

**CEP 2005-2006 FOLLOW-UP REVIEW REPORT**  
**OF THE UCSD POLICY ON INTEGRITY OF SCHOLARSHIP**

**August 31, 2006**

In a continuing effort to optimize the implementation of UCSD's Policy on Integrity of Scholarship, a CEP subcommittee over the last four months conducted interviews and discussions with a range of individuals involved in the campus integrity process. The occasion for this exercise was provided by the mandate for a one-year follow-up to the more extensive review undertaken by CEP between April and June of 2005 ("Campus Policy on Integrity of Scholarship: Report on Implementation and Effectiveness", June 1, 2005). The 2005 report, in its turn, followed upon the even more extensive review and substantial revision of the Integrity Policy concluded in 2003. In essence, the following sets out to determine how the improvements proposed in the 2005 report have fared; and to propose further refinements.

To this end, interviews were conducted with VCSA Joseph Watson, Academic Records Coordinator Candace Garner, Interim Academic Integrity Coordinator Cynthia Davalos, Campus Counsel Dan Park, Director of the Office of Student Policies and Judicial Affairs Tony Valladolid, the College Provosts (twice), the College Deans of Student Affairs, and the standing members of the Academic Dishonesty Hearing Board. The AIC, on behalf of CEP, solicits feedback on the integrity process from every instructor who participates in it, and forwards the instructor's responses to CEP. These responses form a valuable dossier of direct communications from faculty involved.

Additionally, CEP benefits from direct observation of the policy in practice. Questions on particular cases are frequently directed to CEP by Academic Records, the AIC, and individual faculty, provosts and deans; and the issues raised formed the substance of discussions on academic integrity at virtually every CEP meeting over the last year. The following is the CEP follow-up report of the UCSD Policy on Integrity of Scholarship, and is primarily based on the above mentioned CEP subcommittee's report on the campus integrity process.

#### General remarks

There is nothing to indicate a higher incidence of cheating at UCSD than at any other institution. The incidence of cheating and plagiarism nationwide, however, appears to be surprisingly high. A Rutgers University study in 2003 claimed that one-third of college undergraduates plagiarized (reported in the Los Angeles Times, June 17, 2006). Another survey of 62,000 students on 96 campuses cited in the New York Times (May 18, 2006) found that two-thirds of the students questioned admitted to cheating. Such figures hardly provide conclusive figures, much less for our own campus. But statistics aside, it is fair to say that cheating is endemic, at UCSD and elsewhere; it is not exceptional nor rare; and no one is particularly shocked by it. Further, it has undergone its own institutionalization, with an infrastructure of resources, techniques and tools that seem to be fairly well-developed. Its status is nearly that of an informal substratum of the academic experience, a reality that is regretted, but to a certain extent tacitly tolerated.

We are convinced that the majority of our students disapprove of cheating, and expect to be graded, for better or worse, on the basis of their own effort. Cheating distorts the grading curve, and honest effort is devalued as a result of unpenalized cheating. Students realize this; and they realize that if more cheating cases are processed and sanctioned, honest effort will be more fairly rewarded. This, in fact, is the focus of CEP's effort at this time: to establish the basis for greater and more visible participation in the integrity process. CEP hopes that in coming years, a smoothly functioning process that is perceived as fair and

strictly observant of due process, and is stringent enough to deter cheating, will win the trust of faculty who must bring forward cases. Simultaneously, CEP hopes to raise awareness across the entire campus population that cheating is a weak alternative to actually learning. The details of the policy and the process, the seriousness of the sanctions, and the options for minimizing or disabling cheating before it occurs, all must be articulated more openly; but above all, at all levels of our community we need to make a persuasive case for the fundamental benefits of academic integrity.

CEP feels that we are in a good position to do this. We continue to remain satisfied with the policy as revised in 2003; and the broad changes to implementation set in motion by the 2005 report appear unequivocally successful. Most significant among these is the removal of direct responsibility for the handling of cases from the Student Conduct Coordinator and the office of Student Policies and Judicial Affairs, and the creation of the Academic Integrity Coordinator as replacement. The 2005 report notes that between 2003 and 2005 substantial overstepping of the responsibilities assigned in the policy to the SCC and SPJA occurred, while at the same time enormous organizational disarray prevailed in these offices. A conflation of "academic misconduct" with general student misconduct was observed, and the report asserts that "breaches of academic integrity should not be confused with ordinary forms of student misconduct", since acts of cheating "directly threaten the core educational mission of our institution". The current CEP strongly supports this view, and welcomes the new dispensation of duties as a major improvement in the application of the policy.

