

Student Academic Integrity Committee (SAIC)
October 10, 2018
Minutes of the Meeting

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 reflect the views of, nor are they binding on, the senate, the administration, or the Board of Regents.

[**In these minutes:** College Review - University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD) School of Fine Arts; College Review - College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences (CFANS); Campus Committee on Student Behavior (CCSB) Overview]

PRESENT: Jeffrey Schott (chair), John Hourdos, Daniela Orza, Kimberly Clarke, Tracene Marshall, Aditya Pakki, Caitlin Federici, Sharon Dzik, Kathrine Russell

REGRETS: Pieranna Garavaso, Rashne Jehangir, Sara Johnson

ABSENT: Bethany Novak, Nicholas Fleege

GUESTS: Jefferson Campbell, associate dean, School of Fine Arts, UMD; Bill Ganzlin, director of student services, College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences (CFANS); Susan O’Conner-Von, past chair, Campus Committee on Student Behavior (CCSB)

OTHERS: Clayton Bracht

Chair Jeffrey Schott welcomed the committee, and members introduced themselves.

1. College Review - University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD) School of Fine Arts - Schott introduced Jefferson Campbell, associate dean, School of Fine Arts (SFA) at the University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD), to provide a review of academic integrity within the School of Fine Arts. Campbell stated that in the last three years, the SFA has only seen two cases of scholastic dishonesty. Much of the curriculum of the SFA is performance based so there is not a lot of “typical” cheating occurring. Most cases that occur usually deal with plagiarism. Instructors work hard to catch these instances early and use them as teaching moments and to tutor students to source their writing correctly.

Schott asked how many scholastic dishonesty cases go unreported or are resolved informally. Campbell responded that his faculty report about four to five cases each year where a student had an issue. Again, these cases usually do not revolve around tests. Instructors have been very proactive in administering tests that are randomized and not similar to previous year’s versions. Moving tests online with Moodle have made it easier to randomize questions on exams. Schott asked if they have tools for monitoring online activity. Campbell said that not everything is foolproof but SFA does try to use common sense methods to detect unusual activity.

Schott then asked if more resources are needed to prevent academic dishonesty. Campbell said that for the more introductory liberal education courses, giving instructors access to “Turn It In” or other online resources that help check plagiarism in papers would be beneficial. Currently, instructors have limited or no accessibility or instruction to those types of resources.

Kathrine Russell asked if Campbell would talk about the process for faculty reporting academic dishonesty cases. Campbell said that from the faculty perspective, they first set up a meeting with the student. At this meeting they provide evidence to the student. The faculty also fills out a standardized reporting form. If a student feels falsely accused, they take the matter to the department head or the associate dean of the college. If the matter still doesn’t feel satisfied, the case can go before the executive vice chancellor for academic affairs.

Sharon Dzik asked if faculty can make a formal or informal resolution. Campbell stated that faculty can create a resolution. When the violation is clearly intentional, it is reported to the University. However, if a case is accidental or unintentional, faculty are encouraged to work with the student to resolve the situation in an educational manner. He said the SFA is a fairly small college with only 510 students. Faculty frequently meet to discuss common issues and students.

Schott asked about the prevalence of contract cheating, paying money for someone to write their papers for them. Campbell said that SFA has yet to detect any contract cheating. Dzik agreed that it can be hard to catch. She said that there is a nationwide effort to create an algorithm to check writing from paper to paper. In Europe, contract cheating is very popular. Dzik then asked what is included on SFA’s syllabi regarding a student doing their own work. Campbell said that SFA faculty include this sort of messaging in every syllabus that they produce. They also include resources on the syllabi for how to write and report sources, including websites.

Tracene Marshall asked about the possibility for bias when faculty speak about students in their meetings together. Campbell clarified that faculty never name individual students when speaking in a large group setting. However, if common issues are recognized, they will meet in smaller groups to see if there is any commonality. For example, one case involved an international student who didn’t understand why plagiarism is wrong. Faculty tutored the student on the subject and the student never had an issue again. In fact, that student is now on Broadway. Dzik asked if UMD has a central repository for tracking academic misconduct. Campbell said that he wasn’t aware of the particular system UMD uses.

2. College Review - College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences (CFANS)

- Schott introduced Bill Ganzlin, director of student services, College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences (CFANS), to provide a review of academic integrity within CFANS. Ganzlin proceeded to address the following questions that were sent from the committee ahead of time:

1. What is the prevalence of academic dishonesty within the college, including the most common means students may use for cheating?
2. What active measures each college is using to prevent academic dishonesty?
3. What are current challenges that each college sees in maintaining academic integrity?
4. What resources are needed to improve academic integrity?

Gazlin stated that the majority of academic dishonesty cases reported within the college involved plagiarism. In addition, they oftentimes see students turn in copies of previous work from other students, such as lab reports from previous years. He said that many faculty use the “Turn It In” resource to look for overlap in papers and reports that are submitted for grading. CFANS has not seen a lot of reported cheating from within the classroom setting, most reports are from online or submitted work, perhaps because students think no one is watching those interactions or submissions.

