



Senate Committee on Academic Development
Report to Senate - Meeting of January 26, 2006

Final Report of the Sub-Committee on Academic Integrity

Introduction

In June 2003, SCAD approved the establishment of the Sub-Committee on Academic Integrity. The Final Report of the Sub-Committee on Academic Integrity was reviewed and approved by the Senate Committee on Academic Development at its meeting on January 11, 2006. Dr. John Pierce, Associate Dean (Studies) of the Faculty of Arts and Science and a member of the Sub-Committee on Academic Integrity was present to speak to the matter and answer questions from SCAD. The report is attached.

Analysis and Discussion

The following should be noted:

- an Interim Report was presented to Senate at its meeting on January 27, 2005 for discussion following which a broad consultation across the University was undertaken;
- the comments and feedback received were reviewed and considered by the Sub-Committee and the Final Report was presented to SCAD in September 2005;
- SCAD engaged in comprehensive discussions and made a number of suggestions to enhance the Final Report;
- the Final Report highlights academic integrity and the free exchange of ideas as fundamental to the essence of a University and empowers the Vice-Principal (Academic) to ensure implementation of the report's recommendations.

C o n c l u s i o n s / R e c o m m e n d a t i o n

Recommendation:

that Senate approve the recommendations and motions as outlined in the Final Report of the Sub-Committee on Academic Integrity.

Respectfully submitted,

Patrick Deane
Chair, Senate Committee on Academic Development

Committee Members:

R. Burge
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Sub-Committee on Academic Integrity

Report to the Senate Committee on Academic Development (SCAD) January 2006

1. Preamble

Senate approved the Queen's University policy on academic dishonesty on June 22, 1989. Since that time there has been a paradigm shift in the ways of thinking about, discussing and administering matters related to academic dishonesty. In particular, discussions of academic dishonesty have increasingly moved into the broader context provided by the concept of Academic Integrity. While the issue of academic dishonesty may, in some sense, be viewed as a reactive response, giving rise mainly to arguments about local, individual violations and what punishment is appropriate after an incident, the concept of academic integrity is proactive, seeking to engage students, professors, staff and administrators in the broader values which support the scholarly mission of the university. Thus, the concerns of education and remediation can replace discussions of punishment and excessive sanction, and a focus on the entire learning environment--how it facilitates responsible social involvement and constructive citizenry--becomes the main interest of an institutional policy of academic integrity.

Queen's already cites "intellectual integrity" as one of the essential priorities outlined in its Principles and Priorities; the work, recommendations and motions contained in this report of the Sub-Committee on Academic Integrity seek to inscribe the ideas of intellectual or academic integrity throughout the policies, procedures and practices of the institution.

2. Background and Mandate

SCAD established the Sub-Committee on Academic Integrity in June 2003. The impetus for this initiative had its genesis with student leaders who had approached members of the senior administration in the first instance to express the view that the culture and way of thinking about academic integrity at Queen's should be reviewed. As with many other institutions, the historical approach at Queen's has been to deal with these matters through a policy framework that is set up to handle cases of academic dishonesty.

In following up on the request from the students, and as initial research was undertaken, it became evident that a number of institutions, especially in the United States, have embraced a more proactive approach and actively promote a range of educational initiatives in support of a culture of academic integrity. Moreover, the Committee learned that many Canadian universities have been reviewing the situation at their own institutions (including, in some cases, by participating in surveys to determine incidence and type of cheating occurring in their institutions) and have made a range of recommendations to move forward. Some have already formalized their findings in a

variety of ways including establishing targeted programs and policies, applying resources to address identified problem areas and actively promoting a culture of academic integrity.