A student who has received a passing grade by cheating has not learned the material, and very likely will never again have the opportunity to. The student will advance to the next level of academic pursuit lacking at least some of the skills needed to absorb new material. The process is apt to repeat itself. Ultimately, a culture of advancement without real competence spreads, with obvious consequences to the quality of research and leadership, to personal satisfaction, and to standards of possible human and intellectual attainment. The effects on society need hardly be elaborated.

CEP takes the position that learning, as an end in itself, is the real basis of the university. Benefits to industry, government, scientific and cultural knowledge and the arts, and the personal advantages that adhere to these, proceed from the pure act of learning. Cheating is the conscious decision to not learn, but to move through the system anyway. This is the sense in which academic dishonesty threatens the core of our institution.

The parameters of academic integrity are subtle, and vary in particulars from discipline to discipline. This is another reason that a typical code of conduct, or even an ethics code, is often insufficient guidance. The lines between collaborative and individual work, between citation, quotation, allusion and collage, between problems solved with the aid of a written or a memorized formula, can often not be discerned from outside the discipline. The policy specifically, and wisely, relies on the instructor of record in the initiation of a case and in the determination of a case's merits; and when an academic dishonesty hearing is called for, it is faculty, together with student representatives and college deans, who weigh the evidence. The authority of the faculty is at the very heart of the process, and the roles of other participants, whether provosts, deans or the AIC, as essential to the implementation as they are, must defer to the defining role of the faculty.

For these very same reasons, academic integrity must be taught to students. It does not appear that high schools are teaching it. How to represent knowledge, and how to distinguish between existing knowledge and new knowledge (however modest the new knowledge may be) are fundamental questions. Much has been made of the inability of the "internet generation" to differentiate between own knowledge, another's knowledge, and open source information, which appears to be there for the taking. Students who are accustomed to software that performs formatting tasks for them may no longer feel the necessity to learn rules of footnotes, bibliographies or perhaps even the proper use of quotation marks. Students with

undeveloped writing skills may panic when asked to produce an entire essay of their own, and indeed they may have never been required to write one independently before. These are deficits in students' understanding of their relationship to knowledge, and we overlook them at our peril. CEP sees a profound responsibility in the writing programs, for example, to imbue all students with a focus on developing original arguments, from the most basic level if need be. Faculty must embrace the problem of academic integrity in the classroom, addressing it openly and in the terms of the discipline being taught. Original thought and original discovery, of whatever scope, are empowering; integrity suggests wholeness. The ethics of academic integrity should not be separated from the skills and confidence which make cheating unnecessary.

Certainly, cheating also takes place as the result of sheer misjudgment. The extreme, and increasing, competitiveness of higher education plays a role; and potentially the increasing expense of education, even at a public institution, as students assume that a hoped-for "return", in the form of high grades and admission to graduate and professional schools, must be forthcoming from the investment. Regrettably, sanctioning is the only useful deterrent.

The 2005 report found that sanctioning was lax, and generally below the levels specified by the CEP-COP jointly agreed-upon Recommended Outcomes for Academic Dishonesty. According to the policy, the determination of the administrative sanction rests with the college deans. This is an entirely appropriate component of the college system, in which a student's college represents their social, quasi-familial home. The deans fulfill a supportive need for students, helping them through the labyrinth of university life and often providing reassurance. It is not surprising then that the sanctioning process adds an awkward and unwanted negative aspect. The 2005 report is inconclusive in ascertaining the reasons for lax sanctioning, as well as for the perceived passivity of the deans while the SCC appropriated some of their responsibilities in the integrity process. In the current round of interviews, it appears that sanctioning is now more strictly in line with the Recommended Outcomes, and CEP welcomes this. But the deans still seem somewhat reluctant, or reticent, when it comes to enforcement.

Specific examples emerged relating to the enforcement of timetables. When a student is notified of a charge of academic dishonesty, a response time of ten business days is granted the student. According to policy, if there is no response in that time, the student is presumed to have accepted the charge. In practice, it appears that students are not always held to this timetable, and delays of unknown length are countenanced. Some inconsistencies regarding appeals also emerged, in which deans appear to have encouraged appeals, and predicted positive outcomes for appeals, that seemed inappropriate to others in the process (including CEP). Also, sanctions that appeared meaningless to CEP were encountered, such as suspension for the duration of summer session. Individual faculty have indicated efforts by deans to persuade them to withdraw charges.

