

**Student Academic Integrity Committee (SAIC)**  
**November 8, 2017**  
**Minutes of the Meeting**

*These minutes reflect discussion and debate of 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:** Academic Integrity Week Debrief; Issues from the Office for Community Standards]

**PRESENT:** Jeffrey Schott (chair), Mark Bultmann, Kimberly Clarke, Sharon Dzik, John Hourdos, Sara Johnson, Tracene Marshall, Barry McQuarrie

**REGRETS:** Rashne Jehangir

**ABSENT:** Daniela Orza

**GUESTS:** Jessica Kuecker Grotjohn, assistant director, Office for Community Standards

**1. Academic Integrity Week Debrief**

Chair Jeff Schott called the meeting to order and asked Sharon Dzik to debrief the committee on Academic Integrity Week. Dzik said that the vision for the week was to employ a multifaceted approach to raise awareness about the importance of academic integrity. Events of the week included various workshops, in-class activities related to academic integrity, and tabling on the Washington Avenue Bridge. About 900 people stopped by on the Bridge and about 17 faculty members had their class do in-class activities. Lessons learned included the need to start planning earlier (perhaps in February) and the need to have a tabling presence on all three campuses.

Dzik then stated that raising awareness among faculty is important, as many faculty are reluctant to report cases of academic dishonesty to the Office of Community Standards. She said that many faculty feel that such a report has negative implications for the student's long term academic career, and also takes a lot of time. However, she explained, the issue with not reporting a student lies in the fact that this behavior could be a pattern, and the only way to identify that pattern is to report the incident.

John Hourdos said that he is one who feels such procedures have negative impacts on a student's life. He asked who is given access to the reported incidents, due to the concern for the long term consequences to the students. Dzik explained that if a student is found responsible for academic dishonesty for the first time, they have the option to participate in the Academic Integrity Matters (AIM) program, and upon successful completion of the AIM program, the record is expunged. The Office for Community Standards retains a record of the incident for seven years. The student, and those individuals that the student grants access, will have access to the report. The report can also be accessed if requested by a subpoena. Hourdos responded that he felt, for these

reasons, the incident is not actually expunged as a result of participating in the program. He added that in addition to the potential harm to the student's future, there is also a barrier to reporting incidents due to the additional time that it takes to verify that academic dishonesty occurred, as well as report it to a third party.

## **2. Issues from the Office for Community Standards**

Schott invited Dzik to introduce the next topic on the agenda. Dzik explained to the committee that a faculty member opined that students should not be allowed to walk in the graduation ceremony if they have a pending scholastic dishonesty case. This is not current policy, but she brought this to the committee to honor the concern of the faculty member and to seek the opinion of the committee. Members discussed that if the case is pending, the student has not yet been found responsible, therefore this consequence is not supported.

Members then shared their opinions regarding students that have been found responsible at any time in their academic careers walking in the graduation ceremony. Opinions included the following:

- Commencement is a ceremony and participation could help students found responsible to understand the impact of academic dishonesty on the community.
- The families of the students are also impacted by the exclusion of the student from the ceremony.

Schott summarized the discussion by saying that the committee would not support excluding students from commencement that have not been found responsible and whose case is in pending status.

Jessica Kuecker Grotjohn, assistant director, Office for Community Standards, raised another scenario to the committee. Often students submit the work of a peer, that has previously taken the course, as their own. What should be done about the author of the assignment that provided it to their peer? Dzik added clarification by asking if the author should be interviewed to understand the intent of sharing their work. Committee members shared their opinions:

- There are existing groups and databases that retain student work, so it is not easy to determine how or why the work was provided.
- The author of the document should be free to disseminate their work as they please. Without evidence that the author of the work coerced their peer to plagiarize, the author should not be found responsible. The peer of the author ultimately chose to plagiarize, not the author.
- A discussion with the author could be valuable in discouraging the sharing of work and fostering a cultural change. There are other ways to help your peer with an assignment.

Kuecker Grotjohn explained that she has drafted a letter to be sent to the student that submitted the work of a peer, as well as the author. Members then discussed their opinions further:

- There should be a warning so that students understand there will be consequences for sharing your work, if your peer decides to submit it as their own.
- Students often study together, so it will be important to be clear about what can be shared so that positive behaviors are not discouraged.

Schott then asked if formal actions are needed around this topic. Kuecker Grotjohn responded that as a result of the discussion, she understood that the committee is in support of a conversation with the author that shared their work as a way to promote cultural change.

### **3. Debrief on Contract Cheating Webinar**

Chair Schott introduced the next topic and Kimberly Clarke discussed her thoughts on the Contract Cheating webinar sponsored by the International Center for Academic Integrity (ICAI). The term “contract cheating” refers to academic dishonesty in which a student hires a third party to complete work that the student then submits as their own for academic credit. Clarke shared the following points from the webinar:

- More than 20,000 UK students purchase papers annually.
- The majority of students believe that this is a common practice.
- A custom paper can be acquired on Craigslist.com.
- Social media has made it easier for buyers and providers to be connected.

Members then had the following comments:

- Schott described some of the attributes he discovered when he Google searched providers. The companies are advertised as being harmless sources of student support and help. In some cases, the companies will submit the papers to Turnitin.com to ensure that it will not be flagged for plagiarism. One site charged \$18 per page.
- It is important that the word cheating is used to describe this practice, it is not ghost-writing.
- Degrees are awarded, not certificates of competency.
- The University should explicitly define contract cheating and explain that it is a violation of the code of conduct.

### **4. Future Topics Discussion**

Schott reminded members that there are three remaining meetings for the academic year.

Members then discussed possible goals for the committee:

- Dzik informed the committee that an International Center for Academic Integrity (ICAI) survey can be completed again for the University. She will provide more information regarding this opportunity to the committee. Members agreed that preparation for this survey should be completed and the survey should take place in fall 2018.
- Meet with Provost Hanson and Vice Provost McMaster regarding their visions for the committee. Members added that academic integrity should be discussed from a system-wide perspective.
- Review the committee charge and confirm that it accurately outlines the purpose of the committee.
- Gather demographic data to inform a discussion on possible implicit bias involved in the reporting of academic dishonesty. Define goals and scope for a project around this topic. External researchers would enable the University’s data to be compared nationally, while internal researchers would have a greater understanding of the culture. The committee could make a recommendation that this survey or research be initiated.

In the interest of time, Schott adjourned the meeting.

Amber Bathke  
University of Minnesota