It was agreed that it would be most appropriately in the purview of the Senate Committee on Academic Development to undertake such a review at Queen's, and SCAD in turn established a sub-Committee that was mandated to do the following:

- undertake a review of the existing policies and practices with respect to academic dishonesty and academic integrity at this institution and to provide advice/recommendations to the appropriate bodies on issues arising from this review;
- examine the policies and practices on academic dishonesty and academic integrity at comparator universities in Canada and elsewhere, in particular, the United States;
- identify standards of academic integrity for Queen's University; to develop strategies for creating and maintaining an institutional culture in which these standards will be valued and embraced; and to provide advice/recommendations to SCAD regarding the promotion of such strategies within the University community.

The membership of the Sub-Committee was broadly representative, bringing together student leaders and faculty members with wide-ranging backgrounds and areas of expertise.

Coincident with the establishment of the Sub-Committee, Queen's became an institutional member of the Centre for Academic Integrity (CAI), which is associated with the Kenan Institute of Ethics at Duke University. The Centre for Academic Integrity, as stated on its website, "provides a forum to identify, affirm, and promote the values of academic integrity among students, faculty, teachers and administrators" and has a membership of over 400 post-secondary institutions. In the fall of 2003, representatives, including student members, from the Queen's Academic Integrity Sub-Committee, attended the annual CAI International Conference. Besides meeting and exchanging ideas with colleagues from other universities across North America and beyond, they had the opportunity of learning about the various approaches being followed to develop and maintain a culture of academic integrity at other institutions. Furthermore, they were introduced to the growing body of research and scholarship on the subjects of academic integrity and academic dishonesty.

3. Work of the Sub-Committee

In the initial stages, the Committee focused its efforts on becoming familiar with the Queen's context, sharing experiences and thoughts about the current state of affairs at this institution.

In general, it was determined that Queen's operates in a very decentralized way when it comes to matters of academic dishonesty, with each Faculty having its own regulations governing student behaviour in these matters. The Committee learned that some Faculties have noted an increase in the incidence of plagiarism in recent years. They also noted that rules established some time ago are out of date, irrelevant and inadequate to address the current situation and realities of today's world of internet resources and increased use of team assignments, to name just two challenges now being faced in interpreting academic dishonesty regulations. The Committee considered various theories as to why students at Queen's might feel pressured or pushed to engage in cheating activities. Some of these influences could be wholly external to the Queen's experience (diminishing ethical values in the North American society as exemplified by the example of cheating corporate leaders), but some of those cited may be attributable to the Queen's situation (for example, large class sizes and a highly competitive environment). Through its discussions, the Committee highlighted the need to engage all members of the University community, from the earliest possible opportunity, in the promotion of a culture that values academic honesty and integrity.

The Committee also examined the non-Queen's context to determine what is being done at other institutions in Canada and the United States where similar challenges are being faced. In the U.S. context, Honour Codes are widely used, while in Canada some universities are moving to a more centralized approach to this issue. The latest research by Dr. Don McCabe who is considered a leading scholar in this field, has also been reviewed and discussed by the Committee.

In the process of developing an interim report, the work of the Committee was also informed through consultation with a number of individuals whose areas of expertise and/or interest are particularly relevant. These individuals included Doug Babington, Director of the Writing Centre; Caroline Baillie, Dupont Chairholder in the Faculty of Applied Science; Bob Crawford, Dean of Student Affairs and Bob Silverman, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science.

The Committee presented its Interim Report to SCAD, and subsequently forwarded it to Senate in January 2005. Following this, broad consultation across the University community was undertaken over an extended period of time to allow students, staff and faculty the opportunity to provide comments and feedback on the Interim Report and the recommendations contained therein. The Committee reviewed and considered the input that was received and this final report is intended to reflect the views of the community and of the Committee.

4. Statement of Scope

Having carried out a substantial amount of background work, members of the SCAD Sub-Committee on Academic Integrity agreed that for the purposes of fulfilling the mandate from SCAD and Senate, their work would focus on behaviour and interactions within academic settings.

