

[In these minutes: Background on SAIC and Review of the Clayton Committee Report, OSAI Updates, and 2003-03 Agenda Items]

STUDENT ACADEMIC INTEGRITY COMMITTEE (SAIC)

MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2002

9:30 – 11:00 A.M.

300 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: Dorothy Anderson (Chair), Shawn Curley, Betty Hackett, Laura Coffin Koch, Robert Pepin, Daniel Svedarsky, Ava Trent.

REGRETS: David Roberts, Carston Wagner.

ABSENT: Mark Bellcourt.

1. BACKGROUND ON SAIC AND REVIEW OF THE CLAYTON COMMITTEE REPORT

Professor Dorothy Anderson began by reviewing the history, duties, and responsibilities of the SAIC, noting that the committee has been in existence for three years. She said that the first issue with which the committee dealt was deciding what to do about an honor code. It was decided that an honor code for the University should not be started at this time. Instead, a foundation needs to be built so that students do not feel that they are being forced to sign the statement.

A second initiative has been to spread the word about academic integrity by speaking to incoming students at orientation, collegiate meetings, and new student convocation. The Center for Teaching and Learning has also started to address academic integrity during its faculty training.

Q: How is the honor code used in Natural Resources and Veterinary Medicine?

A: For Natural Resources, the honor code is on the web and is provided to students in a pamphlet. It specifies a system for detecting cheating and plagiarism, as well as expectations for students. In Veterinary Medicine, students sign a statement at the beginning of the year and then on every exam. The one place that there is no statement, and where one is needed, is during clinical rotations.

Q: When students are charged with academic dishonesty, do they say that they did not realize

that there was a policy or expectation in place?

A: Some students do not know, while others knew and were too busy to follow procedures. A wide range of responses are received.

Members said that it may be easier to have an honor code in professional schools, since they are governed by a code of behavior once they join the profession, which includes having to report any violations that they see. Athletes are also a homogeneous group in terms of their activity, but heterogeneous based on their collegiate affiliation. Therefore, athletes should not be forced into an honor code, but should ask for it for themselves.

Professor Anderson said that last year the committee also spent time discussing academic integrity initiatives at the other campuses, seeing a film on the subject, proposing a statement for the admission's booklet, and hearing pros and cons regarding Turnitin.com.

Q: What is Turnitin.com and what does it do?

A: Turnitin.com is a program that allows faculty to check the closeness of a student's paper to source material in its database. Last year the usage was low among faculty, and some that did use it had problems from students who objected to their paper, a form of intellectual property, becoming part of the source material in the program.

Q: What happened with the admission's booklet language?

A: The committee was told that the booklet was being revised, but a final version has not been seen. This item will require follow-up this year.

2. OSAI UPDATES

Betty Hackett, the Academic Integrity Officer, provided the following update:

- Center for Teaching and Learning is working with her to teach faculty how to create a positive classroom environment to diminish or eliminate academic dishonesty
- Collegiate student affairs professionals reviewed the case studies on academic dishonesty presented to incoming students and held a session on plagiarism
- OSAI is included in the booklet for new faculty as a resource
- She is willing to attend departmental meetings to speak with old and new faculty
- In terms of academic dishonesty violations, 90 cases were reported as of June 30, 7 or 8 of which have continued since last spring although no hearings were held
- The percentage of students with repeat charges is small, but more than in prior years
- Some colleges like the centralized office while other colleges prefer to handle cases themselves
- PSEO students need information about academic dishonesty in their orientation
- Campus policy is being considered that will prohibit students from withdrawing from a class to avoid academic dishonesty charges. CLA already prohibits this, but there should be a uniform policy across campus. Faculty latitude would still be allowed.

- Changes in the ‘W’ grade are being discussed, including marking a grade to indicate the grade was given for academic dishonesty reasons. Many people are opposed to this option except for chronic cheaters.

3. 2002-03 INITIATIVES AND AGENDA TOPICS

Members made the following suggestions for 2002-03 agenda items:

- Focus should be given to upper division students and courses
- Sample syllabi with a good statement should be provided to all faculty by e-mail
- What message should be given to students who are ready to graduate? Tie effort to junior and senior seminars and capstone courses, ethical standards in careers, and general rules for everyday living
- Limited student involvement in policies and procedures since OSAI and further actions were driven by central administration and not students themselves
- Involve juniors and seniors in brainstorming sessions to understand the culture. Show them that what they say and do matters, and offer them the opportunity to have an impact on future students. What would have been important for them to hear early in their college career?

The committee then discussed holding focus groups with students. The focus groups should have a specific goal and be comprised of students from across colleges and programs. Central administration and the colleges need to be on-board with the initiatives so that they are willing and able to implement specific ideas generated from the focus groups. The focus groups should be asked how the classroom environment could be improved. The committee decided to spend more time discussing this topic next month.

4. OTHER BUSINESS

With no other business, Dorothy Anderson thanked the members for attending and adjourned the meeting.

Becky Hippert
University Senate