

[In these minutes: Accountability in reporting grades, Background checks, Non-course related scholastic dishonesty, Syllabi language]

STUDENT ACADEMIC INTEGRITY COMMITTEE (SAIC)

MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 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, Sharon Dzik, Jena Henry, Laura Coffin Koch, Chris Russill, Eric Watkins.

REGRETS: Dana Davis, Linda Jones.

ABSENT: Manami Bhattacharya, Erin West.

GUESTS: Amy Barness.

1. DISCUSSION WITH VICE PROVOST MCMASTER ON ACCOUNTABILITY IN REPORTING GRADES

Tom Shield said that he proposes meeting with Vice Provost Robert McMaster to talk about faculty accountability in reporting grades. Increased reporting of scholastic dishonesty needs to be encouraged, but training for faculty is needed first. OSCAI cannot catch two-time offenders if reports are not being sent to their office. Most students have a clean record, so low reporting only protects the students who cheat.

He said that low reporting also means that faculty could be dealing with cases without informing students of their rights.

Members made the following comments:

- Most faculty do not accuse a student of scholastic dishonesty without talking to the student
- Educational Policy Committee was receptive to increased training for faculty
- University culture is to not centrally report
- Faculty would be more receptive if they were trained
- Do modules exist at other institutions?
- Online resources would be helpful
- Students live up to expectations. If there are no expectations, then students expect that they can cheat

Laura Coffin Koch said that she would discuss a meeting with Vice Provost McMaster.

2. REPORT OF MEETING WITH TINA FALKNER AND TRACY SMITH ON BACKGROUND CHECKS

Tom Shield said that he and Sharon Dzik met with Tina Falkner, from the Office of the Registrar, and Tracy Smith, from the Office of the General Counsel, regarding the need for a policy on disciplinary background checks. After the conversation, neither felt that a policy was necessary, but that a process needed to be put in place. However, he feels that external agencies will still look to policy to determine which office is authorized to issue a response.

Q: Would residence hall violations be included?

A: OSCAI has access to records in their database.

Tom Shield said that he would bring draft policy language to the next meeting.

3. FINAL REVIEW OF NON-COURSE RELATED SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY REPORTING

Tom Shield said that he forwarded the committee's draft to the Graduate School last week for their review. This item will be back for committee approval in February.

Q: Does OSCAI receive reports from Admissions?

A: Yes.

Q: Do faculty need to call OSCAI or can they just complete the form and send it in?

A: The first time a faculty files report, they usually call OSCAI. Most cases are submitted without a call first.

Q: Are the forms online and can they be completed online?

A: The forms are online, but work would need to be done allow for online submission. The problem is that most cases have accompanying information that is needed to start reviewing the report in OSCAI.

4. DISCUSSION OF LANGUAGE ON RECOMMENDED LANGUAGE FOR SYLLABI

Tom Shield distributed the review Syllabi Policy.

Members made the following comments:

- Students are less likely to read through the syllabus if all these statements are included
- Students need to read the syllabi since it is the contract with the faculty member and it can vary by class

5. OTHER BUSINESS

Sharon Dzik said that she has been asked by faculty to advise them on how to interpret plagiarism for their class/assignment. She would like feedback from members on responses that would be helpful, without deciding the case for the faculty member.

Members made the following comments:

- Ask the faculty member what they think about the case/situation and what the expectation on the assignment
- Faculty should go to their department chair/head for assistance
- These determinations are the responsibility of each faculty member and can vary
- Refer faculty to what they put on their syllabus
- Was the incident plagiarism or an assignment that was done wrong/poorly?
- Faculty need to make clear expectations about proper and improper expectations, and what that means for charges of scholastic dishonesty

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

Becky Hippert
University Senate