Obviously students are emboldened by the perception that enforcement is lax or negotiable. And the far-reaching effect of weak sanctioning is to undercut the honest work turned in by the majority of students. The deans should be encouraged to consider the assessment of strict sanctions as part of the support they provide to all students, inasmuch as deterring cheating supports the academic mission of the entire university. CEP observes improvement in the deans' sanctioning, but sees an urgent need for continued consultation to maintain standards.

Too-lenient sanctioning also led to frustration by faculty. Both the 2003 revision of integrity policy and the 2005 report address widespread observations that sanctioning levels were too lenient; and in the 2005 report some faculty stated that the laxness of sanctioning made participation in the process seem pointless. Also, it is worth recalling that one of the impulses for the 2003 revision was to achieve greater fairness by improving the consistency of sanctioning across all of the colleges. CEP has heard almost no indications from faculty that sanctioning is too harsh, although the college deans report that some instructors are

surprised by the sanctions. At this time, the urgent need is to assert the policy more vigorously, so that enforcement leads to deterrence. Some interviewees proposed publishing the number of penalized integrity cases, and the sanctions received, in the *Guardian*, although CEP is divided on the wisdom of this. It is essential, however, for the sanctions levels to be more widely known by students and faculty.

Overall, the 2005 report cites the apparent abandonment by much of the faculty of the formal process as set out in the policy. Delays, poor communication from the SCC, confusion in the process, and laxness of sanctioning caused many faculty to either stop citing cases, or to go outside the policy to settle cases on their own. The problem with settling cheating incidents outside the formal process is that while the student may receive a failing grade or a lower grade as punishment, there is no record of cheating, and the student will not be identified as a repeat offender. Worse, the student can retake the failed course for a passing grade, and there is no net punishment of the cheating whatsoever. It is difficult to determine how much progress we have made in winning faculty back to the process in the last year. The process has definitely improved; whether this has come to the attention of the numerous faculty who would be inclined to participate if they gave it another try is hard to say. Finally, when instructors settle cheating incidents outside of the process, the student is left without recourse to a hearing or to appropriate advice from the college.

The current cycle of interviews and the findings outlined below demonstrate again the importance CEP places on this issue, and the enormous time and effort the Committee and Senate staff are prepared to invest in improving the process. The Committee wishes to thank all of the participants for the time and care they brought to this exercise. From a certain perspective the prospect that CEP must continue devoting so much of its already full agenda to overseeing academic integrity seem daunting; yet we see no alternative, as we consider few issues in our purview to have greater urgency. It is hoped that this continuing effort will be met with reciprocation from faculty, students, administration and staff; and that the conversation on academic integrity will be taken up openly by the entire campus community.

The main findings to emerge at this time are as follows:

-The interim Academic Integrity Coordinator has performed admirably in the inaugural year of this office. Significant improvement in communication, speed of case disposition and record-keeping were noted by Academic Records, COD, SPJA and senate staff involved in the integrity process.

-JASMON (Judicial Affairs Student Misconduct Online Network) has still not been adequately upgraded or customized for the specific uses required by the integrity process. Academic Records reported unnecessary work and parallel record-keeping due to the shortcomings of JASMON. These include the inability to view a student's overall record or to track a case in progress; and the inability to make detailed entries regarding the type of dishonesty, the presence of mitigating circumstances, and the sanction level. COD and AIC were equivocal about the functionality of the database.

-Academic Dishonesty Hearings are conducted in a manner that is overly legalistic, possibly overly formalized, and unnecessarily resembling a court of law. This was cited by the Hearing Board members and the college deans, and confirmed by the SPJA director. Campus Council felt that this need not be the case, and that it could be detrimental to the process. Students going before a Hearing Board have access to student advocates for advice and representation; the student advocates are typically pre-law students, some of whom use these opportunities as a sort of mock trial to hone their courtroom skills.

-SPJA confirmed anecdotal reports that, contrary to policy, hearings of cases from the writing programs were sometimes attended by the Academic Coordinators of the writing programs, rather than the instructors of record.

