

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

MEMORANDUM

To: Senate

From: Dr. Robert Gordon, Chair
Senate Committee on Academic Integrity in Student Learning
and Evaluation

Re: Final Report

Date: December 10, 2008

I am pleased to submit the Final Report of the Senate Committee on Academic Integrity in Student Learning and Evaluation (SCAISLE).

Introduction

The Senate Committee on Academic Integrity in Student Learning and Evaluation was created by Senate in 2005 and charged with the following responsibilities:

1. To promote academic integrity and honesty in course work and evaluation processes.
2. To establish procedures that support, improve and ensure the standards and conduct of examinations and to update these procedures as necessary.
3. To develop and update as necessary, a recommended statement on academic honesty for use in course outlines.
4. On an annual basis, to liaise with the University Board on Student Discipline and the Senate Committee on Disciplinary Appeals to ensure the currency of policies and procedures dealing with academic integrity and, when appropriate, recommend to Senate revisions to the policies as required.
5. To review and, where appropriate, make recommendations to the Senate Graduate Studies Committee on supervisory practices that will promote academic honesty and integrity.
6. To review and, where appropriate, make recommendations to the relevant office or committee on revisions to graduate regulations or guidelines that will

promote academic honesty and integrity concerning intellectual property, authorship and confidential research.

7. To consider other issues relating to the general question of academic integrity as it applies to courses and evaluation of student performance.
8. To report annually in October to Senate on activities in the preceding year.
9. To report to Senate in May 2008, and recommend whether the Committee should continue or whether its responsibilities be transferred to another Committee (or Committees) or Senate.

Membership

The first and only chair of the Committee is Dr. Robert Gordon, the Director of the School of Criminology and a faculty senator. Drs. Hilmar Pabel, Evan Tiffany, and Peter Tingling are faculty members at large. Other members are Mr. Joe Paling (undergraduate student representative and student senator); Ms. Camilla Sears (graduate student), Mr. Richard MacLeod (Student Services) and Ms. Elaine Fairey (Library). The secretariat is Ms. Jo Hinchliffe, Assistant Registrar and Academic Integrity Coordinator. Mr. Brett McCollum is the alternate graduate student representative.

The Committee would like to thank Drs. Alton Harestad and Sean Zwagerman, Mr. Larry Wiebe (Faculty of Education), Dr. Dianne Whiteley from Student Services, Ms. Josephine Wong, Ms. Karen Tse, and Mr. Derek Harder each of whom contributed significantly to the work of the Committee and whose terms expired at various points during the life of the Committee.

The Work of the Committee

SCAISLE scheduled, and usually held, monthly meetings from the Fall of 2005 onwards, except in the months of July and August each year. In the Fall of each year, the Committee discussed and approved an Action Plan for the following year based upon the Committee's mandate and other important issues that had surfaced during the previous year and were related to the mandate.

By the end of the first year of operations (2005), SCAISLE had completed four tasks: a review of the creation of the Academic Learning Centre in the library; a review of the on-line plagiarism module created by the library; and a review of examination standards, practices and procedures, particularly the adequacy of the facilities in which large examinations were held. The Committee also began to develop standardized academic honesty statements for use in departments and schools, the creation of a new incident report form to streamline and standardize the processing of academic dishonesty cases, the creation of a central data base in which to record academic dishonesty cases, a review of the value, or otherwise, of "Turnitin.com", and the development of a series of workshops on academic dishonesty for TAs and faculty.

By the Fall of 2006, SCAISLE had determined that the initial and continuing education of students, faculty and teaching support staff was the key to preventing and reducing instances of academic dishonesty across the campuses; consequently, a great deal of time was spent exploring and developing appropriate strategies. Academic honesty statements were drafted, tested, and circulated to both students and faculty/teaching assistants. In addition, the Committee had drafted and tested a one page document addressing the issue of ethical (and unethical) tutoring. These documents were to be posted on the Student Learning Commons website, and on the Committee's website which was under construction. The Committee had also been involved in the development of academic honesty materials for the Student Learning Commons which had built an extensive collection of information for students and an academic honesty/dishonesty component that included a link to a self administered test, developed by the Library, which determined a student's level of knowledge about academic honesty policies and issues. The Library had also developed an "exam bank" as an alternative to the unregulated exam banks found in some departments.

