SAIC MINUTES

[In these minutes: Academic reporting process for graduate students, Background checks, Use of the 'Fx' grade]

STUDENT ACADEMIC INTEGRITY COMMITTEE (SAIC)

MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, MAY 7, 2008

[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), Lisa Anderson, Sarah Angerman, Amy Barsness, Sharon Dzik, William Enlow, Linda Jones, Randy Moore, Micky Trent, Eric Watkins.

REGRETS:
Laura Coffin Koch, Amanda Kossak, Erin West.

1. ACADEMIC REPORTING PROCESS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

Tom Shield asked members if they had any other changes to suggest to the graduate student reporting process; no one had any. Sharon Dzik noted that she needs to determine what happens to reports when the DGS changes.

Tom Shield said that he had a few minor edits. He would make the changes this summer and bring a draft back to the committee for approval in fall.

2. DISCUSSION OF BACKGROUND CHECKS

Tom Shield said that the committee started discussing background checks at the last meeting, noting how various entities on campus are responding to the requests, and not always checking with OSCAI. There is a Regents Policy on Student Education Records that deals with these requests, but he needs clarification in the language. In particular, Section IV (2), item c uses the language 'person.' Is this language also extended to mean institution, or does it imply that a specific person needs to be authorized by the student to release the information? There is also no parallel to language in item d, which covers official transcripts, regarding official notice of Student Conduct Code violations.

He said that he and Sharon Dzik would be meeting with someone from the Office of the General Counsel this summer to get clarification. The committee and CUD can then discuss the best possible response.

3. DISCUSSION OF THE USE OF THE 'Fx' GRADE

Sharon Dzik said that she polled 86 institutions to determine if they use an 'Fx' grade for scholastic dishonesty and if they offer a way to remove the notation. Of these institutions, 25 have some system and the rest do not. Many institutions are also discussing this approach.

She said that many faculty state that they do not want to report a student since this creates a file that will follow them. A model from some institutions is that a student is able to remove the notation after the first offense by taking an on-line class or tutorial. For a second offense, the 'Fx' remains. Maybe faculty here would be more willing to report first-time offenders if the students would have to complete a class or tutorial.

The current proposal would be to add an '*' to the grading system to mark any letter grade that is awarded for violation of scholastic dishonesty. This would immediately be reported on a transcript.

Tom Shield said that he agrees with not removing the notation and not bracketing the grade for two-time offenders. For first-time offenders who complete the on-line course or tutorial, the notation would be removed and the incident would not be reported to external agencies. However, a file would remain in OSCAI in case a second violation is reported. He would like to see the notation frozen on a transcript for a first-time offender if the student does not complete the on-line course or tutorial within one year of the report or upon graduation.

Members made the following comments:

This would help inform more students of their rights if more faculty centrally reported
Local culture needs to be changed; the University will never eliminate non-reporters, but work must be done to educate and increase reporting
Faculty also need to be consistent
If course or tutorial is on-line, there is no reason that a student could not complete it
Whether the first offense is due to ignorance or is intentional, all students will have a second chance and will not have an excuse the second time
Education and accountability are keys to the success of this change

The tutorial or course should not be included in the policy; OSCAI can report back to the committee on progress and for assessment

Q: Will this approach be agreeable to the Educational Policy Committee (SCEP)?

A: SCEP did not want the 'immutable F' since it would follow a student. This approach should be more agreeable since it provides an educational opportunity for first-time offenders and would allow any grade to be noted as given for a scholastic dishonesty violation.

Q: Would the notation be permanent for any second violation?

A: Yes.

Q: Do faculty ask if a file already exists?

A: Yes, but each violation is a separate event so this information should not be shared.

Q: Do on-line courses or tutorials exist?

A: Some do, so the University just needs to determine if a current one works or develop its own.

Sharon Dzik said that she would look at the links provided by some of the institutions to determine which model(s) might work for the University.

Tom Shield said that this will be a major item for the committee next year. SAIC will start work in the fall so it can be presented to SCEP for their approval.

4. OTHER BUSINESS

With no further business, Tom Shield thanked the members for their work this year, thanked Micky Trent for her service on the committee, and adjourned the meeting.

Becky Hippert

University Senate