MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

FACULTY: Pamela Aaltonen, Mary Comer, Ed Fox, Stanton Gelvin, Matthew Ginzel, Chad Jafvert, Russell Jones [chair], Chuck Krousgrill, Carlos Morales, Robert Nowak, Sandra Rossie, Kipling Williams

STUDENTS: Geralyn Denger, Jocelyn Dunn, Linfeng Jin, Daniel Romary, Renner Winston, Anastacia Young

ADVISORS: Heather Beasley, Linda Mason, Beth McCuskey

RESOLUTIONS FORWARDED TO THE SENATE

1. Senate Resolution 15-9 was presented by SAC in February and passed in March by Senate vote. This resolution proposes an increase in the minimum wage for part-time and temporary employees on campus to $8.25 per hour.

2. Senate Resolution 15-13 was scheduled for presentation by SAC in March, but was delayed because of lack of a quorum, which was called for in the midst of Prof. Jones’ presentation. Therefore, the resolution is scheduled for discussion and, hopefully, action [pending a suspension of the rules] at the April meeting of the Senate. This resolution proposes a continuation of funding for PLaCE, Purdue Language and Cultural Exchange, a new unit focused on improving oral and writing communication through culturally sensitive, educationally purposeful activities. This center focuses on helping international students who come from countries whose first language is not English. At present, funding is only guaranteed for PLaCE through academic year 2016-17.

3. Senate Resolution 15-20 is being presented for discussion at the March Senate meeting. SAC is hopeful that action can be taken as well at the meeting. This resolution is focused on increasing the staff size, by eight clinicians, of the Counseling and Psychological Services [CAPS] center on Purdue’s campus. Comparative studies document the shortcomings of our staffing relative to the number of psychologists available, the length of wait times for students to see a clinician, and the continued expected increase in loads as time goes on. This resolution was crafted through the excellent work of two student senators from Purdue
Student Government, Daniel Romary and Mackenzie McDonald. It has the support of the Equity and Diversity Committee as well.

ADDITIONAL WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

4. Selection of Faculty Representatives to PSG and PGSG meetings
   We elected Matthew Ginzel to attend the Purdue Student Government meetings as our faculty representative from SAC, and, similarly, Chad Jafvert as the representative to Purdue Graduate Student Government.

5. Academic honesty; cheating
   A request from President Daniels, forwarded via the Steering Committee to SAC at the beginning of the academic year, asked us to focus on issues of academic honesty amongst the student body. SAC chair Jones put together a panel of students, headed by Renner Winston, to study the issues, specifically ways in which students cheat, and how pervasive cheating on campus seemed to be. Winston submitted a report of the committee’s findings, which was forwarded on to the Steering Committee in March. [See Appendix A.]

6. Campus climate for international students
   The committee spent the better part of fall term in discussion of the campus climate for international students. We were dependent on one of our graduate student committee members, Linfeng Jin, to help spearhead the conversations, relating his experiences as an undergraduate at another institution, and comparing that to his time at Purdue. We discussed the “Let's Talk About It” program begun by PSG, which has as it’s goal to focus on a variety of important issues concerned with campus climate. A recent event drew an audience of 300 participants to Fowler Hall. It was suggested to take some events to the dorms, spreading them to different locations each time rather than a singular location. It was suggested that the climate for international students could be a topic for a future session. All in all, we feel that the University goes out of its way to involve international students in day-to-day activities of the campus-wide activities. Opportunities to make friends with people from countries other than one’s own are plentiful, and begin with Boiler Gold Rush. While it is natural that students will form cliques, and this is unavoidable, the opportunities to meet others are frequently made available.

7. Policy on procedures for allowing time for student leaves of absence
   The Equity and Diversity Committee [EDC] sent a request to SAC for information related to whether a policy could be established to protect students who required a leave of absence
from the University for a long-term illness. We specifically looked at three issues: re-admittance to undergraduate school; loss of financial aid; and loss of graduate financial aid. We learned that undergraduate students may withdraw from the University for up to three semesters and be re-admitted without having to re-apply. Their financial aid is not secure in all cases, however, depending on the type of aid they have received. This is because most financial aid is controlled by governmental sources. In essence, while students may not incur issues with academic standing when taking a leave of absence, their financial aid will probably be impacted. Issues of graduate student funding are much more difficult to guarantee, because of the variety of sources of graduate stipends and assistantships. These funds, and their security for a student requesting a leave, must be arranged on a case-by-case basis. Thus, at present, there is no campus-wide policy that guarantees a secure re-admittance, with continuance of funding, for either undergraduate or graduate students.

8. The Forecast App

At our meeting following the Senate meeting in which The Forecast App was presented, the question arose as to whether students have the ability to opt out of participation, or even if they are aware that their actions/movements are being tracked. The committee decided to draft a statement of concern, which was forwarded to The Steering Committee. As a result, the start of The Forecast App pilot was delayed, and a new task force was formed to work on issues of student privacy, with three members of SAC taking positions on the task force: Stan Gelvin, Chad Jafvert, and Chuck Krousgrill. The Statement of Concern is as follows:

The Student Affairs Committee expresses concern about the proposal to implement “The Forecast App” at Purdue. We perceive there is a potential for the invasion of student privacy with this tool. One thing to consider is whether students are aware of how their activities are being monitored, and whether they can be given the option to opt out of such monitoring. We strongly suggest further study before the policy is implemented.”
APPENDIX I