The administration of the system for dealing with academic dishonesty cases had also been reviewed and areas that needed improvement had been identified. A new, multi-copy, academic dishonesty report form had been drafted to assist faculty in accurately and more easily reporting cases to Chairs and Directors, and to the Registrar's office. A second, multi-copy report form had been developed for use by Chairs and Directors.

The University's Code of Student Conduct had been reviewed and a new version, amalgamating and amending the existing T10.01, 10.02 and 10.03 policies had been drafted. At the request of the Registrar and other senior administrators, the draft was being further revised to accommodate new student conduct issues and concerns (e.g., hazing, the possession of firearms on campus, and vexatious complainants). The revised student misconduct portion of the Code was developed as a result of a joint meeting of the Committee and representatives of UBSD, SCODA, the Ombudsperson, SFUFA, the Registrar's Office, and the President's Office. This proved to be an excellent exchange of ideas and concerns and is the seedbed of the new misconduct policies (found in the revised T10.01 and T10.02) slated for presentation to Senate in February 2009.

The University's Code of Faculty Ethics had been subjected to a preliminary review and plans made for further work during 2007. The Committee had also conducted a review of examination standards and procedures and, in partnership with the Registrar's Office, had developed a new set of policies and procedures for the conduct and supervision of examinations, especially those to be held in the gymnasium.

The Committee had also started a review of the uses and value of Turnitin.com with the goal of completing the review by the end of 2007. Committee members had also started to offer workshops on academic dishonesty issues for new faculty and teaching support staff, and had participated in academic dishonesty workshops at other institutions.

By the Fall of 2007, the Committee had completed the revisions to the Code of Student Conduct. This has involved an amalgamation of three existing policies, the addition of

new policies to deal with new areas of concern, and a redrafting of some of the academic dishonesty provisions which were rather vague. A redraft had been completed and the new draft policy had been circulated to affected individuals and groups for comments.

The Faculty Code of Ethics had been reviewed and a recommended amendment had been forwarded to SFUFA for their consideration.

Incident report forms for faculty and for chairs and directors had been completed and circulated to departmental academic integrity advisors and chairs and directors. The forms were "multi-part forms" designed to reduce the amount of paperwork required to report cases of academic dishonesty and thereby encourage faculty (and department heads) to report cases. It was expected that the Forms would need further amendment once they had been in use for a while.

The Committee had also recruited academic integrity advisors for each department, thanks to the assistance of the Deans and department heads across all three campuses. These faculty members were acting as academic honesty resource people for their departments and their colleagues, responsible for educating and assisting their colleagues with the interpretation and implementation of policy including the annual training and education of new faculty and teaching support staff.

The system was being administered and coordinated by the Academic Integrity Coordinator, Ms. Jo Hinchliffe, from the Office of the Registrar. The Coordinator is responsible for receiving, filing and analyzing reports of academic dishonesty, organizing and delivering the training of new departmental academic integrity advisors, organizing bi-annual, campus-wide meetings of the advisers, and issuing periodic bulletins on developments in the area of academic dishonesty. Ms. Hinchliffe had become a member of the Centre for Academic Integrity, a university based, North America wide group that focuses on ethics and academic integrity issues. She had also joined the Canadian Academic Integrity and Student Judicial Affairs Division of CACUSS (the Canadian Association of College and University Student Services), and was (and still is) serving on the Association's Executive as the Western Representative. As a result of this involvement, SCAISLE has been able to connect with other bodies addressing academic integrity issues across North America and both benefit from and contribute to a sharing of knowledge with colleagues.

The Committee had developed a resource kit for departmental integrity advisers, including an adaptable power-point presentation to be used for training new faculty and teaching support staff. The Committee had also reviewed ways of dealing more effectively with on-line essay banks such as "Cheathouse.com." This was a national concern and the Chair of the Committee had conferred with the Canadian Association of University Teachers to identify an effective strategy which could involve lobbying the federal government with respect to some legal options.

