

[In these minutes: OSAI Director, Committee Charge, Student Dispute Resolution Center]

STUDENT ACADEMIC INTEGRITY COMMITTEE (SAIC)

MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2003

2:30 – 4:00 PM

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: Micky Trent (Chair), Mark Bellcourt, Shawn Curley, Robert Pepin, Kirsten Rewey, Matt Swanson.

REGRETS: Dorothy Anderson, Lindsay Craig, Linda Ellinger, Marilyn Grave, Thomas McRoberts, Tracy Smith.

GUESTS: Jan Morse.

1. UPDATE ON NEW OSAI DIRECTOR

Mickey Trent informed the committee that a new OSAI director has been hired. Her name is Sharon Dzik, she will be starting in the middle of January, and she should be at the next meeting.

2. REVIEW COMMITTEE CHARGE

Mickey Trent noted that the Senate Consultative Committee has asked each committee to review its charge and forward any proposed changes. Members then made the following comments:

- Committee should ask new director for her opinion on a student pledge
- Committee was formed out of an emergency and therefore most work has been done on item A.1
- There was hit and miss reporting a few years ago. OSAI has done a good job of getting a system in place quickly, but more modifications are needed to help the users, such as downloadable forms
- Committee should work with director on a best practices list of alternate sanctions
- Section C-G need to be reviewed with OSAI to see if they are doing or if the committee should be. If OSAI handles them, then they can be removed from the charge. If the items are kept in the charge, a mechanism for review needs to be created.
- Is the committee doing anything that needs to be added to the charge?
- Committee needs to find out what the new director wants

Members then voted to remove section b. from the charge. Members then discussed the language of A.1, noting that ‘abiding concern’ should be changed due to the culture change being made. Members made the following suggestions for new language:

- Integral part of the academic culture
- A value
- An integral value

With no more time for discussion, Micky Trent noted that this item would appear on the next agenda for further discussion.

3. DISCUSSION WITH JAN MORSE FROM STUDENT DISPUTE RESOLUTION CENTER (SDRC)

Jan Morse, Director of the Student Dispute Resolution Center (SDRC) joined the committee to discuss her office and how it interacts with student academic integrity cases. She stated that her office is student fee-funded, and therefore operates as an adjunct unit of the University, to resolve campus-based complaints. She office offers two types of services. The first is an ombudsman, which is an informal, confidential, and flexible process that allows an ombudsman to serve as a neutral party in a dispute.

Q: Are students aware of the office?

A: While pamphlets are widely distributed and students receive an email two times per year, many students state that they wish they knew about the service earlier. However, SDRC’s caseload has doubled in the last year and more focused has been placed on reaching students at orientation and in advising offices.

Q: How can students decide when to talk with SDRC?

A: SDRC offers the student an opportunity to hear their side of a dispute and serve as a student’s representative and advocate.

Jan Morse then said that the second service offered by SDRC is advocacy during formal hearings when other means of resolution are not possible. The ombudsman and advocacy sides of a case are kept separate to safeguard the process.

For allegations of academic dishonesty, SDRC can work with students and faculty before a formal complaint is made. She said that she office tries to differentiate between plagiarism, intentionally claiming another’s work as one’s own, and improper citation, carelessness when citing sources in a paper. This distinction is one used by the Composition Department, and therefore her office would prefer to send suspected cases to the Composition Department for review prior to formal filing with OSAI.

A member noted that the distinction between plagiarism and improper citation can be a fine line to walk and all cases of academic dishonesty need to be reported centrally.

Jan Morse said that students who are charged with improper citation always benefit from a re-review. Many times the students charged are freshmen, sophomores, and international students; groups largely unsure about how to cite sources at the collegiate level.

Another member noted that a neutral party can be helpful to resolve cases since OSAI's role is not to support the student but to adjudicate the case.

Q: Has the advocacy function of your office doubled as well?

A: The need for an advocate has almost tripled.

Q: How many cases does SDRC handle?

A: Last year there were approximately 30-40 cases of academic dishonesty handled by the ombudsman and another 30-04 cases handled by an advocate, with some overlap between the groups.

Q: Can faculty use SDRC's services?

A: Since it is student fee-funded, the emphasis is placed on helping students, however, faculty and graduate students can get information from SDRC and offer an intervention.

In closing, Jan Morse said that no office can do everything, but she tries to have contacts in all areas across campus, so that she has someone directly to call with a problem and to get an answer in a timely manner.

4. OTHER BUSINESS

Mark Bellcourt informed the committee that the Student-Athlete Welfare Subcommittee would be meeting on January 14.

With no further business, Micky Trent thanked the members for attending and adjourned the meeting.

Becky Hippert
University Senate