MINUTES
April 6, 2005

Attending: Amit Anshumali, Steve Carvell, Janet Corson-Rikert, David DeVries, Betsy East, Greg Eells, Sharon Dittman, Kent Fuchs, Tanni Hall, Kent Hubbell, Tim Marchell, Daniel Marques, Susan Murphy (chair), Andy Noel, Kathy Okun, Lisa Ryan, Linda Starr, Charlie Van Loan

Guests: Mary Beth Grant—Judicial Administrator
Dale Grossman—Senior Lecturer, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
member, CALS Academic Integrity Board
Martin Lang—Assembly Coordinator, Office of the Assemblies
Anne Lemley—Professor/Department Chair, College of Human Ecology
Chair, Educational Policy Committee of the Faculty Senate
Sharon Mier— UCAN/CAPS community based services team, Gannett Health Services
Michelle Moody-Adams—Professor/Director, Program on Ethics and Public Life
Pat Wasyliw—Assistant Dean, Academic Advising, College of Arts and Sciences

Upcoming meetings: today’s meeting was the final meeting of the spring; meetings for the fall semester will be scheduled during the summer

Council on Mental Health and Welfare membership for 2005 – 06

- Ongoing members: Continuity of members who have been actively engaged over the past year is vital to the progress of the Council. If you are unable to continue as a member in the coming year, please contact Janet Corson-Rikert.
- New student members: We are eager to enhance student participation in the Council by identifying undergraduate, graduate, and professional students who would be active, engaged members. Please send student names and contact information to Sharon Dittman (SD15).

I. Meeting with Associate Deans group
   A. Members of the CMHW met with Isaac Kramnik, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Education, and the Undergraduate Associate Deans on March 30.
   B. The purpose of the discussion was to enlist the interest and support of the deans in engaging the academic side of the university in our work. They supported ongoing conversation with them, the academic advising offices, and the academic deans.
   C. We hope to work together in the future to think about organized, systematic approaches to dealing with students in distress and promoting linkages across the colleges, as appropriate.
   D. Two positions in Gannett, the Director of Mental Health Initiatives (Tim Marchell) and the Coordinator of Mental Health Promotion (new position, to be filled by August, 2005), will take a lead role in offering support to these efforts and strengthening the partnership between academic and student services units.
   E. Academic integrity was introduced as a predictable “high risk” time for students and an area for which it would be helpful to have linkages across the colleges.
II. Academic Integrity and Mental Health

A. Academic integrity has been on the agenda of a growing list of meetings, including:
   1. University Assembly discussion with Gannett about medical excuses and academic integrity (December)
   2. University Assembly and President Lehman (February)
   3. Executive Committee on Campus Health (March)
   4. Student Assembly (April)

B. The Council on Mental Health and Welfare is in a unique position to interject into these discussions considerations regarding the connections between academic integrity, the process of adjudicating violations, and mental health.

C. The Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity can be found online at:
   http://web.cornell.edu/UniversityFaculty/docs/AI.Acknow.pdf

D. For this meeting, we gathered a panel of faculty and staff members to provide information from various perspectives on the issue.