The Committee had completed its review of the use of Turnitin.com. It is clear that this service is used by some faculty in a handful of departments and that it is used for more than just the prevention and detection of academic dishonesty. This has been confirmed

through a survey of faculty members, conducted in conjunction with SFUFA. Some faculty felt that it is a valued resource, others were skeptical, but no one appeared to be vehemently opposed. Faculty are not required to use the service and the Committee was unable to find grounds for recommending prohibition of the service.

The Committee had started to publish short, bi-monthly, hard copy and e-bulletins to all faculty and teaching support staff about developments in policy and practice affecting academic dishonesty issues. The bulletins include information on the types and techniques of dishonest practice and are intended, in part, to alert faculty to the latest "fads" as well as suggest ways of preventing and detecting dishonesty.

The Committee continued to be concerned that academic integrity be entrenched in the process of graduate supervision. The Committee's work on this task began in 2005 and has piggy-backed on an initiative originating with the Dean of Graduate Studies office. The Dean's initiative was slated for completion by the end of 2007 but appears to be an issue that is still in progress.

The Committee had hoped to review the extent to which academic dishonesty is an issue in High Schools and the ways in which this could be stopped (e.g., by conducting workshops for Grade 12 teachers during their professional days). The need for an exploration of this issue was highlighted by the results of the Hughes/McCabe study which showed that most university students who engage in academic dishonesty learned how to do so in High School. Although worthwhile, the scope of a review of this kind was clearly beyond the capacity of the Committee which did not feel that it could be completed in the time left for the Committee to finish its work. Nevertheless, two Committee members - Ms. Hinchliffe and Ms. Fairey - have met with groups of High School counselors and opened dialogues on academic integrity issues that show significant promise. The matter has been flagged for possible future action by the Office of the Registrar.

By the Fall of 2008, the Committee had completed the training of departmental academic integrity advisors and was in the process of identifying and training a second generation of advisor. A system of advisors, overseen by the Academic Integrity Coordinator, is now in place across the three campuses, and this system includes the regular production of bi-monthly bulletins for faculty, teaching support staff and students, as well as the development of additional strategies and techniques for ensuring that faculty are kept informed of academic honesty issues and policy changes. To this end, the Committee has built a website (<http://students.sfu.ca/academicintegrity>). Special workshops for advisors have been well attended and more are planned for 2009, particularly following the adoption of the new policies affecting academic dishonesty and general misconduct.

The Committee has completed a full draft of a new Code of Student Conduct and related Procedural Code which will be presented to Senate in February 2009. These new policies have been subjected to a full, University-wide review and the final drafts reflect an exhaustive (and exhausting) consultation process.

The Committee's proposed amendment to the Faculty Code of Ethics (addressing faculty responses to student academic dishonesty issues) has not yet resulted in a policy change. The Committee is advised that while the proposal has been well received by SFUFA, any change to the Code is a negotiated matter and will have to be dealt with in the next round of SFUFA/SFU negotiations.

The Committee has developed a succession plan. When the Committee winds up on January 31st 2009 there will be a continuing need for some kind of small advisory group to assist the Academic Integrity Coordinator and the Registrar with the continuing implementation (and interpretation) of the new policy and procedure. The Committee has recommended, to the Registrar, the creation of an Academic Integrity Advisory Committee. The Terms of Reference for this Committee are attached.

Winding Up

The Committee had a recommended shelf life of three years. It was anticipated that most of its tasks would be completed within the three years but by the Spring of 2008 it became clear that additional time was necessary. Senate consequently extended the life of SCAISLE to January 31st 2009 with a request that a Final Report be submitted to Senate at its January 2009 meeting. This is that Report.

In the Committee's view, a great deal has been accomplished since the Fall of 2005, and accomplished with no budget. A new system for ensuring academic integrity is currently in place and is shortly to be reinforced by new policies and procedures. This system, *which also involves no new fiscal resources*, should serve the University well for many years, particularly if the new Academic Integrity Advisory Committee is appropriately supported by the University administration.

Submitted to Senate.