

RAC-SCO
July 8, 2009
Macon State College

Meeting called to order at 10:00 a.m.

Introductions

Note: Last e-mail reminder about the meeting (from un 25, 2009) included at bottom the agenda for today's meeting for anyone who needs agenda to submit for travel reimbursement, etc.

Topic 1:

Assessment in Conduct Offices

Discussion led by Lynn McCraney, Macon State

How are we assessing our conduct processes?

General theme – thinking about how you track information with eye on SACS reviews

- Macon State is working on collecting data from those who submitted conduct complaints

Other assessment ideas:

- Clayton State is looking at assessing those involved in process “as violator” giving their feedback in the process – what was your experience like?

Macon State has a manner in which they can document “charged” students perceptions of process:

- Did you have preliminary conference, did you have due process explained?
- Problem is bad feedback because students are evaluating their outcome/sanctions not the process
- Clayton State has some ideas/samples of ways to do this
- At what time do you give out the instrument?

Georgia Tech – focus on sanction – qualitative assessment during sanction period, not during hearing process

e.g. – reflection paper – target questions that get at “what they learned,” what ways have you come to understand your role in the community.

Reflection papers – mixed ideas on using them (do they plagiarize them?)

Service to community projects (FVSU) – on campus, verify hours, then write 1000 word paper (show intrinsic learning) – if students plagiarize

Offices on campus at Clayton State are surveyed at beginning of year to see places that could use student “service” as part of sanctions

Gordon College – from survey standpoint – identify what it is you want to survey – did student get due process rights? Or something else? Do you have two different surveys – one for behavioral and one for academic misconduct?

Macon State – interested in 2 things – meet legal requirement and helped students in learning process

System (legal affairs) view on “process”

1. That you comply with due process and
2. That we do it somewhat consistently across our campuses

Different campuses are doing things different ways (to administratively) withdraw students – particularly in criminal matters (e.g. Valdosta State situation)

There is nothing in BOR policy that tells us how or when we can do these things, but that would be difficult given each different situation that could arise

Due process is the “right to be heard” - so we don’t have a requirement from BOR about each campus using due process – certain things must happen (you have to have a policy and be accountable for what you said you were doing to do)

How much process is due – depends on circumstances – and could depend on severity of violation, flexibility is allowed, too, so as long as you define that flexibility as long as you are following in consistently

Lynn = should we evaluate students perception of “due process”

Columbus State – part of hearing – list of items they initial as they go through hearing – outlines due process for them and they initial each step

Any students who feel aggrieved by a decision of president can appeal to the BOR

On-campus, you can have grounds for making an appeal (at Gordon is meets one of 4 criteria)

Possible ways to assess applicability of due process: Internal Audits or Peer Reviews - if data base includes all steps – you can see timeline, timing, etc.

Idea: One option for education assessment - when students who were removed from campus for criminal charges return to campus

Idea: Assessment of preventative educational program – outreach to high school’s, or through Orientation?

Look at places from where you are get conduct violation reports and see if you can do some preventative education.

SOFTWARE SYSTEMS:

- PAVE - Judicial Action
- Simplicity - JAMS
- MAXIENT
- Seabord - ODYSSEY
- homegrown systems

Topic 2:

Appeal Processes

Discussion led by: Chris Schmidt, Ga Tech

Appeal changes to Ga Tech – now (as of June 15, 2009) – all appeals can go to Dean of Students, suspensions or expulsions can go to President and then BOR, if desired

Before – anything could be appealed to President and ultimately BOR (president had concerns about that)

Feedback on appeals process from other system schools and thoughts on new process at GA Tech as well as changes in processes and how they have been done at other institutions

At Ga Tech – it is not a new hearing at appeal, but can appear as a hearing depending on person hearing the appeal

What is position of BOR on appeals – if you have policies and procedures that preclude appeals – they may have a right to appeal to the BOR based on the fact that they didn't have a right to appeal

There can be limits on appeals, but it depends on what limits are – students have right to be heard – if students say they were not heard then they have a right to appeal (esp. in situations with suspensions and expulsions) – if it is other issues and students did not have a right to be heard, then the BOR may hear the case

Transcript Notations: Some schools put non-academic conduct violations on transcripts

Tonya – AACRAO recommends you do NOT put that information on an academic transcript, only

putting academic suspension or expulsion on transcript

Putting conduct (non-academic) violation information on academic transcripts – this has not been endorsed by BOR because of the intended use of the transcript beyond sending it to transfer institutions (AACRAO supports transcript as ACACEMIC RECORDS, not conduct record)

Suggestion is having another transcript with this information on there – that students could request?

NOTE: If you put non-academic conduct information on academic transcript – Please let Tonya Lam (at BOR) know you are doing this, what you are listing, and how long it stays on there

We also collect self-reported data on Common Application for Admission and Conduct Officers can use this information as a resource students are found in violation of something on campus otherwise

Approval Process for any changes in Code of Conduct – many schools require approval by Faculty Senate groups. Some have option to make ad hoc changes and then go back for approval. However, some have statements that allow for review by Dean of Students and President.

