

Commission on Faculty Affairs
Minutes
April 17, 2015

Members Attending: Rami Dalloul (Chair), Velva Groover, Wat Hopkins, Rodney Irvin, Brad Klein, Drew Muscente, Wornie Reed, and James Spotila

Guests: James Orr, Director of the Undergraduate Honor System and Amy Hogan, Assistant Provost for Leadership Initiatives

1. Announcement to approve and post the minutes from the March 20 meeting. Those minutes have been posted on the CFA Scholar site.

Minutes will be reviewed in the next meeting.

2. Revision of the Undergraduate Honor Code Policy: presentation by James Orr (Director of the Undergraduate Honor System) followed by discussion.

Orr presented on how the university will “Cultivate a Culture of Support for Academic Integrity.” Orr began his presentation by explaining that the provost appointed a committee to revise the undergrad honor code policy. Prior to revising this policy, the committee assessed how well the current honor code policy was working. Data collected to assess the culture included: meetings with faculty, students, and staff; presentations; review of annual reports and articles written about the undergraduate honor code during the past 12 years; review of previous assessments, and conducted survey. The following are the comments made by the Virginia Tech Community and Reports:

- Promoting Academic Integrity: Not Catching Cheaters/Criminals
- Lack of Development of Honor System Tradition
- UHS Organizational Presence
- Little Academic Integrity Programing
- Lack of Institutional Framework for Promotion
- Development, Recognition, and Training for Student Leaders
- Classroom Strategies for Reducing Academic Misconduct
- Case resolution time is too long and there are many moving parts
- Legalistic Approach: Discourages Honesty
- Sanctions
- Systematic Lack of Training
- Fairness of Process
- Faculty Reporting and Support
- Lack of Systematic Data Collection and Benchmarking

Based on this assessment, revisions have been made to the honor code and the next step is to make the recommended changes available to faculty and administrators throughout the campus and then put them through the governance structure.

Orr recounted the history of institutional honor codes. He explained that although there is an assumption that institutions with honor codes have less cheating and higher integrity, this is not accurate. It is really about having a campus with a culture that promotes honesty and integrity.

Therefore, beyond simply revising its undergraduate honor code, Virginia Tech is planning to create a culture that promotes academic honesty and integrity. This new culture will connect integrity with the work students do in the classroom. It will demonstrate how integrity and honesty can be taken to the workforce. In order to implement this culture, there will need to be collaboration across academic departments.

Additionally, changing the culture to support academic integrity will require for university policies and procedures to be revised in a manner that does not criminalize students who cheat. Virginia Tech wants to make sure its community understands that the Honor System is more than a tool to report cheating. It also has resources to help prevent cheating (e.g., presentations on what is academic integrity). As the university seeks to continue changing the academic culture, it will hold sessions that talk about what is integrity and honesty. Professors can give extra credit for more students to attend this session.

Towards the end of the discussion CFA members wanted to know why Virginia Tech's cheating statistics were low compared to its peers. Orr explained that there is belief that professors are not always reporting cheating cases and this is in part due to the way people on the Honor Code system have been trained. Orr believes that by changing the culture, faculty will feel more comfortable reporting cheating cases and those on the Honor Code System will be better trained to handle cases. CFA members also asked if the university has considered collecting data on how much academic misconduct is actually occurring. Orr explained that there has never been systematic data that capture this information. However, it has now been recommended for Virginia Tech to conduct assessment and surveying every four years.

During the summer and fall, the revised Honor Code document will be up for discussion to occur from everyone on-campus. The target date for putting forward the revised policies for university council to approve is spring 2016.

3. Academy of Faculty Leadership: Amy Hogan (Assistant Provost for Leadership Initiatives). Updated materials are in the Scholar meeting folder.

Hogan explained that based on the feedback she received during the previous CFA meeting, she decided to go in the direction of differentiating between the existing Service Academy and the proposed Leadership Academy; taking this route will allow for more employee contributions to be recognized. Hogan explained each change she made to further define both academies. She explained that although both academies will overlap, this will not often be the case. The Service Academy serves to recognize a narrower type of contribution and the Leadership Academy will seek to recognize a broader level of service that can be classified as “leadership”. For example, someone who is creating initiatives that would impact smaller constituencies and not the university at large could not be nominated to the Service Academy, but would be eligible for the Leadership Academy. In this instance, the person’s service may only impact his/her department and would therefore not classify as service under the Service Academy.

CFA members asked who will make the distinction in instances where there is overlap. Hogan explained that it would initially be up to the nominator to decide to which academy to nominate the person (in some cases the person may be nominated for both), but ultimately it is for each review committee to decide.

Towards the end of the discussion CFA members were still unsure about the difference between both academies. They recommended for further distinction to be made. Hogan asked for CFA to provide specific recommendations about how to distinguish the Leadership Academy. CFA members agreed to discuss specific recommendations to further define the academy during their next meeting.

4. Reports from CFA representatives on other commissions and committees

No reports were given.

5. Announcements/Updates

No announcements were made.

6. Other business

No other business was discussed.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Recorder, Elsa Camargo