1. Dale Grossman—Senior Lecturer, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences; member, CALS Academic Integrity Board
   a. Overview of academic integrity code/process for violations
      - The university has one code of academic integrity, adopted by every college except Hotel, which has its own code. In general, there is uniformity in the way the code is administered, though the process may be somewhat different in the professional schools.
      - Each college has its own Academic Integrity Hearing Board, comprising two faculty members, two students, and a non-voting chair who can break a tie.
      - Procedure
         (i) Primary Hearing: a faculty member who believes there has been a violation can hold a “primary hearing,” an opportunity to meet one on one with a student to address the violation and determine appropriate consequences.
            1. The faculty member has to give formal notice (e-mail is permitted) to inform the student of the charge and his/her rights.
            2. The primary hearing is supposed to be attended by an independent witness whose job is to make a record.
            3. The matter can be resolved at this level, depending on position student takes (admitting guilt, etc.).
            4. Penalties resulting from the primary hearing can be related to the course itself, nothing more.
         (ii) Academic Integrity Hearing Board: an academic integrity violation charge may be heard by the college’s academic hearing board.
            1. Circumstances:
               a. If the professor believes the matter is more serious that what can be handled in a primary hearing, s/he can refer it to the hearing board.
               b. If the student does not agree to the process or outcome of the primary hearing, s/he can refer it to the hearing board.
            2. Process:
               a. The student usually is accompanied by a faculty advisor or by a judicial codes counselor.
               b. The faculty member presents the charge (may have witnesses).
               c. The student has an opportunity to counter it (may have witnesses).
               d. The Board considers the charge and response, then takes action. If it finds there was a violation of academic integrity, they can impose the original penalty, or something else.
               e. The decision of the panel can be appealed only to the dean of the college.
            3. Kinds of penalties include: grade-related penalties, notation on transcript (may be permanent, for a set period of time, or until the student requests and can demonstrate reason to have it removed), suspension, expulsion.
               a. The hearing board does consider circumstances that may have brought an individual to the point of making a decision to violate the code; often there are personal circumstances that could be helped by counseling. Though it is difficult for hearing boards to “mandate” counseling, applying a penalty that leaves the open the possibility
of removing a notation on the transcript can be a way of applying leverage for counseling.

b. Hearing boards may find serious philosophical disagreements among the parties in the room. To some, it may not matter why a person violated academic integrity: it is a standard that has to be held, regardless of other factors. To others, individual circumstances should be considered.

c. They must also determine and consider the extent to which the student willingly, knowingly chose to engage in the behavior.

2. Anne Lemley—Professor/Department Chair, College of Human Ecology; Chair, Educational Policy Committee of the Faculty Senate

a. Academic integrity is at the core of the identity of academics. However, students today are getting very mixed messages about academic honesty. It is becoming increasingly difficult for faculty members to know how to address the issues.

b. Fairness:
   - We have a commitment to students who are being honest to make sure their grade reflects their work.
   - If you don’t catch the student who cheated, it is unfair to others in the class.
   - Catching only those with egregious violations is also unfair, because everyone knows others are cheating.

c. Concern for individual: faculty instructors and advisors might be sympathetic to a student and refer them for help rather than confronting the violation; this is problematic, in terms of both fairness and timely intervention for the student.

d. Options/support for faculty:
   - It would be helpful to have more dialogue among faculty about what kinds of things they can do to uphold the values of academic integrity and to help students who are in trouble. These issues are almost never discussed.
   - Faculty members have profound power over and in the lives of students. Criticizing a student can be devastating in ways we don’t really understand, anticipate.
   - Faculty, especially those with advising roles, need to learn more about the full range of issues affecting students. It would be very helpful to facilitate more dialogue between faculty members and academic advising, in general and about particular students about whom there are concerns.

3. Mary Beth Grant—Judicial Administrator

a. Overview of role
   - The Office of the Judicial Administrator (JA) works to enforce the Campus Code of Conduct (though the Office does not deal with academic integrity, there are similarities in the issues involved in dealing with violations to the Campus Code of Conduct and the Code of Academic Integrity).
   - The office handles 750 to 800 cases/year—the vast majority resolved by agreement with the JA office. (Some cases may be referred to or appealed to judicial hearing board.)

b. Focus/goals of process
   - Work with students on accountability; i.e., how not to make the same mistake again.
   - Want to make sure agreements regarding consequences make sense from an educational perspective and are seen by the student as having an educational value.
   - The most important part of the process involves walking the student through the process of how they ended up in the Office of the Judicial Administrator:
     (i) What decision(s) did you make?
     (ii) How did you make the poor decision(s)
     (iii) What would you have done differently, or do differently in the future?
   - Importance of intervention
     (i) Often, by the time someone gets caught violating the Code, they’ve been doing it for a while.
     (ii) It is in students’ interest to have consistent referrals to the JA, and not have things swept under the rug.
     (iii) At the end of the day, it may not be the sanction that has the impact so much as the intervention.
   - Mental health concerns
     (i) During the discussion with the student, red flags may go off that raise concerns about an underlying mental health issue (depression, anxiety, may be onset of a mental health disability):
       1. May be a “gut feeling”—“sometimes you can just tell.”
       2. Student may identify health issues or situations that contribute
     (ii) JA staff do use mandated counseling, as appropriate, and have worked out protocols and shared understanding with CAPS.
(iii) In some cases, the JA Office tracks a student longer to make sure they follow up with counseling and can be a safe, successful member of the community.