It was noted that giving notice so people know rules/changes so they can be informed

Differentiate between administrative changes to respond to current changes/ demands, vs. substantive changes that would need faculty approval

How do students notify if they are going to appeal (KSU has process start by filing letter in her office) to keep all information accurate and in a file Helps us make sure appeals processes are happening properly and president (or whomever) is following process

Some campuses allow people to appeal just to the appealing party (and that party should contact conduct officer to get file and their perspective)

We (conduct officers) have responsibility to make sure process is followed, however, it can be educational for students to file paperwork with other offices for appeals, etc.

What can students base appeals upon?

- Don't like outcome (Columbus State)
- Violation of due process
- New evidence
- Evidence of prejudice or unfair treatment
- Mercy appeal (sanction unfair or too harsh)

If you are responding to person who is hearing appeal – you can provide information and provide copy to student

If there is an appeal to BOR – helpful if campuses provide detailed information and file that can be understood by 3rd party

Are disciplinary records academic records? – according to Red and Black case they are not, but other places they are – they are educational records protected under FERPA in other places

Question about students with illness - their behavior through conduct has escalated to criminal behavior and are excluded from campus community, but they do transfer to other places with no required notification of their behavior – unless they self-report.

Meeting adjourned for lunch at 12:15 p.m.

Meeting re-adjourned at 12:53 p.m.

ELECTIONS:

- Chair for 2009-2010 – LaRhonda Brewer. Georgia Tech
- Co-Chair for 2009-2010 – Alicia Caudill, Gainesville State College, Gainesville Campus
- Secretary for 2009-2010 - Jeff Jacobs, Clayton State University

Group will meet once or twice in the upcoming year.

**Topic 3: Academic Misconduct
International Students and Plagiarism**

- Some institutions are seeing large numbers of International Students with academic conduct issues, most often plagiarism issues – when students are found in violation they have a lot a state (related to Visa issues, etc.) if they are suspended or expelled
- It seems many of them plagiarize unintentionally
- Students say it could be cultural, but in their high school's plagiarism was not taught or enforced
- How are we helping students understand this? – Orientation, Freshman Seminar Courses, Mandatory Workshops, class presentations for these students to help them learn these writing skills and understand plagiarism in the U.S.
- It is not just a question of citation, but students have been taught not to put things in their own voice, but you give the expert's opinion back to your professor – it is an unknown concept to them to “summarize”
- They need a safe space to practice these skills and not be afraid of getting it wrong. Build trust, help students network
- Mandatory seems to be important for workshops – as attendance is low if they are not
- KSU puts holds on students if they do not attend these workshops
- Orientation doesn't tend to be a time that students want to hear about academic honesty – they have other concerns at the time
- Collaborate with those offices who work with International Students
- Postcard or newsletter mailing to these students with educational information

- Some schools also have issues with international students changing exam answers after they exams have been returned and going to faculty saying grading was incorrect
- Issues are arising with International undergraduate and graduate students – one approach with graduate students is to work with their faculty so they understand the issues their international students are facing with regards to plagiarism or other academic conduct issues
- If international students are suspended, it has to be indicated in SEVIS immediately
- If you choose, you can allow students not to be suspended until appeal process has ended which means you would not have to report them in SEVIS until appeal process was complete, if the student is ultimately suspended
- Unauthorized group work is also an area of plagiarism (lab work, computer programming language, etc.)
- What appeals are coming to BOR from Int'l students – Plagiarism, cheating, misuse of calculators – they use not following due process as foundation for reason, but ultimately it is another issue
- Generally BOR does not know if they are Int'l students for sure unless they mention it in their documents submitted for appeal
- At KSU student has complained to NAACP rep saying that he was being discriminated against based on national origin – this is not being seen at BOR
- The issue with teaching students is that they may not clearly understand how to apply guidelines to practice - i.e. learning how to cite properly

Other Discussion:

Five Year Rule – for keeping conduct records – keep records for five years after graduation or date of last attendance

How many people are involved in review of admissions applications information for students with criminal/misdemeanor charges or former academic misconduct

If a student is admitted and did not indicate previous felony and institution find out - student is due some sort of due process for lying on the application

What about not disclosing attendance at previous institutions – especially if you had had the information it would have prevented them from being accepted – Importance is being consistent in sanctions for falsifying documents – not dependant on what they falsified, but the fact that they falsified (ie if they had falsified criminal charges would you committee's decision be the same?)

Advice from BOR about work of conduct offices – Kimberly Ballard Washington, USG Legal Affairs

- Be Consistent, Make sure students have due process

- Make sure sanctions are appropriate related to level of violation
- Can you articulate reason for treating one student differently from another?

Next meeting date: **Monday, November 23** (before Thanksgiving) at Clayton State

Meeting adjourned at 2:06 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Alicia Caudill, Ph.D., Dean of Students, Gainesville State College