-Scheduling of hearings has improved as a result of the change in composition of the Hearing Boards from 3 standing/10 alternate to 6 standing/7 alternate, which was approved by Representative Assembly. The backlog of unheard cases has been reduced. AIC and Hearing Board members noted this improvement.

-SPJA acknowledged that Hearing Board members are trained by the Student Conduct Coordinator; Hearing Board members suggested that not all members are sufficiently versed in the policy and in the special nuances of academic dishonesty; and that Hearing Board members do not train together.

-Shortcomings of cheating-detection software - such as TurnItIn.com - were noted by Hearing Board members, as well as cases in which slight neglect of rules of attribution were brought forward; the dangers of undue reliance on a mechanized detection system, without overview by the instructor, were mentioned by COP.

- College deans complained of overly restrictive sanctioning, and questioned the possible rigidity of the Recommended Outcomes for Academic Dishonesty.

-Sanctioning by the college deans--found to be too lenient in the 2005 report--has become more consistent with the guidelines adopted in the Recommended Outcomes for Academic Dishonesty. However, puzzling variations in the disposition of sanctions continue to occur. In particular, Academic Records identified the following as possible inconsistencies with written policy: appeals of the timing of suspensions, suspensions for summer session only, and reinstatements of students who appeal suspensions. Discussions with COD and COP confirmed that there is a disparity of opinion on the disposition of sanctions and appeals.

-COD indicated that they do not always hold students to the 10-day deadline for responding to a charge, after which the student is presumed to have accepted the charge.

-Individual faculty have advised CEP of cases in which the college deans have urged faculty to withdraw charges.

-CEP has observed an inordinate number of cases withdrawn by the instructor who initiated them.

- Some faculty have indicated that they fear negative consequences to their status or advancement should they bring charges of academic dishonesty. Others have expressed concerns regarding litigation from students or parents. Campus Council explained that in the case of litigation from a student or parent, UCSD guarantees legal representation and indemnification, as long as the instructor is acting in good faith.

-Faculty are delinquent in submitting the final grade at the conclusion of the process. COD and Academic Records confirmed that numerous faculty are unaware of their responsibility to conclude the process with a grade that is appropriate in light of the incident ("academic sanction"). These delays compromise the smooth functioning of the process and can lead to serious problems for students.

-Informal discussion and reports from faculty and staff indicate that the widespread dissatisfaction with and mistrust of the integrity process on the part of faculty, noted in the 2005 report, has not changed significantly. Many faculty do not use the process; many seem oblivious to it; some take the penalizing of academic dishonesty into their own hands. All participants in the current interview cycle acknowledged that major educational efforts must be undertaken to inform the campus community on the process, and to win the trust of the faculty, who form the linchpin to its application. All noted the large numbers of presumed cheating cases that remain unpenalized.

Changes already implemented since Fall 2005:

-In Spring 2006 the new Faculty Advisory Panel on Academic Integrity was named by Committee on Committees, at CEP's request. A charge letter was provided by CEP to define this Panel's function. CEP felt that a large number of instructors, particularly new, part-time or visiting faculty, would benefit from counsel and feedback from their peers on issues related to academic integrity. Questions that might be asked of a FAPAI member include whether sufficient evidence exists to proceed with a case, what is expected of an instructor as the case is processed, what sort of communication with the cited student is appropriate, etc. It is hoped that some of the perceived reluctance to proceed with cases can be overcome through informed advice.

-In Winter 2006, VCSA Watson requested a change to the composition of the Academic Integrity Hearing Board in order to facilitate scheduling of hearings. With the requirement that at least one standing member (and not more than two alternates) be present at any hearing, and with a total of only three faculty campus-wide designated as standing members, it had become logistically unrealistic to schedule timely hearings. A backlog of unheard cases had built up, reflecting poorly on the handling of the policy. When cases become too old, the fairness of the hearing is threatened; indeed, instructors may no longer be in residence, and students may have moved on without their cases having been resolved. It must be said, however, that the vast majority of backed-up cases resulted from delays in their processing at SPJA, prior to the advent of the Academic Integrity Coordinator.

VCSA Watson and CEP determined that the ratio of Standing to Alternate Hearing Board Members should be changed from 3 Standing and 10 Alternates to 6 Standing and 7 Alternates. This change in the composition of the Board was endorsed by Committee on Rules and Jurisdiction, and subsequently unanimously approved by Representative Assembly in May 2006. Scheduling appears to be proceeding more smoothly since then..

