

Minutes  
Educational Affairs Committee  
February 20, 1997  
2:30 p.m.

Members present: Carole Henry, William S. Kisaalita, Marguerite Koepke, Jere Morehead, and Scott Schamp.

Guests present: Bruce Shutt, Registrar, and Jason Waters, Vice President of the Student Government Association.

As the first order of business, Jason Waters presented the Student Government Association's proposal for an Honor Code for the University. Some questions were raised regarding the wording of the proposal, and suggestions were made regarding how the proposal might be amended before going before the University Council for action. One question concerned the meaning of the phrase "and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others" in the proposal. Mr. Waters explained that the word "tolerate" was taken from honor codes at other institutions and that it was intended as an aspirational statement only, to make students aware of the value of academic honesty and to begin building a culture of honesty on campus; it was not intended to make failure to report an offense in itself. Professor Davis added that prohibited conduct is outlined in the policy, "A Culture of Honesty", and that that policy does not make failure to report an offense. The intent of the proposed Honor Code is not to create new offenses but to incorporate by reference the existing academic honesty policy.

In light of the language in the proposal to the effect that "a procedure will be implemented to assure that all new students are educated about this Honor Code and sign a copy of it," Dr. Shutt asked what would happen if a student refused to sign it. Would we not allow the student to register? Professor Morehead suggested that rather than tie the requirement to registration, we tie it to admission. At the end of the currently used admission application, applicants are asked to sign the admission application, certifying that all information provided is truthful. We could add the Honor Code to the application form, and when applicants sign the application, they are subscribing to the Honor Code. If an applicant fails to sign the application, it is returned to him or her. The Honor Code could also be made a part of freshman and transfer orientation.

Professor Morehead also suggested that the paragraph titled "Administration of Honor Code" be reworded to read: "A Culture of Honesty has already established a fair "Academic Honesty System" and fair "Procedures for Adjudicating Dishonest Cases," and this Honor Code incorporates the existing policy and procedures."

Professor Shamp moved, and Professor Morehead seconded, a motion that the Educational Affairs Committee recommend the Honor Code proposal, as amended, to the Executive Committee for placing on the University Council agenda for action at the March meeting. The motion unanimously carried.

Next, Dr. Shutt mentioned that in semester conversion discussions the idea had been floated that we might institute a five- or six-week period at the beginning of each semester in which students could withdraw from a course and receive an automatic W. Several institutions already do this. Such a procedure would relieve students, faculty, and staff (in the colleges and in the Registrar's Office) from the enormous volume of paperwork (and legwork) associated with withdrawals. Professor Morehead asked whether a warning could be placed on the OASIS screen before the student hits the key withdrawing from a course, to the effect of: "Warning; withdrawal from this course will reduce your academic course load and may affect your eligibility for financial aid, your athletic eligibility, or perhaps eligibility for other services or entitlements." Dr. Shutt said that such a message could be added to OASIS. Professor Morehead also added that we might want to place some limit on this access; for example, we might want to limit a student to one such withdrawal per semester. Dr. Shutt agreed to write a proposal and present it to the committee at a future meeting. Since the proposal would not be implemented until Fall 1998, we have plenty of time to act on it.

Finally, Professor Koepke mentioned a letter she had received from Wyatt Anderson asking the EAC to consider the request from his Arts and Sciences student advisory group that diplomas indicate a graduate's major area of study as well as the degree being conferred. Dr. Shutt said that a faculty committee had considered the same question seven or eight years ago (when the diploma was being redesigned) and had rejected the idea at that time. He said if we add majors, the diploma starts to become cluttered. Some students have four or more honors (e.g., Summa Cum Laude, First Honor Graduate, etc.), and if we list majors as well, we start to run out of room, short of redesigning the diploma again. Moreover, if we agree to list majors, what about students with double or even triple majors, and why not minors and areas of concentration? The committee agreed to study this matter further, after receiving input from students and colleges.

No further business appearing, the committee adjourned at 3:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Samuel M. Davis  
Secretary to the committee