- Connection to academic integrity violations: explore how/why a student ends up with an academic integrity violation
  (i) What has motivated them to engage in the behavior?
  (ii) Did the student feel the need to achieve a certain goal and didn’t have, or didn’t believe s/he had the time or tools or ability?
  (iii) Is the student not capable of making the appropriate choice because of underlying issues. (How do you sanction that student whose behavior is clearly inappropriate, but may not understand that it is?)

4. Pat Wasyliw—Assistant Dean, Academic Advising, College of Arts and Sciences; Sharon Mier— UCAN/CAPS community based services team, Gannett Health Services
   a. Pat and Sharon have been working together for several years to develop a partnership for dealing with academic integrity violations that are influenced by underlying mental health concerns and/or trigger more serious problems as a result of the stress inherent in the process of being charged with and penalized for violations.
   b. The current state of the process they have developed is reflected in documents from the UCAN/Arts and Sciences Partnership Draft Protocol for Therapeutic Intervention in Academic Integrity Cases that were distributed before the meeting and are attached as Appendices to these minutes.
   c. They start with premise that mental health issues do not mitigate academic integrity violations. Academic integrity proceedings go forward, but the College calls on the therapist to provide support for the student.
   d. Sharon and Pat have tried to work together in academic integrity cases in which the student looks like s/he is particularly fragile. They rely on faculty to alert them to a need.
      - Triggers for faculty to call in help: high expectations for success/intense competition, shame, parental pressures, hasn’t been to class, falling apart.
      - Most of the cases they have dealt with are more complex cases than “I didn’t know this was plagiarizing.”
   e. Frequently, they see students with behaviors that are symptomatic of mental health issues, including disassociation, but can also provoke or anger faculty members.

E. Council Discussion

1. Cultural variation in understanding about academic integrity
   a. Academic integrity is not an absolute, but a culturally constructed concept.
   b. Different cultures have different definitions of academic integrity and understandings of what constitutes a violation of academic integrity. Examples of cases reflecting this clash of understandings:
      - Student who believed that quoting lecture or text without reference is expected. “Knowledge is universal”—it’s not necessary to quote; it is a great honor to know and repeat verbatim what you have learned from someone else.
      - Students who are accustomed to working in groups and presenting shared or very similar “work product” as their own.

2. Orientation for students to Cornell’s Code of Academic Conduct
   a. The university does not have a clear, consistent approach.
   b. No special orientation for international students.
   c. Student services: academic integrity is not a part of the Orientation programs sponsored by the Dean of Students Office, Campus Life, or other departments in Student and Academic Services. It is understood to be the domain of the Colleges/Schools.
   d. Colleges:
      - Each college does it differently. Arts and Sciences has a two-part approach: deans speak about it during the Sunday orientation program; peer advisors discuss it in smaller groups on Monday (100 peer advisors for 1000 students).
      - Faculty advisors and instructors may or may not communicate about it. Many professors and instructors include it on the syllabus, but it is believed that students don’t read it.

3. Societal Changes
   a. It is difficult to measure to what degree the problem has gotten worse, but academia is part of a society where cheating seems to be more accepted.
“Winner takes all” mentality does promote a “win at any cost” mentality. Is the university promoting this by whom we reward for what?
- Top universities tend to reward the ultra-competitive students whose priorities are goal-related. The process of learning, the importance of character, the embrace of shared values is lost.
- The ethos of the honor system is being replaced by the need to be “on top.”
- Ratings like US News and World Report focus students and families on “getting in” to the “best” school.