-In Winter 2006, CEP informed the Writing Programs that all cases of plagiarism must be submitted by the instructor of record, via that instructor's official UCSD email account. This assures that the important decision of charging a student with academic dishonesty rests with the individual who has ultimate responsibility for the conduct of the course, including the assignment of the final grade. Cases flagged by automated cheating-detection software which, upon scrutiny in the overall context of the assignment and of the course are without merit, will hopefully no longer enter the system.

#### New Recommendations:

-The Academic Senate should initiate an active educational campaign to raise awareness of integrity issues. We envision a small group visiting departments and programs during faculty meetings, with a ca. 20 minute presentation, bringing the crucial issues out into the open and answering questions. Details of the process, prevention and sanctioning should be concisely outlined. A post card with email addresses, web addresses and phone numbers for the main contacts should be distributed at the presentation.

-JASMON, the campuswide database for all student misconduct cases, is inadequate to the purposes of the academic integrity process. CEP recommends that a new, more compact and customized database be developed, to be housed in Student Affairs, dedicated to academic dishonesty cases. Academic dishonesty cases must be sortable and accessible independent of a student's possible record of general misconduct; and the flexibility to view an individual record over time and in adequate detail must be present.

-The office of the Academic Integrity Coordinator should remain permanently in Student Affairs, and should continue to function independently of the SCC and SPJA. The function of the Academic Integrity Coordinator has been clearly and positively defined over the last year as the fulcrum of the integrity process: not bringing to bear the weight of decision-making, not asserting policy or determining results, not discussing or evaluating

evidence with faculty; but rather transferring information, seeking advice when necessary, keeping the process in motion, balancing the various parts, and maintaining accurate records.

-A critical interim implementation change was agreed upon by members of the Integrity Task Force which requires formal changes in the UCSD Policy on Integrity of Scholarship: once the charge of academic dishonesty has been resolved and the instructor is ready to assign the student his or her final grade, the instructor records the grade on the Grade Change Form which is then to be sent directly to Academic Records, not to the AIC.

-A meeting of the appropriate parties should be convened with the standing members of the Academic Dishonesty Hearing Board, as well as the director of SPJA and the AIC, to discuss the atmosphere of the hearings. Campus Counsel has also indicated willingness to participate in a re-evaluation of the conduct of the hearings. The involvement of the student advocates must be especially reevaluated. CEP points out that an academic dishonesty hearing is very far from a mock trial; it is potentially a decisive encounter in the accused student's academic career. No individual's ego or personal ambitions should encroach on the transparency, respect and probity which must prevail in the hearing. A set of desired conditions should be developed and clearly communicated to the relevant parties through the appropriate channels (i.e., by the director of SPJA to the student advocates and the SCC, by the college deans' representative to the other college deans, etc.). The presiding dean at each hearing should hold all present at the hearing to the agreed upon conditions.

-Hearing Board members should be trained together, standing and alternates alike, in a single session attended by a representative from the CEP Subcommittee on Academic Integrity.

-The question of the start time for suspensions should be consciously considered by the COD when determining the administrative sanction. The recommended start time for suspensions should be the beginning of the quarter following the one in which the decision falls, but COD may choose an immediate, or a later start time, depending on the case. Further, appeals exclusively of the timing of a suspension should no longer be considered; and, an appeal should not be treated as equivalent to a stay of suspension; thus when students begin to serve a suspension, they may not attend classes even if they have initiated an appeal. CEP recommends that dismissals continue to be effective immediately.

-The Academic Senate website pages on Academic Integrity need to be updated. Clear, easily-navigable links to the AIC, FAPAI and to the relevant text of the policy itself should appear readily, and outdated information needs to be purged from the site. A concise roadmap for instructors new to the process should be devised, with the most basic information legible in an instant. Advice to instructors on preventing cheating (exam techniques, full disclosure of what is and what is not permissible, information on typical cheating methods, etc.) needs to take a prominent place on the site.

-*The UCSD Instructor's Guide for Preventing and Processing Incidents of Academic Dishonesty* needs to be updated, and perhaps rewritten. Here too, advice on preventing cheating needs to be highlighted, and the process needs to be outlined clearly, so that an instructor's first encounter with the process is not daunting or confusing.

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