

[In these minutes: Scholastic Dishonesty violations within the College of Pharmacy, OSCAI Updates, University Definition of Plagiarism, Withdrawal email]

STUDENT ACADEMIC INTEGRITY COMMITTEE (SAIC)

MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2011

[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: Eric Watkins (Chair), Dana Davis, Sharon Dzik, Patricia Fillipi, Jennifer Goodnough, Laura Coffin Koch, Tom Shield, LeAnn Snow.

REGRETS: Levi Atinda.

ABSENT: Francisco Ocampo.

GUESTS: Doneka Scott.

1. DISCUSSION OF SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY ALLEGATIONS HANDLED WITHIN THE COLLEGE OF PHARMACY

Doneka Scott, faculty member in the College of Pharmacy, joined the meeting to discuss how scholastic dishonesty cases are handled within that college. There is an honor code for students and a student-run Honor Council at the Twin Cities and Duluth. These councils meet to review procedures but do not talk about their cases. This process was started 10-15 years ago because the students wanted to police themselves. Faculty are usually not involved in the process except for her as advisor and the Senior Associate Dean. A composite of the cases is prepared at the end of the year. Case information has not been shared with OSCAI as she was not aware of this requirement.

The process is that the student honor council receives a case by submission of a form by another student, teaching assistant, or faculty member. A case liaison gathers information and then the council meets. Witnesses can be called depending on the type and level of the violation. The proceeding is recorded. The council determines if there was or was not a violation. If yes, then consequences are recommended to the student. If the student accepts, the case is concluded. If the student declines, the case is referred to the Academic Standing Committee which is composed of faculty, staff, and students. Another hearing is held and a decision is made. If the student still does not agree with the decision, there is an appeal outside the college.

The council is composed of four freshmen each year who are elected to serve for four years. A mock trial is run and two minute presentations are given prior to elections in October. Co-chairs are elected each year by the council members. A secretary position is also being added. Members take this service very seriously.

Q: Do charges affect licensing?

A: The licensing board does not check with the college; their only concern is whether or not the student graduates.

Q: What are the college background checks?

A: Each student has a criminal background check each year as required by accreditation standards.

Q: What types of violations are seen by the council?

A: It is mainly cheating on exams on the academic side.

Q: What is the range of sanctions?

A: They are in the procedures document. Students are working on changes to this section which will require a two-thirds vote of the student body to approve.

Q: What are typical sanctions?

A: Rewrite of a paper or zero on an assignment. The council takes into account any previous offenses when determining sanctions.

Q: Do instructors give sanctions?

A: No. This is done by the council. Faculty brought into the council and they prefer a central body handling these offenses instead of individually. They are able to make a recommendation to the council if they choose.

Q: Who provides the reports?

A: It is mostly other students.

Q: What is your role as advisor?

A: The previous advisor was the Associate Dean of Student Affairs. She was asked to take on this role since she does work on student development. As there are few cases, unless the procedures are being revised, there is not much work. A main goal is to make sure that the Twin Cities and Duluth are aligned and use the same procedures.

Q: Can the council recommend a grade change?

A: They can send a letter to the faculty of the course with the recommendation.

Q: What if a faculty member refuses to change a grade?

A: This has not happened and there is no procedure to handle this situation, although the matter could be referred to the Academic Standing Committee.

Q: How many cases were heard last year?

A: One in the Twin Cities and two at Duluth.

2. OSCAI UPDATES

Sharon Dzik reported that she is still working with people from the Graduate School regarding handling scholastic dishonesty cases involving graduate students and cases outside the scope of a

class. She will be meeting with Vice Provost and Dean Henning Schroeder to discuss these issues.

She will have a draft of the McCabe survey for the November meeting. The semester email to instructors from Vice Provosts McMaster and Rinehart will be sent shortly.

3. DISCUSSION OF UNIVERSITY DEFINITION OF PLAGIARISM

Eric Watkins note that at last week's meeting of the Senate committee chairs, the Chair of the Campus Committee on Student Behavior (CCSB) asked this committee to consider a University definition of plagiarism. This becomes an issue in many CCSB cases since definitions from different institutions and organizations are brought in by the accused student in an attempt to prove that he or she is not responsible.

Following that meeting, Professor Chris Cramer, Chair of the Senate Consultative Committee, sent an email to the Provost on this topic. The Provost responded that the Office of the General Counsel is looking at this issue.

Jennifer Goodnough noted that Morris took a positive approach to this issue when it revised its policy and decided to define academic honesty instead of plagiarism. This definition will be shared with the committee.

4. OTHER BUSINESS

Eric Watkins said that he sent an email to Sue Van Voorhis asking that the withdrawals emails be sent starting after the fifth week. Her office is looking at implementation for spring semester. The email would be modified to include a reference to the University policy on withdrawing from classes when scholastic dishonesty is pending.

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

Becky Hippert
University Senate