4. Changes in Tools and Processes of Academic Work
   a. Rapid changes have been happening in the relationship between intellectual work and the ways of doing the work.
   b. Development of the internet:
      - The internet has dramatically changed the ways in which information is available and can be used.
      - It has made cheating and other shortcuts so much easier.
      - Need to make students aware of the ways in which the internet might make them vulnerable.

5. Experiences at Other Universities
   a. David DeVries reported on the experiences from other campuses represented in the Ivy Plus Deans meeting.
   b. All institutions report increase in academic integrity issues; all have different responses.
   c. Schools that have a cohesive freshman seminar experience where they make it a point to discuss academic integrity report that it has not had an effect on this negative trend.
   d. Those that have more “draconian” approaches (e.g., expulsion) find that their policies discourage faculty from reporting.

6. Consideration of Strategies
   a. Scare tactics?
      - As a way to make a lasting impression on students, could we try to “scare” them into compliance with the Code? How would this square with our mental health concerns?
      - Research shows that fear approaches to behavior change are ineffective with this population. Developmentally, students tend to feel invulnerable to whatever threat (health, career, success, future) adults or other authorities try to get them to see.
      - On the other hand, we don’t know, and often can’t assess, the fragility of some students and how they would respond to a perceived threat.
      - Inherent in the faculty/student relationship is a power relation/dynamic, which in itself has a tremendous potential to impact a student. Faculty need to be aware of and sensitive to this dynamic.
   b. The biggest deterrent to a serial cheater is getting them on record once as having cheated.

7. Clarity about Cornell’s Priority For Academic Integrity
   a. Academic integrity has to be something the whole community embraces: faculty, as well as students.
   b. What are we as an institution asking? And what is it we want students to learn? How can we evaluate them fairly? How do we cultivate self-examination, reflection among students?
   c. How can we turn the whole conversation toward the values we adhere to as a community, rather than just threatening what we’re going to do to those who get caught?
   d. We need to articulate why academic integrity matters.

8. Next Steps Related to Academic Integrity and Mental Health
   a. Develop understanding, tools, and skills that will help faculty, staff, and peer advisors consider when an academic integrity violation may be a reflection of some underlying mental health problem and when it may be a precipitant.
   b. Identify successful practices of some colleges and consider possible application in others.
   c. Support cross-university conversations and collaborations.
   d. Strive to intervene at an early, low enough level to convey an educational message, not a punitive one.

9. More General Next Steps
   a. Consider specific strategies to enhance the orientation of incoming students to the university’s value of academic integrity and the Code of Academic Integrity (consider particular needs of international students).
   b. Engage the entire university in a broad conversation to develop a shared understanding of what constitutes academic integrity.
Chairs of academic integrity boards have met periodically for a couple of years with the Dean of the Faculty. There has been some attempt to communicate across colleges. Charlie Walcott has plans to gather the chairs for a review of Cornell’s approach to academic integrity education and enforcement.

The University Assembly currently is discussing many of the issues we talked about today. All members of the community—faculty and staff members, undergraduate, graduate, and professional students— are represented at the table. They are engaged in very early explorations of honor codes and how to develop the culture of academic integrity so there is a reason not to cheat other than not wanting to get caught.
Appendix 1

U-CAN/ Arts & Sciences Partnership
Draft Protocol for Therapeutic Intervention in Academic Integrity Cases

Role of the Faculty

Sharon Mier, Psy.D, Manager, University Counseling and Advising Network (U-CAN)
Patricia Wasyliw, Ph.D, Assistant Dean, Academic Advising

Academic Integrity violations can sometimes be manifestations or symptoms of underlying emotional or mental health issues. While mental health issues do not negate or excuse the seriousness of an academic integrity violation, it is important to provide therapeutic assessment and support of at-risk students during the academic integrity hearing process. Faculty members, with few exceptions, are not trained as mental health professionals, and should not be responsible for assessment or treatment of a student’s mental health. For this reason, the College of Arts & Sciences and U-CAN have developed a cooperative approach that provides therapeutic support to students in need, while maintaining the responsibility of the college to make academic decisions regarding guilt and appropriate penalties.