Furthermore, the Committee agreed on the following definition:

*“ Academic integrity is constituted by the five core fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility (as articulated by the Centre for Academic Integrity, Duke University; see www.academicintegrity.org) all of which are central to the building, nurturing and sustaining of an academic community in which all members of the community will thrive. **Adherence to the values expressed through academic integrity forms a foundation for the "freedom of inquiry and exchange of ideas" essential to the intellectual life of the University (see <http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/senate/policies/princpri/>). Queen's students, faculty, administrators and staff therefore all have ethical responsibilities for supporting and upholding the fundamental values of academic integrity.”***

The values listed in this definition are described more fully in a document produced by the CAI titled "The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity" and available on the website listed above. Each value gives rise to and supports the next; honesty creates an environment where trust can occur, and trust gives rise to attitudes of fairness. Respect, in a general sense, is part of an intellectual community which "recognizes the participatory nature of the learning process and honors and respects a wide range of opinions and ideas." However, "respect" appears in a very particular sense when students attend class, pay attention, contribute to discussion and turn papers in on time; instructors "show respect by taking students' ideas seriously, providing full and honest feedback on their work".¹ Ultimately, "responsibility" is both personal and collective and draws students, faculty administrators and staff into creating and maintaining a learning environment supported by and supporting academic integrity. As the document further shows, these values are not just abstract but are expressed in and reinforced by policies and practices.

5. Summary of the Recommendations of the Sub-Committee

The Committee focused its discussions and conclusions in three areas:

- awareness;
- education; and
- policies and procedures.

The Committee's main conclusions and recommendations in each of these areas are set out below:

Awareness

- initial exposure to the Queen's culture of academic integrity should occur during the Orientation period; recommendation to the Senate Orientation Activities Review Board to make changes as appropriate to the Goals of Orientation (approved by Senate in 2002) and to orientation activity policy to ensure the inclusion of elements

¹ "The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity, <http://www.academicintegrity.org/pdf/FVProject.pdf>, p. 8.

- in the Orientation program that will provide an introduction to the standards and values of academic integrity that apply to all members of the Queen's community;
- graduate students should also be engaged when they arrive on campus for early exposure to the Queen's culture of academic integrity; this introduction, through the School of Graduate Studies and Research as well as the Centre for Teaching and Learning (formerly the Instructional Development Centre), should focus both on their role as Teaching Assistants but also on issues related to their own graduate work;
 - initiate campus debate through a variety of focus groups, town hall meetings etc. on issues related to academic dishonesty and academic integrity; for example, the use of plagiarism detection devices such as TurnItIn.com; issues could also be debated and discussed in the campus media and various campus publications.

Education

- make available to all students a comprehensive definition of plagiarism and clear guidelines about how to avoid plagiarizing in their work (The Writing Centre is an excellent resource for this type of information and education);
- include in all courses an educational component which addresses expectations regarding academic honesty and avoiding plagiarism, particularly in “grey” areas;
- offer a broad range of faculty development programs through the Centre for Teaching and Learning (formerly, the Instructional Development Centre) including assistance for instructors, Teaching Fellows and Teaching Assistants in introducing academic integrity elements into their teaching;
- educate instructors, Teaching Fellows and Teaching Assistants on definitions and procedures related to academic dishonesty; this could perhaps be done through the development of guidelines in handbook form to be made available to all instructors, Teaching Fellows and Teaching Assistants;
- consider the introduction of a comprehensive “University 101” course for first year students to prepare them in a general way for academic success; such a course would include elements of skills training, as well as education in the area of academic dishonesty and academic integrity.

Policies and Procedures

- overall approach to academic integrity should encompass the entire academic and broader learning environment (e.g. classroom, library, assessment etc.) but not directly attempt to exert control over the non-academic environment (residence life, extracurricular activities etc.), with the understanding that the distinction between academic and non-academic (social) may not always be entirely clear-cut. This specifically acknowledges that initial responsibility for the enforcement of the existing Code of Conduct including non-academic discipline of students outside the academic setting rests with the Alma Mater Society (AMS) and the Society of Graduate and Professional Students (SGPS) through their respective Judicial Committees, on behalf of Senate.

