4-9-2013

Scholastic minutes 04/09/2013

Scholastic Committee

In attendance: Jennifer Goodnough (chair), Hilda Ladner, Chad Braegelmann, Judy Korn, Brenda Boever, Pete Wyckoff, Luciana Ranelli, Ellery Wealot, Jen Zych Herrmann, guests Melody Veenendaal, Sandy Olson-Loy

Not in attendance: Melissa Hernandez, Zach Kroells, Clare Dingley, Kent Blansett, Jess Larson, Nic McPhee, Steve Gross

1.   Minutes For Review
April 2, 2013 minutes approved

2.   Chair's Report
no report

3.   SCEP Report
no report

4.   Academic Integrity report
After introductions, including Ellery Wealot providing a pronunciation tip for his first name, "rhymes with celery," Sandy Olson-Loy, vice chancellor for student affairs, and Melody Veenendaal, program specialist for student affairs, presented a report on Academic Integrity (AI) at Morris. The Scholastic Committee (SC) provides members, as a SC subcommittee, to the Committee on Academic Integrity, and the SC reviews procedures for academic integrity. The procedures are available at www.morris.umn.edu/committees/scholastic/academicintegrity.

The Office of Student Affairs has gathered data on the reports filed with the office since the 1999-2000 academic year. (See Addendum One.) During the last 14 years,136 academic integrity incidents were reported, the majority "low level" offenses, which ranged from attendance sign- in for another student to high-level plagiarism, sharing information or using exams, and cheating in class. The University is tracking and analyzing issues of academic integrity and emphasizing reporting.

At Morris, the process begins with faculty members first talking to student about the academic integrity issue. The faculty member then determines if a violation of the policy occurred from the information available to them and if so determines an outcome that could range from a zero on a paper, a zero on a quiz, or failing the course based on the severity of the incident. If the faculty member and student do not come to a resolution, either party can request a committee hearing. The procedure calls for documentation of academic integrity violations with Student Affairs, providing the opportunity to create a record and address multiple violations. There has been a significant increase in reporting; 42 cases this year to date. There may be more incidents, but the number also reflects better documentation and reporting.

When faculty submit an academic integrity report, a letter is sent to the student outlining the procedures and the student's due process options. The student has the option to submit additional information. Student Affairs also reviews the academic integrity file to see if the student has prior violations.

The Chair shared that the Twin Cities is seeing a similar spike in reporting. There seems to be a correlation between having a resource person in Science and Mathematics and the number of reports from the division. Perhaps each division should have a point person for academic integrity issues.

A question was asked about "organized" cheating of groups of students. Does the intentionality of this type of cheating increase reporting? Last year, there was one situation in which several people were involved, and there were more group incidents this year.

Electronic information and commercial entities were discussed. To date, the use of companies that sell papers, etc., has not been identified as an issue at Morris.

When a student's writing doesn't match past assignments, faculty take note. Work submitted through Moodle is easily reviewed through turnitin.com. The chair was invited to a meeting on "We will take your class for you" sites. Discussed an expose about a Twin Cities company that claimed many of the people they hire are adjunct faculty and/or graduate students.

Universitywide Student Academic Integrity Committee's message is to design your course so that you will catch cheating (more difficult) or that students won't cheat (easier). Students are likely to cheat when they see no value in the material, have not established a relationship with the professor, see others get away with cheating, or if the student feels that the faculty member is being unreasonably hard.

SC and guests discussed various ways to intercept potential academic integrity violations before they happen. Morris doesn't talk to new students as a whole about academic integrity during orientation as had been done in the past. Faculty talk about it in their classrooms, but the information varies between faculty members. Should this topic be emphasized in orientation? Academic expectations are addressed later during orientation week. Are we proactively educating students about academic honesty instead or reacting to academic dishonesty? Do Intellectual Community courses address academic integrity? Students should be well-versed in plagiarism and notation in Writing for the Liberal Arts. It needs to be conveyed to upper-level division faculty that they should be clear on academic expectations and not assume that students learned this information before their course.

There are discipline specific ways of addressing academic integrity. For example, international students education systems greatly different, and those students need be exposed to United States higher education expectations. These topics are covered in international student orientation, STELLAR, and LANG courses.

The committee and guests discussed the St. Olaf College honor code through which students commit to the shared principles of academic integrity and pledge to turn in other students if they observe cheating. It was noted that there is inconsistent data on the effectiveness of honor codes.

Some students make the blatant choice to plagiarize, and Student Affairs has looked into situations that lead to these student decisions.

The discussion turned to ways for Scholastic Committee to make a difference in the area of Academic Integrity.

- The Chair will talk to WLA faculty regarding academic integrity topics as a learning outcome.
- The Chair will speak to the Dean about IC covering academic integrity topics.
- Wealot will bring the topic to MCSA, which may provide a good forum for an academic integrity discussion.
- Provide a positive message at orientation…these are the high standards at this campus. Reinforce with practical message later.
- Provide academic integrity grid as guidance for faculty.
- Provide information to faculty based on data. The data does not support the faculty's worry of destroying a student's career.
- We need to reinforce the message that a very small percentage of Morris students violate academic integrity policy, but if needed, a fair procedure, not overly burdensome, is in place.
- It would require a thorough conversation, but the campus could consider giving many first-time violators a sanction of probation.
- Academic Integrity information could be included on the Student OneStop.
- Academic Integrity could be a topic at the Faculty Retreat.

Wealot and Goodnough will revise the TC academic grid for Morris use. The grid will be presented at the April 22 Campus Assembly meeting. Olson-Loy will provide a message to be incorporated with the SC report to assembly. Wealot will bring the topic and grid to MCSA with the proactive question, "How do we establish a climate of academic honesty?"

5.   Transcript and Grading Policy review tabled

Respectfully submitted,

Judy R. Korn, executive staff

Addendum One may be accessed at www.morris.umn.edu/committees/scholastic.