Ganzlin said that faculty are required to have a statement regarding academic dishonesty in each syllabus and discuss the topic and possible sanctions for violations on the first day of class. They also try to provide early exposure of academic integrity when registering for classes and reiterate those points over time. The most impactful methods occur in the classroom.

Ganzlin said that one of the biggest challenges for faculty reporting students to the University is the concern that doing so will ruin a student’s career. Instructors will sometimes speak with the student and won’t do a formal report. Ganzlin encourages instructors to report formally through him so that repeat violations can be tracked. This is a learning or coaching experience, especially in plagiarism issues. Faculty are also worried about the severity of a sanction and what the University should impose on a student. Ganzlin encourages instructors to consult with the Office for Community Standards (OCS) to discuss what appropriate sanctions should or could be. He said that through this more open dialog, he is seeing faculty coming forward and reporting cases more now than a few years ago.

As far as resources for academic integrity, Ganzlin said that students need to be continually educated and reminded of the importance of the issue. The college needs more momentum for faculty to be responsive to students and to talk to them in class. This all starts with the faculty and Ganzlin sees the faculty becoming more comfortable in discussing these issues.

Schott asked about the prevalence of contract cheating in CFANS. Ganzlin said that he has seen a few cases over the years. He said that he doesn’t see it as a growing trend but does see random incidences. Ganzlin further stated that he sometimes sees issues where a student will submit a paper that they previously produced for another class that covers a similar topic. Schott asked if there are statements in the syllabus about reusing papers. Ganzlin said that he is working with the curriculum committee on that issue. John Hourdos commented that the wording for such a statement for reusing work has to be clear because that work is the student’s personal property. Schott said that in some courses the syllabus states that it must be original work produced and if previous work is used, it must be cited appropriately. Russell and Caitlin Federici agreed that such a statement must be clear.

Aditya Pakki emphasized that teacher assistant (TA) training is important. Dzik stated that she gets asked to present to groups of TAs a lot, especially for international students. Ganzlin agreed that this is important as maybe a third of all misconduct cases are found by TAs. Federici asked what the most common test formats used in CFANS are. Ganzlin said he was not sure about that, as the college uses a wide variety of exams. He said that in order to combat cheating, some

faculty change the order of questions in exams that are distributed to the class. Schott asked about the prevalence of unreported cases of academic dishonesty. Ganzlin reiterated that there is much more reporting by faculty now than there used to be.

3. Campus Committee on Student Behavior (CCSB) Overview - Schott introduced Susan O’Conner-Von, past chair, Campus Committee on Student Behavior (CCSB), to give an overview of the CCSB process and its procedures. She stated that serving on this committee was one of the most important things she has ever done. She said that while the CCSB is the central judicial body for student violations of the Student Conduct Code, the process is meant to be educational in nature.

The CCSB acts as the hearing panel when students contest a violation of the Student Conduct Code. A hearing has a very structured process. While the committee hears a variety of cases, the most common hearings involve cases of scholastic dishonesty. Cases only go to a hearing after a student has exhausted their options for accepting a satisfactory sanction for the violation that they are accused of.

O’Connor-Von continued by stating that a hearing usually consists of five panelists who are all members of the CCSB. Faculty and staff are appointed to three year terms and students serve two year terms. A hearing can last anywhere from three to six-plus hours. O’Connor-Van stated the longest hearing she ever attended lasted more than nine hours. This is due to the fact that the case is not only presented, but the panel makes their ruling and prescribes sanctions all in the same day.

During the hearing, an accused student may represent themselves or have an advocate or a lawyer present on their behalf. The University presenter is usually someone from the Office for Community Standards or the Office of the General Counsel, if the student retains a lawyer. Both sides may call witnesses and present evidence. All hearings are presided over by the chair and the CCSB secretary records the hearing and produces the final disposition in the case. The chair and secretary have no vote on the panel.

The standard of proof in a CCSB hearing is different than in a court of law. As opposed to “guilty beyond a reasonable doubt” in a courtroom, the standard of proof is did a violation “more likely than not” occur based on a preponderance of the evidence. All violations and sanctions are outlined in the Board of Regents Student Conduct Code.

Prior to a hearing, a pre-hearing conference takes place where the accused student, their representative, the University presenter, the CCSB chair, and secretary attend. The purpose of this conference is to set expectations for the hearing, provide the names of witnesses, and disclose evidence if necessary. It is also a time for the accused student and the University presenter to try and come to an informal resolution. Marshall asked if informal resolutions are often made prior to the hearing. Dzik responded that resolutions are frequently made. If the student does not agree with the result and sanction of the hearing, they have the right to appeal the ruling to the provost.

Ganzlin asked how witnesses are brought in to the process. O'Conner-Von stated that witnesses are often prepared by either the University presenter or the accused student's representative. Witnesses are questioned by both parties as well as panelists. Dzik said that preparing witnesses also helps her prepare the cases for presentation as the witnesses often have more expertise on the subject matter. Ganzlin followed up by asking if the CCSB notifies the colleges about the cases. Dzik responded that they do notify the colleges once a hearing is scheduled. Hourdos commented that maintaining the privacy of the student is important.

Hearing no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Chris Kwapick
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