

[In these minutes: Roadblocks to faculty reporting, Academic Integrity Week]

STUDENT ACADEMIC INTEGRITY COMMITTEE (SAIC)

MINUTES

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2006

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

PRESENT: Tom Shield (Chair), Francisco Diez-Gonzalez, Sharon Dzik, Linda Jones, Laura Coffin Koch, Paul Myers, Robert Pepin, Abbie Stohlmann.

REGRETS: Mark Bellcourt, Shawn Curley, Micky Trent.

GUESTS: Debbie Gettemy.

1. DISCUSSION OF ROADBLOCKS TO FACULTY REPORTING

Tom Shield said that the current reporting structure has instructors directly sending scholastic dishonesty reports to OSAI. However, when he thought about the usual chain of events in departments and colleges, he came up with a different structure, which he distributed. This revision has the instructor sending a report through the Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUGS) or the Director of Graduate Students (DGS) to the Dean's Office and then to OSAI.

He discussed this issue at an IT Academic Standards meeting and it was noted that the current system has a gap at the department and college level for who is involved. DUGS and DGS would also like to know about a problem student or class.

Committee members made the following comments:

- All offices need to be copied and involved, but the question is how and at what point in the process
- The process needs to be clear and able to deal with cases quickly
- Professional programs within colleges don't have the same relations as other departments, so the final reporting structure will need to be flexible
- Most colleges do not have a standard procedure that involves the college office, but just have a direct reporting line from the instructor to OSAI

Sharon Dzik noted that her office had a drop in the number of cases reported last year. She does not think that there is less scholastic dishonesty on campus, but that more faculty are just handling the cases themselves and not reporting the offenses to any other source. This process

makes it impossible to catch repeat offenders. Faculty need to understand the limited role that OSAI has, especially with first-time offenders.

Committee members then made the following comments:

- DUGS and DGS directly interact with all faculty and can be an information conduit for OSAI
- Low numbers may also be because many faculty do not catch offenses
- Faculty need to understand the importance of centrally reporting and should not see an OSAI file as some higher form of punishment
- Faculty need to realize that they are not ruining a student's life by centrally reporting; the students did that themselves by cheating or plagiarizing
- Students talk and know what faculty will do if they are caught. A letter from OSAI states that the University as a whole knows and that the student's actions were a big deal
- The faculty instinct is to talk with a DUGS or DGS, and OSAI should encourage this behavior
- Reporting path should be a letter from the faculty to the DUGS/DGS, who then reports the incident to OSAI with a cc to the Dean's Office. Faculty will need a speedy response from OSAI.
- Dean's Office should not be a responsible reporting party, but just informed of the incident
- OSAI should work with the DUGS/DGS to educate them on the process and use them as a resource and contact for faculty
- DUGS/DGS are in each department and would function as a local contact point for OSAI
- The role of the student's advisor can be critical in preventing future offenses, and a meeting with the advisor should be required for these offenses
- Advisors would need to be trained to deal with these cases
- Faculty advisors are more important than academic advisors, and could be informed of their role by the DUGS/DGS
- A flag could be used in PeopleSoft to alert an advisor; this issue should be discussed with CUD

Q: Are student files destroyed upon graduation?

A: No, they are kept for seven years from the date of the last incident.

Q: Is scholastic dishonesty noted on a student's transcript?

A: No.

Q: Who has access to an OSAI file?

A: The most common request is from professional programs to which a student is applying; they contact OSAI to verify whether the student has a record or not.

Q: How will a student's college be informed if the offense occurs in another college?

A: OSAI should contact the student's collegiate advisor to make them and the student's college aware of the incident.

Sharon Dzik then asked members about what is the biggest roadblock for faculty reporting. Members provided the following answers:

- Lack of knowledge and not enough time to remember information that they might not need
- Not understanding the entire process and thinking that it is enough to just talk with students
- Not realizing the implications for not reporting versus what they think are the implications of reporting
- Not seeing OSAI as a resource
- Faculty hear from other faculty that the process is long/hard and that they might not be supported in their decision
- Faculty not hearing the low number of reported cases and seeing that their actions have an impact

Sharon Dzik said another effect of not centrally reporting is that students are not informed of their right to challenge the decision. Many times faculty just want the case to be done, but students want to follow the entire process.

Tom Shield said that there appears to be two parts to this issue – organization of the process and education. If the process is improved and faculty can be better educated about it, then OSAI should see an increase in reported cases. He said that he would work with Sharon Dzik to draft a revised flowchart for discussion at a future meeting.

2. UPDATE ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY WEEK

Debbie Gettemy informed members that presenters have been confirmed for the week's workshops, which will take place in various locations across the three areas of campus to be convenient to all those who might want to attend. Ads will also be placed in the Minnesota Daily.

3. OTHER BUSINESS

Sharon Dzik reported that her office has moved to 211 Appleby Hall and its name has been changed to the Office for Student Conduct and Academic Integrity.

With no further business, Tom Shield thanked the members for attending and adjourned the meeting.

Becky Hippert
University Senate