Rationale for the Recommended Changes to the Integrity of Scholarship and Grades

Items #1 and 2 – no changes

Item #3 – The first change to item #3 is to simply clarify process. Once completed, all notifications and the addition to the student’s academic record are automatic.

The substantive change in this item allows the Dean of the Graduate School or the Dean of Undergraduate Studies to remove a report in instances other than the student successfully grieving the allegation.

On 11/3/06, the Academic Dishonesty Subcommittee of the University Committee on Academic Policy recommended that on a first offense “The student is placed on Academic Dishonesty Probation for the remainder of their career at Michigan State.” They went on to say, “This would not appear anywhere on the students transcript, but would be available to the associate deans for undergraduate education within each college, and to appropriate academic staff serving the associate deans.” (see UCAP minutes 11/09/06). Their discussions made it clear that, at least at that point in time, they did not want a permanent grade marker used. This, in part, stemmed from what they believed was the great variability in the imposition of penalties among faculty. At the 2/22/07 meeting the committee noted that: “Some additional sanction or action should be required after multiple violations.” However, they reinforced that: “It is important to emphasize education as well as sanction.”

The emphasis on education led to the final recommendation which was ultimately approved. On a first act of academic dishonesty, student should be required to participate in and educational program to enhance their knowledge of the importance of academic integrity. Such a program was developed and all students reported for academic dishonesty now participate in the program.

In addition, throughout the original discussions, and as reflected in the current language of the Integrity of Scholarship and Grades, it was clear that the initial decision on whether an act of academic dishonesty had been committed was at the discretion of the instructor. It would follow, therefore, that it is also at the discretion of the faculty member to request that a report be deleted if, following discussions with the student, they believe the act was unintentional and would best be considered an opportunity to enhance student learning.

The change in language being requested is consistent with these two original intentions. The current language in the Integrity of Scholarship and Grades state that the report: “will remain (in the students record), unless the student successfully grieves the allegation.” The new language would:

1. Allow the Dean of the Graduate School or Dean of Undergraduate Studies to remove a report at the request of the faculty member filing the report and
2. Allow the Dean of the Graduate School or the Dean of Undergraduate Studies to remove a report at the time of the student graduation in those cases in which there was only one act of academic dishonesty, the student had successfully completed the required academic integrity course, and no additional sanctions had been requested by the faculty or the student’s dean. This is consistent with the original intent of UCAP that a record should be maintained throughout the student’s undergraduate program, that students who commit a single act of academic dishonesty and who successfully remediate their actions should not have a permanent record in their file.

Item #4 – Again, these changes primarily reflect process.

1. Faculty can only request additional sanctions if they are willing to impose a grade of 0.0 in the course.
2. Beyond imposing a penalty grade in the course, the only option faculty have is to request the student’s dean consider additional sanctions, and then only, as noted above - if the penalty grade imposed by the faculty is a failing grade in the course. It is the dean’s decision whether additional sanctions are warranted and it not within the dean’s purview to alter the penalty grade without faculty consent or following the decision of a hearing board. Therefore, actions can only impose sanctions in addition to the penalty grade not other than the penalty grade.

Item #5 – No changes

Item #6 – This change is again to clarify process. At the undergraduate level the “appropriate hearing board” would be the University Academic Integrity Hearing Board.” At the graduate level it would be the department, school, or college. Because of these differences, simply stating “…before the appropriate hearing board” is more precise.

Item #7 – Clarifies that the student must “complete” not just “attend” the program.

Item #8 – Allows consistency in titles through the document.

Item #9 – Provides consistency in the level of detail provided with that in Item #8. The SSR and the GSRR both spell out the purpose of these meetings and it does not need to appear in the Integrity of Scholarship and Grades.