

[In these minutes: Scholastic Dishonesty violations within the College of Veterinary Medicine, OSCAI Annual Report]

STUDENT ACADEMIC INTEGRITY COMMITTEE (SAIC)

MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6, 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: Tom Shield (Chair), Sarah Angerman, Dana Davis, Sharon Dzik, Jennifer Goodnough, Kendall King, Eric Watkins.

REGRETS: Arthur Carlson, Patricia Fillipi, Laura Coffin Koch, Francisco Ocampo, Andrew Olson.

GUESTS: Jessica Kuecker Grotjohn, Laura Molgaard.

1. DISCUSSION OF SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY ALLEGATIONS HANDLED WITHIN THE COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

Laura Molgaard, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the College of Veterinary Medicine, distributed a copy of the college's honor code which was just approved on January 1, 2011, after a five to six year revision. The previous honors code narrowly defined scholastic dishonesty as cheating and included lots of procedures.

The revision process was student-led and was meant to broaden the scope. Input during this process was also sought from the Office of the General Counsel and OSCAI, as well as being in-line with other professional schools.

Under the new honor code, cases first go to the Student Honor Case Commission for an informal hearing and judgment. The issue can then be raised to the Student Promotions Committee. The new version has already been tested several times this semester and is working well so far. The challenge in most cases is determining intent by the students. A second issue is that faculty feel that they do not have any responsibility to prevent cheating since there is an honor code.

Q: Is the decision of the Student Honor Code Commission separate from the faculty decision?

A: Faculty need to report the violation to the Commission for a decision instead of making a decision themselves.

Q: Does the removal of the decision from the faculty mean that the honor code supersedes the Student Conduct Code?

A: No. The expectation is that faculty report the violation rather than handling it themselves. Faculty are involved in the determination of the sanction but are not the sole decision-maker. This ensures consistency across sanctions. In her 10 years, there has never been a case where the faculty wanted to manage the process without outside involvement.

Q: What is the informal part of the process, which is required under the Student Conduct Code?

A: The Commission is the informal part of the process followed by a hearing by the Committee.

Q: What is the process if a faculty member suspects scholastic dishonesty?

A: The faculty contact her, the Commission, or the faculty advisor of the accused student. Few actually contact the student.

Q: Are the majority of cases being reported?

A: She does not have a clear sense. Some students are reluctant to report other students. Faculty have high standards but she is not sure how much rule bending is being done by the students. She has found that expectations between students and faculty are different. Management is key so that opportunities are minimized. More structure and guidance is also needed early in the process to stop bad habits.

Q: Are there repeat violators?

A: The informal process keeps a record so she can identify any patterns. She also checks with OSCAI. She needs to work on a process for sending her information to that office.

Q: What is the composition of the two groups?

A: The Commission has two student representatives and one alternate from each class elected by their class along with a faculty advisor. The Committee includes two faculty from each of the three departments, one student, and an ex officio member.

Q: What is the student turnover?

A: Elections are held each year but the turnover is very low.

Q: Are there sanctioning guidelines?

A: No, but they have been considered.

Q: Do students take classes outside the College?

A: The majority do not since they do not pay by credit but for the degree. If a student wants to take an outside elective, it costs more. There are a few dual-degree program students.

Q: How many faculty are in the College?

A: 140.

2. OSCAI UPDATE AND ANNUAL REPORT

Sharon Dzik presented the OSCAI 2009-10 annual report, discussing the figures dealing with scholastic dishonesty. She said that under sanctions, re-writing an assignment is listed as a possible sanction. She wanted committee members to know that she discourages this as an option but it sometimes required by the student's program so they can meet their accrediting standards. Members then discussed other figures from the report.

Sharon Dzik then said that the email from her office was sent to all faculty. Tom Shield suggested that it should be kept to one page and the content should be varied each semester as

a way to hold faculty attention. Members then stated that this email should continue to be sent around the time of the first exam.

Q: Are coordinate campus scholastic dishonesty violations reported to OSCAI?

A: Discussions have been held with the campuses but the current systems are not connected. This could be a discussion for next year since students can take classes on other campuses or transfer. Jurisdiction for online courses is also an issue.

3. OTHER BUSINESS

Q: What is the end product from the discussions with the professional schools?

A: The committee should craft a report to the Provost that includes a summary from each college along with committee comments. This will be done next year as the final college will not be scheduled until fall.

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

Becky Hippert
University Senate