**Academic Integrity Committee**
Meeting Notes
November 30, 2007

Present were Jess Chandler (graduate student), David Dial (OSI), Sarah Graham (OSI), Robert Kirkman (Public Policy; committee chair), Tom Michaels (ECE), Ericka McGarity (OSI), Eli Riddle (HAC), Carol Senf (Student Honor Committee Chair), Brian Tyson.

1. Turnitin.com

   The question is whether Georgia Tech should have an institutional membership, or whether this should be the choice of schools or of individual faculty.

   Pros:
   - the service maintains a large database of stored files, and so can catch plagiarism from unpublished sources (e.g., other students' old papers);
   - can be used as an educational tool, if students run papers through it prior to submission.

   Cons:
   - FERPA issues, regardless of the services' claim that they strip personal information off of papers;
   - makes money off of students' work, so it may be illegal;
   - concerns about atmosphere/culture within schools: does this breed suspicion rather than fostering integrity?
   - no real consensus among faculty even within schools that this is a good idea;
   - any system can be gamed to

   The possibility arose of a locally based "word" database to serve a similar purpose – something faculty could access in order to check students' work.

2. Faculty Fickleness as Fatal Flaw (or, why we can't really enforce the grade sanction)

   This from the chair: the grade sanction cannot be enforced without faculty cooperation, because it is left to the instructor of record of a course to assign grades. This raises in issue to be taken up with the Registrar, the Rules and Regulations Committee, and eventually the Faculty Senate: Is there any way, if it is considered advisable, to override faculty grading in cases of academic dishonesty?

   It is not yet clear how important this issue is. It may be better to work instead toward increasing the number of faculty who participate in the honor process, and to make the case for agreeing to enforce sanctions that follow the model developed by the Integrity Committee in collaboration with OSI. It may in the end be a very small percentage of faculty who resist.

This raises the further question of how to assess faculty attitudes toward the integrity process. There is a survey in the works for Spring 2008. It might be a good idea to run the survey before this committee's faculty outreach effort to set a baseline, and then to run it again after the effort in order to assess the effectiveness of outreach.

3. The (ever-so-slightly) Revised Sanctioning Model

Ericka distributed the sanctioning model, dated 11-30-07, with the change of wording approved at the meeting on 11-02-07.

3. Faculty Guide to the Integrity Process

The Committee worked on the draft of the faculty guide to the process. An important question arose along the way: Is a guide of this kind insulting to faculty? The question and its likely answer ("sometimes, yes") suggests that the guide might be of greatest use if framed as something for use in faculty orientation, which might be distributed more broadly nonetheless.

Again, in terms of outreach, the purpose of the guide will be to make it easy for those who are so inclined to do the right thing.

This sanctioning model is provided to serve as <u>guidelines</u> in determining appropriate outcomes in academic integrity cases. Individual cases may differ substantially depending on individual circumstances.

Sanctions include the following aspects:

1.  **Disciplinary Sanction**– Student Code of Conduct Section E.1.
    *Disciplinary Warning, Disciplinary Probation, Suspension Held in Abeyance, Suspension, Expulsion.*
    The most common Disciplinary Sanctions in cases in which this is a first offense are Disciplinary Warning and Disciplinary Probation. If the work in question is worth 20% or more of the total grade (100%), then *Disciplinary Probation* is typical.  For work that is worth less than 20%, *Disciplinary Warning* is typical. A second academic violation will most likely result in *Disciplinary Suspension*. *Disciplinary Suspension* will most likely not occur in the first offense unless the case includes serious aggravating circumstances. Consideration of mitigating and aggravating factors may impact the Disciplinary Sanction.

2.  **Supplementary Requirement**–Student Code of Conduct Section E.2.
    *Programmatic Educational Experience*
    This typically is the satisfactory completion of the Academic Integrity seminar that is offered by the Honor Advisory Council. It may also include such things as re-doing an assignment, writing a response or research paper or some other individualized assignment directly related to ethics and academic honesty.

3.  **Supplementary Requirement**–Student Code of Conduct Section E.2.
    *Grade Penalty*
    The minimum grade penalty for a typical case of academic dishonesty is a one-letter grade drop in the student's final grade for the course in which academic dishonesty was committed. Beyond that, the severity of the penalty depends mainly upon the value of the assignment in question relative to the final grade of the course. Academic dishonesty on an assignment worth 30% or more of the final grade results in failure (F) of the course. If the assignment is worth between 10% and 30%, the result will be a grade of '0' on the assignment. If the assignment is worth 10% or less of the final grade, the result will be a grade of '0' on the assignment and a one-letter reduction of the final grade for the course.

<u>**Aggravating Circumstances**</u>
When developing the sanction, the aggravating circumstances should be considered. Aggravating circumstances include, but are not limited to:
  *   Premeditation
  *   Multiple acts of misconduct within a single incident or multiple incidents discovered at one time
  *   Significance of work in question to the final grade (e.g. major project, final exam)
  *   Certainty of benefits (e.g. forged change of grade form, false regrade request, etc.)
  *   Direct academic injury to another student
  *   Element of criminal-type conduct (e.g. theft, bribery)
  *   Conduct intimidating others