fallen into the First-year Programs area, and the committee noted that they appreciate the great effort that has been done to promote student academic integrity.

4. FACULTY RESPONSES

Laura Koch discussed the responses from the freshmen seminars. She noted that there were only 9 seminars last spring to base the results on, while there will be about results from 100 classes after the fall. She then distributed a handout and discussed it with the committee.

Q: Did faculty and students have the same response rate on every question?

A: This is the only question that is the same on each survey.

Committee members made the following comments:

- Seminars are different from other classes since issues can be discussed in small groups
- Survey should be extended to introductory composition classes
- Question should be separated into two, with one question each on citation and collaboration

4. SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY

Betty Hackett noted that material was distributed at the last meeting regarding the scholastic dishonesty charges from last year. The committee asked to have just the nature of the dishonesty and the penalty listed to see if penalties were similar across violations. She noted that since the previous materials, she had removed the student's college and basketball player charges. The use of 'substantial' was because faculty used these words in their charges and most occurred in work to be done outside of the class. She said that class size was not known so the course number was listed instead. She then asked if her office she be collecting other information?

Q: Do you know what directions students were given on assignments that were plagiarized?

A: That information was not requested last year, but this year's report asks for more information.

Committee members made the following comments:

- Penalties seemed to be applied fairly across colleges
- Education efforts need to be concentrated on using outside sources properly and collaboration
- 50% of students caught are in upper division classes so it is not just freshmen
- There is more paper sharing than is being reported, but it is hard to catch

Q: Are coordinate campus reports included on the handout?

A: No since OSAI is just a Twin Cities office. Consultation is done between the campuses, but faculty need to check with their own campus offices to receive reports.

The committee then discussed whether reporting should be mandatory since faculty might fear reports leaking, leading to repercussions for their teaching. The data is confidential and faculty many times talk with their department chairs first so there should not be any repercussions.

Q: Has there been an increase in reporting?

A: There was a significant increase this year.

5. ACADEMY OF DISTINGUISHED TEACHERS

Dan Svedarsky noted that the topic of academic integrity and the Clayton report were introduced at the very end of the fall retreat so there was not much attention focused on the issue. He said that at Crookston, co-horts meet monthly to discuss clarity in syllabi.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

Betty Hackett said that next Tuesday a half-page mailer will be sent to 5500 instructors, deans, directors, and department heads with information on the office and website. She has also met with Joyce Weinsheimer to find ways to connect and introduce academic integrity in teaching education. She is working with Ron Hussman on research on academic integrity and June Nobbe regarding introducing ethics into one of the leadership minor classes.

A committee member then suggested that residence life should also be consulted with to see if academic integrity could be discussed during residence hall meetings. Betty Hackett said that she would follow-up on this topic.

With no further business, Nicholas Velkov thanked the members for attending and adjourned the meeting.

Becky Hippert
University Senate