

TO: Michigan State University Committee on Academic Policy (UCAP)
FROM: Patricia Mullan, Ph.D.,
Chair, UCAP Academic Integrity Subcommittee
RE: Policies related to Academic Integrity
DATE: September 11, 2003

Background: On February 20, 2003, UCAP endorsed the Academic Integrity Subcommittee's written review and recommendations about Academic Integrity-related policies. A copy of this report is available on the UCAP website. In this report, we stressed the need to approach the challenge of promoting academic integrity in a way that would not create misperceptions about the prevalence of academic integrity violations. The recommendations which we suggested warranted *highest* priority included: pulling together the explicit – but currently fragmented – statements about academic integrity policies into a coherent policy statement, centrally located in faculty and student handbooks, and link it to sites in which students, faculty, and administrators would logically seek it out if problems with academic integrity arose. We further recommended that, once this was established, the university disseminate the policy prospectively to students during program orientations throughout their academic training, to faculty, with the explicit expectation that appropriate inclusion of academic integrity statements be included in written syllabi, and to departmental chairs and deans, for their review of the adequacy and consistency of policies in promoting academic integrity. Finally, we recommended that the university “review policies for dealing with students who violate academic integrity more than once, and disseminate information about these policies throughout their academic units.”

Current status: In the UCAP orientation meeting on August 28, 2003, Dr. Behe disseminated her annual report of UCAP activities, which included Dr. Simon's responses to the Academic Integrity report. This report indicated that Dr. Youatt was working with the ombudsman's Office to develop the centralized university document on academic integrity, and was working to develop and disseminate a description of academic integrity to disseminate to new MSU students during their orientation. During our August 28 meeting, Dr. Youatt and Dr. Behe shared the Provost's requests for further work on Academic Integrity, focusing on the review of a potential “XF” policy to identify students with more than one infraction of Academic Integrity Policy. The Academic Integrity Committee was reconvened, with additional members (Dr. Cheng and Jeremy Hernandez). The committee has met and has developed the following action plan:

- 1) Each member of the committee has contacted their respective college(s), to determine what current XF-related policies are in place
- 2) We are seeking the full UCAP committee's advice about proceeding with a university-wide survey of current XF- and Honor Code-related policies. Dr. Betty Cheng led the development of a preliminary survey.
- 3) We have initiated a review of published literature on the impact of honor codes and XF-policies

- 4) We have initiated contact with academic units who have developed and delivered training on academic integrity and professional development.
- 5) We ask that Dr. Youatt share the print- and electronic information about academic integrity recently developed for use in the university, so that we may better coordinate our efforts with the work that the Provost's office has undertaken.
- 6) We ask the full committee's help in identifying contacts that will promote further involvement of students in the committee's work. Mr. Hernandez has been very helpful in this.

Appendix: Draft: Proposed Academic Integrity Survey

- a) Do you have an explicit academic integrity policy?
How is this information disseminated? (e.g., syllabus, course pack, website, etc.?)
- 2) Did you experience any incidents of cheating or other violations of academic integrity in your course(s) during the 12 months from Fall 02 to Summer 03? If NO, go to question 4.
 - a) How many incidents did you experience?
 - b) What type of course did it involve (e.g., service course, required course, upper/lower level, graduate level, lab course, seminar etc.)
- 3) Students who violate academic integrity can be categorized in the following way:
 - a. Innocents: people who did not realize that their acts would be considered dishonest (e.g., do not understand the full scope of plagiarism, etc)
 - b. Risk Takers: they recognize that their act may be considered dishonest, but feel that the risks of being caught are sufficiently low that it is worth the gamble.
 - c. Repeat Offenders: They fully recognize that their acts are considered dishonest, but they are willing to take the chance, and feel that they are resilient to being caught.
How many students in each category (from above) did you encounter?
Innocents: _____
Risk Takers: _____
Repeat Offenders: _____
- 4) A grade of XF is used in some universities and in some courses at MSU to indicate that a person received a failing grade due to academic dishonesty.
 - a) What do you think the impact would be of having an XF option?
 - b) Would you use the XF grade? Why or why not?
- 5) Some colleges and universities use an Honor Code, where people are expected to abide by the university's academic integrity policy.
 - a. What do you think the impact would be of having an Honors Code policy?
 - b. Would you use the Honors Code policy? Why or why not?