

# **Rutgers University Senate**

## **Academic Standards, Regulations, and Admissions Committee**

### **Response to Charge S-1010**

*Charge S-1010, Academic Integrity Policy: Review and report on the final version of the Academic Integrity Policy. Respond to Senate Executive Committee by January 2011.*

#### Background

The proposed new academic integrity policy was written by an *ad-hoc* Academic Integrity Committee (AIC) of students, faculty, staff, and administrators from the Camden, Newark, and New Brunswick/Piscataway campuses, appointed by Executive Vice President Philip Furmanski. The Committee was formed in late 2008 and began work in February 2009. In late September 2009, it presented a rough, incomplete first draft of the policy, which was discussed at the Conference on Academic Integrity held on October 2, 2009 in New Brunswick, a conference which also featured presentations on their academic integrity policies by faculty and staff from the University of Maryland and Penn State University. Starting in November 2009 and continuing throughout the 2009-2010 academic year, the AIC obtained very extensive and useful responses to the developing policy from a large cross-section of students, faculty, staff, administrators, and alumni on all three Rutgers campuses. The draft policy was revised extensively in response to this community input and to suggestions made in late summer by a high-level review committee of representatives from the Office of Student Conduct, the Office of the Vice-President for Student Affairs, the Office of the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the Office of University Counsel. A “final” committee draft of the policy was submitted to the Senate for its consideration on November 1, 2010 by Vice President Furmanski.

The development of the proposed academic integrity policy is the culmination of an effort that began in fall 2004 with the appointment of an academic integrity committee chaired by Prof. Donald McCabe and the issuing of a parallel charge to ASRAC to consider revision of the academic integrity policy. The McCabe Committee and ASRAC failed to agree on how to revise the then current policy. This impasse led ultimately to the development of the Interim Academic Integrity Policy. It incorporated those changes to the Academic Integrity Policy on which nearly everyone agreed but left unchanged those aspects of the previous policy on which there was no broad consensus for change. The Interim Policy was approved by the Senate in May 2008 (and went into effect in September 2008) for a period of two years. It was extended for one additional year in April 2010.

The Senate, it should be noted, played a substantial role in the development of the proposed academic integrity policy:

- The Senate held several committee-of-the-whole discussions of academic integrity and various proposals for modifying the former academic integrity policy. The Senate also co-sponsored the Conference on Academic Integrity in October 2009.
- Members of ASRAC played a major role in the writing of the Interim Academic Integrity Policy currently in effect.
- The Academic Integrity Committee (AIC) was constituted and charged by Executive Vice President Furmanski closely following the recommendations passed by Senate in May 2008

and the AIC has closely followed the Senate's recommendations to solicit feedback widely on an ongoing basis.

- The AIC was chaired by ASRAC Co-Chair Cotter and current and former Senators constituted a substantial fraction of the committee members.

The proposed new policy retains a number of the basic features of the Interim Policy.

- Violations of academic integrity are divided into nonseparable violations, for which the possible sanctions do not include suspension or expulsion; and separable violations, for which the sanctions may, but need not, include suspension or expulsion. The policies and procedures for handling alleged nonseparable violations are different from those for handling separable violations.
  - Allegations of first-time nonseparable violations of academic integrity are handled by the faculty member teaching the course or supervising the activity in which the violation is alleged to have occurred, , or by an Academic Integrity Facilitator appointed by the dean of a school or college.
  - Allegations of separable violations of academic integrity must be handled according to the procedures specified in the *University Code of Student Conduct*, which give an accused student who does not accept responsibility for the alleged violation the right to a disciplinary hearing before a panel of students and faculty
- A student found responsible for either a nonseparable or a separable violation of academic integrity may appeal the finding of responsibility and/or the sanction to an appeals committee of students and faculty members.

The major proposed changes to the Interim Policy are:

- Introduction of an honor pledge, to be written on examinations and major assignments, and a requirement that students affirm periodically that they have read, understood, and will abide by the Academic Integrity Policy.
- Reduction from four to two levels of violations; i.e., separable and nonseparable.
- Expansion of the list of suggested sanctions for separable violations, including the introduction of the XF (disciplinary F) grade and addition of a number of sanctions appropriate to graduate students.
- Introduction of the Honor Council, an organization of undergraduate and graduate students from all three Rutgers campuses dedicated to promoting academic integrity. Members of the Honor Council will play a key roles in educating students and other members of the University community about academic integrity, and in the administration of the Academic Integrity Policy.
  - Members will serve on University Hearing Boards and Appeals Committees.
  - *Community Advocates* will be able to serve as the complainant at a University Hearing; i.e., present the case against the accused student.
  - *Student Advocates* will provide information, advice, and assistance to students accused of violating the Academic Integrity Policy.
- Substantial revision of hearing procedures to make university Hearings less adversarial and less onerous for faculty members and provide accused students with more information and assistance.

