

NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY  
Office of the Faculty Senate  
Academic Policy Committee

February 2, 2021 Minutes

Attendance: Lisa Bass-Freeman (co-chair), Paul Williams (co-chair), Russell Flinchum, Robert Riehn, Intae Yoon, Ken Zagacki, Jonathan Duggins, Michael Reiskind.

Excused: Fikret Isik

Guest: Thomas Hardiman, Office of Student Conduct

The Academic Policy Committee (APC) of the Faculty Senate discussed the following:

- I. The meeting was devoted to discussing the issue raised by Senator Herle McGowan pertaining to the difficulty faculty teaching large sections have with policing academic integrity given the existence of student-help websites like Chegg and Reddit. Because students are able to share information on these sites, they are able to cheat on examinations or other class projects much more easily. Because this is the case, the number of students implicated in any single cheating event can be a number substantially greater than would be the case with in-person testing. Because of the current process for adjudicating academic misconduct, there is the potential that an incident involving a large number of students could involve a significant use of faculty time. The APC discussed with Tom Hardiman how the current process works and what things done to streamline the process to reduce the potential amount of time a faculty member has to spend pursuing these cases.

The committee learned how difficult the policing of the student help sites would be. There exist at least 137 sites where students can post material with new sites easily created. Even if we did manage to monitor such information sharing sites, text messaging among any subgroup within a class is nearly impossible to monitor. Tom Hardiman suggested we rethink the problem. This is particularly important because the problem as now stated resists solution because the System policy compels due process so the power in adjudicating academic misconduct rests with the student. We can't change those policies, e.g. to allow action against a group of students.

Online instruction and teaching is an opportunity for academic misconduct because we use the internet. The internet is inherently hard to police. Hardiman encouraged faculty to state rules of academic integrity and enforce those rules. Many disciplines have formal codes of ethics that condemn dishonesty. We must emphasize to students the importance of those disciplinary codes of ethics. Integrity is a cornerstone of the University and the diploma it issues to a student is an implicit endorsement of the integrity of that student. As a faculty, we need to clearly explain and repeat why we have these expectations of students and why it is important (as the military academies do). The student did not just cheat on a test but failed the more

important test of trustworthiness. Hardiman emphasized the importance of faculty following the process for dealing with academic dishonesty. It is important to notify a student that you suspect is cheating, explain to the student the basis of your belief, and fill out the academic integrity form. From then on, Hardiman's office deals with the situation. Most (93%) such situations are resolved by students accepting the accusation. Hearings are not common and generally depend on the seriousness of the sanction imposed. Hardiman also suggested that the issue of cheating by students should be a topic discussed at a departmental level. Faculty may vary in what they will accept as student behavior, which creates ambiguity among students as to where the lines are.

II. Old Business  
None

III. Adjournment  
The Committee adjourned at 4:20 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,  
Paul Williams  
Co-chair Academic Policy Committee