- consideration of the adoption of an "honour code" (value system) to be introduced to students at the time of recruitment/admission; it would permeate the academic culture of the university and be regularly highlighted in both implicit and explicit ways; and it would comprise a value system that is an ongoing part of the academic experience on campus, and would reach beyond graduation. It is not suggested that the "code" would extend to the adoption of non-proctored exams; nor would it put the entire burden of responsibility on students such as some codes that are in place in US universities do.
- recommendation that the Senate Committee on Academic Procedures (SCAP) review existing policies on academic dishonesty, and in particular consider the viability of a single university-wide policy with faculty-specific additions as needed, with the goal of bringing consistency and proportionality to sanctions for academic dishonesty and greater commonality of practice among departments and faculties.
- the benefits and liabilities of plagiarism detection devices such as the "TurnItIn.com" software should be fully examined, and university-wide consultation should be undertaken, prior to a specific recommendation being made as to whether or not such a device ought to be adopted by Queen's as one tool among others to have available for responding to plagiarism.
- confirmation that commercial tutoring² and exam preparation businesses will not be permitted to operate on the Queen's campus and that all necessary steps are taken to ensure this is the case; assuming that they continue to operate off-campus, steps will be taken to alert students to the unregulated nature of the services offered; to take action against any organization that attempts to use the intellectual property of members of the Queen's community or to make improper use of the Queen's name; and to inform Teaching Assistants of the conflict of interest should they be involved in tutoring students in the same course for which the University has hired them.
- the Office of the Vice-Principal (Academic) will have responsibility in the broadest sense for the promotion of the values of academic integrity at Queen's University.

² "commercial tutoring" as described above, refers specifically to business operations and does not include less formal one-on-one tutoring provided by Queen's students, which is considered acceptable, subject to considerations of potential conflict of interest and provided that such tutoring does not interfere with normal teaching activities (see Policy on Teaching Assistants at Queen's University – approved by Senate May 2005)

6. Motions

Motion I: that Senate accept the Final Report of the SCAD Sub-Committee on Academic Integrity.

Motion II: that Senate endorse the following definition of Academic Integrity and that this definition be prominently included henceforth in the relevant section of all academic calendars issued by Queen's University:

“ Academic integrity is constituted by the five core fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility (as articulated by the Centre for Academic Integrity, Duke University; see www.academicintegrity.org) all of which are central to the building, nurturing and sustaining of an academic community in which all members of the community will thrive. Adherence to the values expressed through academic integrity forms a foundation for the "freedom of inquiry and exchange of ideas" essential to the intellectual life of the University (see <http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/senate/policies/principri/>) Queen's students, faculty, administrators and staff therefore all have ethical responsibilities for supporting and upholding the fundamental values of academic integrity.”

Motion III: that the Vice Principal (Academic) be empowered to form an advisory working group or ad hoc committee to pursue and direct the recommendations put forward by the Sub-Committee on Academic Integrity.

Membership of the Academic Integrity Sub-Committee 2004-05

Suzanne Fortier, Vice-Principal (Academic) [Chair]
Joy Mighty, Director of the Centre for Teaching and Learning (formerly the Instructional Development Centre)
Ahmed Kayssi, Rector 2003-04
Grant Bishop, Rector 2004-05
Cynthia Fekken, Associate Dean (Studies), Faculty of Arts and Science 2003 - 04
John Pierce, Associate Dean (Studies), Faculty of Arts and Science 2004 - 2005
James Lee, Faculty Member-at-large
Christine Overall, Faculty Member-at-large
Nicholas Pengelley, Faculty Member-at-large
Sarita Verma, Faculty Member-at-large
Jonathan Espie, Undergraduate Student-at-large
Sam Hosseini, President, Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Merrilees Muir, Executive Assistant to the Vice-Principal (Academic) [Secretary]