- Combination of the separate campus appeals committees for nonseparable violations and for separable violations into a single appeals committee on each campus. The Campus Appeals Committee will also decide on requests for removal of the X from XF grades.
- Addition of an Appendix (B), which presents a brief overview of the procedures for handling allegations of nonseparable and of separable violations.

The proposed academic integrity policy requires a number of relatively minor changes to the *University Code of Student Conduct*. The AIC has been assured by the Director of the Office of Student Conduct and the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs that the necessary changes will be made to the Code in time for the policy approved by the Senate to be implemented in September 2011.

### Committee Discussions

ASRAC has been kept informed about the progress of the AIC throughout the AIC's work. ASRAC members discussed previous drafts of the Academic Integrity Policy at meetings on December 4, 2009, January 29, 2010, and March 26, 2010 and offered a number of suggestions for changes that were subsequently accepted by the AIC. Moreover, in its response to a previous charge (S-0905), ASRAC expressed its support for the AIC's goals in rewriting the Rutgers Academic Integrity Policy, the major changes to the Interim Policy proposed by the AIC, and the proposed retention of the procedures introduced in the Interim Policy for handling of allegations of nonseparable violations of academic integrity by faculty members or Academic Integrity Facilitators.

More recently, ASRAC discussed the draft academic integrity policy at its meetings on September 24 and November 19, 2010. Members of ASRAC suggested a few small changes to the draft, all of which have been made. Additional changes to the draft policy and to the companion document entitled *Procedures for Adjudicating Alleged Nonseparable Violations of Academic Integrity* were made subsequently in response to objections by a representative of University Counsel to certain aspects of the proposed procedures for handling an alleged nonseparable violation of academic integrity by a student previously found responsible for a violation of academic integrity. Both the final revised draft Academic Integrity Policy and the revised *Procedures for Adjudicating Alleged Nonseparable Violations of Academic Integrity* have been approved by both the AIC and ASRAC electronically.

### Recommendations and Resolution

**Recommendation 1:** ASRAC endorses both the final revised draft of the Academic Integrity Policy and of the *Procedures for Adjudicating Alleged Nonseparable Violations of Academic Integrity* and strongly recommends that the Senate approve both documents for implementation starting in September 2011.

A great deal of work needs to be done in order to implement the new policy in September 2011. To name just a few required tasks: guidelines need to be developed concerning the distinction between nonseparable and separable violations and typical sanctions for various types of common violations; forms for reporting the disposition of allegations of nonseparable violations need to be updated; new guidelines for participants in University Hearings need to be developed; the Honor Council and the new combined Appeals Committee need to be set up and their members trained; and an aggressive program to educate students, faculty, staff, and administrators concerning the new policy needs to be put in place. Much of the work will fall on the Office of Student Conduct and Camden and Newark

Conduct Officers, particularly on Anne Newman, the Director of the Office of Student Conduct. ASRAC strongly believes, however, that the Senate, as well as other students, faculty, and staff, should participate in the planning for the implementation of the new policy. Thus we offer a second recommendation.

**Recommendation 2:** An implementation committee of faculty, students, and academic staff/administrators should be appointed to work with the Director of Student Conduct, other Student Conduct Officers, and the Vice President for Student Affairs or his designee in planning for the implementation of the new academic integrity policy. This Committee should have members representing the Academic Integrity Committee, ASRAC, and the Chief Academic Officers on the Camden, Newark, and New Brunswick/Piscataway campuses.

Finally, we present the following resolution for the Senate's approval.

### **Resolution**

*Whereas*, the ad-hoc Academic Integrity Committee has now completed a proposed new Rutgers Academic Integrity Policy and Executive Vice President Furmanski has submitted it to the Senate for approval, and

*Whereas*, the Senate played an important role in the development of the proposed policy, and

*Whereas*, the Academic Standards, Regulations, and Admissions Committee (ASRAC) has considered the proposed policy and its companion document ***Procedures for Adjudicating Alleged Nonseparable Violations of Academic Integrity*** and strongly recommends that both be approved by the Senate, and

*Whereas*, the members of the Senate have considered the proposed Rutgers Academic Integrity Policy and the proposed ***Procedures for Adjudicating Alleged Nonseparable Violations of Academic Integrity*** and are in agreement with ASRAC that both should be approved for implementation in September 2011, and

*Whereas*, the Senate agrees with ASRAC that the role of the Senate in the implementation of the new academic integrity policy should continue beyond the approval of the policy and that Senators and other faculty, students, and academic staff/administrators should participate in planning the implementation of the new policy.

*Therefore be it resolved that* the University Senate approves the proposed Rutgers Academic Integrity Policy and its companion document ***Procedures for Adjudicating Alleged Nonseparable Violations of Academic Integrity*** and asks the Rutgers administration to adopt the new policy and procedures effective September 1, 2011.

*Also be it resolved that* an implementation committee of faculty, students, and academic staff/administrators be appointed to participate in planning the implementation of the new academic integrity policy, as recommended by ASRAC.