In many cases, the infraction may be straightforward and the student’s response appropriate. In cases where you have a more serious concern, however, due to the nature of the offense or concerns about the particular student involved, we ask that you take note and reach out for a consult with Dean Pat Wasyliw and/or U-CAN. (You may also contact the individual counselor at Counseling and Psychological Services, if known.) Examples of such cases would include:

1. Where the instructor believes the student’s behavior exhibits signs of underlying mental health difficulties, such as verbal incoherence, mood instability, loss of affect, or uncontrollable weeping, severe withdrawal from classes and relationships, or otherwise bizarre behavior.

2. Where the student is believed to be at risk to himself or to others in response to the news of the violation, or news from the committee about the grade or class where the infraction occurred.

3. Where the instructor feels instinctively that there MAY be serious underlying issues that the student is not able or willing to express. This has often been the case with students who for one reason or other do not give a sense to the faculty that they understand the gravity of the violation, or do not seem able in any way to articulate any response to the situation.

4. Where the instructor has some concern that factors in the student’s personal background may add complexity to the situation, such as unrealistic family expectations for the student’s career, the student’s isolation from family and community support, intense feelings of shame or humiliation for infractions, extreme reticence to communicate, or cultural/ethnic differences that may exaggerate the perceived severity of the process.

Faculty who believe that a student accused of an academic integrity violation may be in danger of serious harm to self or others should report concerns to Pat Wasyliw (5-5792, pw36@cornell.edu), who will make sure that the student receives appropriate counseling and support from U-CAN or CAPS. This can take place at any point in the hearing process.

April, 2005
Role of the Therapist

Sharon Mier, Psy.D, Manager, University Counseling and Advising Network (U-CAN)
Patricia Wasyliw, Ph.D, Assistant Dean, Academic Advising

Academic integrity violations sometimes result from underlying mental health issues, and in turn can trigger more serious problem through the stress of the process itself. In order to protect, as best as possible, the health and safety of at-risk students while maintaining the integrity of the Academic Integrity process, the College of Arts & Sciences asks faculty to refer students to U-CAN or to Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) if they have any concern about the student’s emotional stability or well-being at any point in the process. The Advising Office and the counselor can, in partnership, develop the best plan for supporting the student throughout the academic integrity process. Any partnership works best with clearly defined roles and expectations for each. In an Academic Integrity case, the role of the faculty and college is to assess the academic evidence that a violation of the code has occurred and render the appropriate academic penalty. The role of the therapist is to provide support and treatment for any accompanying distress, and includes efforts to:

- Help the student recognize and cope with underlying issues that may have contributed to the academic integrity violation.
- Monitor the student to help him/her manage the stress and anxiety directly related to the Academic Integrity procedure.
- Provide guidance and work in partnership with the college advising office to increase the safety of the student.

It is recommended that the counselor not be present at or take part in the actual Academic Integrity hearing, either the primary hearing or any subsequent appeals. The counselor may choose to be present nearby when a hearing is scheduled, if concern for the student’s stability warrants such action. It is our experience (both from counseling and from advising) that it makes for a smoother support process if the lines of responsibility for each aspect of support for the student are delineated. This can also protect the student’s relationship with the counselor, in situations where the faculty member involved in the hearing may present information that the student has not been able to share with the counselor.

If you are working with a student who discloses involvement in an academic integrity procedure, or are notified by a U-CAN counselor that a student you are working with is facing an academic integrity charge, please feel free to ask questions and discuss your concerns with Pat Wasyliw, Assistant Dean and Academic Integrity Liaison for Arts & Sciences. She can be reached by phone at 5-5792, or, via e-mail, pw36@cornell.edu. Dean Wasyliw does not need to know confidential information about the student in order to discuss the Academic Integrity process with the therapist.