

# Samford University Faculty Senate

## MINUTES, Committee on Academic Affairs

**DATE OF MEETING:** Oct. 3, 2000

**TIME:** 3 p.m.

**PLACE:** Room 308, Divinity North

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Voting members present: Profs. Norfleete Day (Divinity), Bill Ellison (Law), Pat Hart (Education and Professional Studies), Greg Jeane (Arts and Sciences), Jane Martin (Nursing), Roger Parker (Pharmacy), Marlene Reed (Business), Perry Tompkins (Arts and Sciences), Steven Epley (Arts and Sciences, Chair, presiding)

Voting members absent: Profs. Sherry Lawhon (Music), Sue Peterson (Library/Staff)

Ex officio member present: Paul Aucoin (Registrar)

The meeting was called to order by the chair at 3:04 p.m. After introductions, the committee moved on to Old Business.



### OLD BUSINESS

The first item was reconsideration of the committee's proposal on academic integrity. The proposal, passed by the committee on May 19, 2000, was submitted to the Senate at its Sept. 1, 2000, meeting. Several Senators suggested changes in the proposal, especially the portion labeled "Faculty Statement on Academic Dishonesty," and the Senate asked the committee to reconsider the proposal. After the meeting, Senator Albert Brewer kindly sent the Senators a copy of the Honor Code of the Cumberland School of Law, which the Senate had agreed might help guide the Academic Affairs Committee as it sought to clear up problems.

The Senate was most troubled about the "Faculty Statement on Academic Dishonesty" that served as a sort of preamble to the recommendations made by the committee. After the Senate meeting, the committee chair consulted the Law School's Honor Code and borrowed relevant sections in an attempt to find language that would be acceptable to the Senate. He proposed the following revised "Faculty Statement on Academic Dishonesty" to the committee.

**"The purpose of this statement on academic integrity is to establish principles by which the students of Samford University will govern their school conduct. Samford does not condone forms of conduct which bring discredit to the student body or the university. This statement is intended to provide fair protection to the members of the student body from the unethical activities of fellow students and to protect the rights of all students accused of such activities.**

**""Cheating" shall mean any and all intentional activities that accrue an unfair benefit to a student, or create an unfair detriment to other students. Cheating includes the submission to any class of any work by a student that is not the result of the student's own research, efforts and/or knowledge, or prohibiting or impeding another student's doing research or submitting work. Cheating further includes the intentional deprivation of the rightful use of any institutional or personal property for the purposes of preventing other students from completing or submitting assignments for which such materials are needed.**

**""Lying" shall mean to knowingly issue a false or misleading oral or written statement in the context of an academic activity concerning a material fact with the intent to create a benefit to the issuer or a detriment to the hearer or a third party, or both.**

**"Cheating, stealing, lying, or aiding or assisting another to do so, or conduct constituting contempt of the academic dishonesty statement, shall constitute a values violation.**

**"The standard of proof for any values violation shall be "clear and convincing evidence."**

The committee approved, in principle, the revised language.

Next, the committee turned to the specific recommendations contained in the proposal. Prof. Ellison expressed his feeling that the proposed "Faculty Hearing for Academic Integrity Violations" does not furnish the student with due process, because it would, in effect, make the professor both prosecutor and judge of the student's conduct. Other members concurred. Members of the committee who helped draft the proposal explained that they were trying to offer legal protection to professors who had said in a faculty survey that they often handled allegations of academic dishonesty by themselves. However, the proposed solution would probably not pass legal muster, according to Prof. Ellison.

Several committee members said they believed that the proposal had been reviewed by university lawyers this summer. Prof. Epley said Provost Lewis had considered that course of action, but decided instead to ask Chair Epley to send the proposal on to the Senate, which, as has been stated, was done at its September meeting. University legal review will take place only after the Senate has passed a version of the proposal sent to it by the Academic Affairs Committee.

Prof. Ellison suggested that the proposal for a "Faculty Hearing" be replaced by some type of mediation process. He said, for example, that a pool of mediators could be established to work with willing professors and students. When a case arose that a faculty member judged not to be worthy of the full-blown values violation process, the professor and student could agree on a mediator who would try to help the two reach some resolution of the problem. In part, this mediator would represent the faculty member's concerns to the student. This process would be potentially less bruising and intimidating for all concerned, opined Prof. Ellison. However, the current system for adjudicating academic integrity violations would also remain available if the professor judged that it was needed.

The chair asked Prof. Ellison to draft a proposal for mediation of suspected academic integrity violations. Prof. Ellison agreed to do so, and the chair said that the committee would take up the proposal at next month's meeting.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Over the summer, six students had requested some form of action from the committee, which acted on three of those requests at this meeting. Because of the need to protect confidentiality, the names are not recorded in this set of minutes. However, because a complete official record must be submitted, it will be deposited with the Provost's Office. Only those with a legal "need to know" the student's names may consult this set of minutes.

One student was granted a retroactive withdrawal, largely because of health reasons, for the fall 1999 semester. Prof. Parker moved that the student's request be granted. Prof. Reed seconded the motion. The vote was eight in favor and one opposed.

One student appealed for a recalculation of his/her grade point average. The student asked that certain F grades given in classes which the student subsequently passed no longer be counted in the GPA, although the F grades will continue to be recorded on the student's transcript. The student cited personal and business problems as partial reason for the failing grades. Prof. Parker proposed that the appeal be granted. Prof. Martin seconded. The committee unanimously approved the appeal.

One other student asked that F grades which he/she earned in a semester in which he/she stopped attending classes in order to give full-time attention to athletics be forgiven. The student said that he/she could not drop the classes because to do so would have removed his/her NCAA eligibility. The student now recognizes that this was a mistake. Based on the student's contrition and overall academic record, the committee unanimously approved a motion to appeal the grades which was made by Prof. Tompkins and seconded by Prof. Reed.

Since it was time to adjourn, the chair said that he would present the other two student requests at the next meeting, scheduled for Tuesday, Oct. 24, at 3 p.m. in Divinity North 308.

The chair adjourned the meeting at 4:30 p.m.

Signed, Steven Epley

Chair, Academic Affairs Committee

