

Minutes  
Senate Scholastic Standards Committee  
November 17, 2005  
(approved 12/5/05)

In Attendance: Moiseff, Goodstein, Gramling, Jarvi, McGavran, Ratcliff, Sidney, von Munkwitz-Smith

1. The 10/31/05 minutes were approved

2. The committee was provided with payroll information about the number of students employed in job positions #262 and #263 (undergrad 'TA') from 2002 through 2005. In 2002 there were 14 students employed in these positions; this jumped abruptly to 41 in 2003 and is currently 34.

We remain concerned about the job responsibilities of these undergraduates, particularly when utilized to grade other students. These students need to be aware of the FIRPA regulations about confidentiality, for example. Additionally, there remain other questions of the appropriateness of allowing students to grade the work of other students and the concern that undergraduates not be used in place of graduate TAs merely for cost-saving. However, we recognize that some Schools or Departments may have valid reasons to utilize undergraduates as 'TAs'.

We are investigating several alternative approaches to dealing with this issue. A) We can address it at the University level, in form of a by-law. This may be an overly restrictive and complicated approach since we would have to deal with all the possible ramifications to all Schools and Colleges of any broad-based restrictions. B) We could provide specific 'opinion' to Dean MacKinnon voicing our concerns and concluding that the issue should be worked out 'locally' in CLAS. C) A middle ground would be to come up with a set of 'recommended guidelines for establishing a University policy' that would be brought to the senate floor for endorsement and then passed forwarded to the Provost. (Similar to the way we dealt with establishing interdepartmental programs). These recommendations might include, for example, the requirement (or suggestion) that Schools/Colleges/Departments establish a policy on how the undergraduates may be utilized (e.g., can they grade?) and provide assurance that students are made aware of issues such as confidentiality.

The discussion will continue.

3. We discussed, at great length, what our recommendation might be concerning the policy for handling academic misconduct allegations. The major issues were to minimize the complexity of the process and to ensure fairness for both parties (accuser and accusee). We also wanted to provide instructors with the flexibility needed to deal with the broad range of potential transgressions and the option to use their own discretion in meting out 'penalties' and/or 'remediation'. We also felt it important to have one central authority (i.e., Dean of Students) that was informed throughout.

Several lines of discussion were followed. It was suggested that there be student-body involvement in any hearings. The process for selecting and training students that would serve on the hearing panels would have to be worked out, but we could refer to how Social Misconduct issues are dealt with currently. It would seem appropriate that the hearing process would be centralized under the Dean of Students office. While discussing these panels it was 'debated' whether hearings should be mandatory before placing a 'misconduct notification, on a transcript.

After much discussion we came up with the following possible procedure:

If an instructor accuses a student of academic misconduct,

A) The instructor must inform the student of the nature of the allegation and the penalty that will be imposed. The notification must also inform the student of the appeal process (which we have not yet figured out). The penalty may include failure of the assignment or course, and may include the addition of a transcript notation of 'academic misconduct'. The magnitude of the penalty is left to the discretion of the instructor.

B) The instructor will be expected to inform the Dean of Students of accusations of academic misconduct, and include details about the imposed penalty including whether a transcript notation is requested. At the instructor's discretion, minor cases that are settled to the satisfaction of the instructor and student need not be reported to the Dean. However, we need to educate faculty on the value of notifying the Dean of Students even in when cases that are worked out directly between the faculty and student. This will allow the DOS to detect whether a specific student has pattern of misconduct and needs special 'attention.'

C) The student always has the right to appeal to the DOS, but the instructor also has the discretion to offer to discuss the allegation directly with the student. The instructor should notify the DOS if he/she decides to withdraw the allegation and/penalty.

We expect this discussion to continue.