Purdue Student Report on Academic Honesty

Student Affairs Sub-Committee on Academic Honesty
Purdue Student Government
Purdue University
April 1st, 2016
Academic Honesty

Student Affairs Sub-Committee on Academic Honesty
Purdue Student Government
Purdue University
April 1st, 2016

Summary

The Academic Affairs Committee is comprised of several faculty members and several undergraduate and graduate students; its Sub-Committee on Academic Honesty is comprised of several undergraduate students within Purdue Student Government who represent various demographics and students. The focus of the sub-committee was to research various methods of academic dishonesty that the students have either witnessed or have heard about during their time at Purdue. The committee chair, Renner Winston, was able to attend a seminar at Purdue University with a focus on academic integrity to provide information to the sub-committee before its first session. The students were also provided some common statistics from the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. The students researched different methods of cheating while coming up with a proposed solution for each method mentioned below.
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Statistics on Academic Dishonesty

The students were provided the following information from the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities from 2013: 676 total discipline cases have been adjudicated by the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities; 202 (9.8%) of those cases have involved violations of the policy on “Academic Dishonesty; All Other Dishonesty;” 98 (48.5%) students in those cases accepted responsibility for the charges that were assigned; 83 (41.0%) students in those cases were found responsible for the charges that were assigned; 21 (10.3%) students in those cases either had their university level charges dismissed or were found not responsible; 91 (45%) students in those cases self-identify as International students.

Several common examples of a violation were: unauthorized sharing of homework (most common in Engineering and Computer Science courses, specifically ENG 132, CS 159, CS 240); plagiarism and improper citations/references; cheating such as copying from others exams, using unauthorized material during an exam, or attempting to resubmit graded homework/exams for extra points. More egregious examples were: purchasing papers from internet websites and submitting those as original works; entering faculty member offices to remove exams/homework assignments without authorization; entering university computing systems to alter/change recorded grades; attempting to have teacher/instructor manuals shipped to students enrolled in a class.

As mentioned in the previous statistics, 45% of the cases in violation of the policy on “Academic Dishonesty; All Other Dishonesty” were international students. Some common reasons to explain this trend would include: different perceptions/understanding of what “collaboration” and “group work” means; lack of understanding of faculty member expectations for particular assignments/coursework; pressure centered on academic success coming from their home; concern over the creation of a “record” of the incident. It should be noted that many of these concerns are the same for domestic students as well.
Student Thoughts on Information Provided by the Academic Integrity Seminar

An Academic Integrity seminar took place on March 4th, 2016 at Purdue University with guest from other colleges around the area. Renner Winston, chair of the sub-committee on Academic Honesty, was able to take notes and provide them for discussion during the sub-committee meetings. The following paragraphs include the topic of discussion as well as the student’s thoughts and perspectives.

International Students view academic dishonesty differently than students in the United States do. Part of this issue is due to a different testing system to get in to college compared to our testing system. In some cultures, using someone else’s work can be perceived as a sense of honor for the other person; the issue with this is when there is not a proper citation of the referenced material.

Fraternity systems have a large amount of previous class files and binders that are used to help new members while helping to improve the chapters GPA. This was not perceived as negative by the committee, because if a professor were to hand back exams to the students after taking it, then it should be expected by the professor that it will be studied for future exams.

Some students are ashamed to reach out to their professors if they are struggling with their courses. If this is the case, then students will sometimes resort to cheating on their assignments in order to get the work done. This could be a result of students being unprepared academically when they get to Purdue, so we must trust that the Office of Admissions is recruiting the right students that are getting in to Purdue. If students are ashamed to reach out to professors, a method could be set in place to incentivize students to reach out if they are in need of help in lieu. It could also be recommended to professors by the university that this is a root cause of cheating, so that professors can promote their students to come to them if they need any help. It was also noted that a potential solution would be to reach out to the parents of the students who are in violation of the academic honesty policy.

In some rare cases, a student will give an emotional excuse as to why they cheated and convince the professor to not turn them in. This can end up doing
more harm than good because the student could have given the same response to a different professor in a different class at a different time. The program is in place that if a student is caught cheating, then the Dean of Students will be notified. If there is a common trend with that student, then they are removed from the university. The issue is that some professors are not reporting every single case because it might be a minor infraction and they trust that the student will not do it again. The sub-committee did not know the correct solution, but it was recommended that there is a software that allows professors to record these "minor infractions" so that there is not a severe punishment the first time around for that student.

The final topic was on the website “Chegg,” an online homework help site. If the professor gives out problems from the end of a chapter from a well-known text book, the student is capable of going online to find every solution to their problems for a small fee. This is most commonly used by students with large course loads who have not properly managed their time to complete the homework on their own. It is much easier to “Chegg” their homework assignment for 30 minutes, than it is to actually work out the problem on their own for 3 hours. This is only helpful in the short-term, because when it is time for the exam, the student will not know how to properly think through a problem to solve it. Once a student uses this website for the first time, it becomes much easier to use it again because they do not want to face the time commitment of solving a lengthy homework assignment. It was recommend that professors give out homework assignments that were not previously recorded online or in a text book, because there will more than likely be a solution to it online.

Conclusions

The information provided by the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities to the sub-committee was very helpful in looking at common trends with academic dishonesty. The sub-committee was able to look at the data, analyze it, and relate it to the information provided by the Academic Integrity seminar. The information provided allowed the sub-committee to think about their own experience at Purdue and communicate a realistic student-perspective on the data that was provided.
References
