



STUDENT GOVERNMENT

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

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## **AR 19      In Support of Student Involvement in the Academic Integrity Process**

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Sponsors: Representatives Patrick McMillin, Leigh Owens, and Justin Stein

**WHEREAS** students were the driving force behind the creation of The University of Texas at Austin's Honor Code, which was adopted in April, 2004,<sup>1</sup>

**WHEREAS** currently, disputes about violations of academic integrity policies can be handled in the following ways: resolved directly with the course instructor, resolved with the Office of the Dean of Students, or resolved at a hearing presided over by a University Hearing Officer (a faculty or staff member appointed by the University President),<sup>2</sup>

**WHEREAS** in this model, there is no place for student involvement in the adjudication process for students who have been accused of academic dishonesty,

**WHEREAS** colleges and universities around the country have implemented Honor Boards or Honor Councils that place punishments for academic integrity violations in the hands of a group of trained students,

**WHEREAS** these boards or councils are in place at many diverse institutions, including Rice University<sup>3</sup>, Southern Methodist University<sup>4</sup>, Kansas State University<sup>5</sup>, Baylor University<sup>6</sup>, Georgetown University<sup>7</sup>, Tulane University<sup>8</sup>, California Institute of Technology<sup>9</sup>, the University of Pennsylvania<sup>10</sup>, and Duke University,<sup>11</sup>

**WHEREAS** in her 2005 report "Improving Assessment through Student Involvement: Practical Solutions for Aiding Higher Learning in Higher and Further Education," author Nancy Falchikov draws several observations that support student involvement in this process,

**WHEREAS** Falchikov writes that "there may have been a low awareness of cheating as a problem" on college campuses in the past, and writes that one reason for cheating may come from the "culture in which students are unwilling/unable to police themselves,"<sup>12</sup>

**WHEREAS** the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) has written extensively of the need for student involvement in the enforcement of honor codes,

**WHEREAS** CASE has written, "Students who are perceived as leaders by their peers should take the lead in defining standards and policies and overseeing judicial processes,"<sup>13</sup>

**WHEREAS** CASE has also written, "Adopting academic honor codes helps minimize cheating, especially when the codes encourage students to participate in the judicial process and promise to report cheating,"<sup>13</sup>

**WHEREAS** *The Chronicle of Higher Education* has written, "Some of the elements that make honor codes successful are critical in establishing a climate that supports academic honesty. Student involvement is one of the key elements,"<sup>14</sup>

**WHEREAS** there have been concerns about lawsuits over potential Honor Board rulings in which student participants, who are not employees of the university, would be unprotected. Student Judicial Services reports that "courts have consistently ruled in a university's favor if the university followed the process outlined in the university rules. In other words, if we allow students the options afforded to them in our policies, we will have nothing to worry about with regards to a lawsuit,"<sup>2</sup>

**WHEREAS** Student Judicial Services has also reported that "The idea of an honor council was discussed with the UT System last year, and the idea is still being considered,"<sup>2</sup>

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Student Government at the University of Texas at Austin strongly supports the inclusion of students in the process of evaluating cases of alleged academic integrity violations and in the process of deciding repercussions for said violations.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Office of the President, the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost, the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, the Faculty Council, and Student Judicial Services.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.utexas.edu/news/2004/04/29/nr\\_honor/](http://www.utexas.edu/news/2004/04/29/nr_honor/)

<sup>2</sup> Electronic communication with Jason Thibodeaux, Assistant Director of Student Judicial Services

<sup>3</sup> <http://honor.rice.edu/index.cfm>

<sup>4</sup> <http://smu.edu/honorcouncil/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.k-state.edu/honor/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.baylor.edu/honorcode/>

<sup>7</sup> <http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/honor/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://college.tulane.edu/code.htm>

<sup>9</sup> [http://donut.caltech.edu/about/boc/ug\\_handbook.php](http://donut.caltech.edu/about/boc/ug_handbook.php)

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.dolphin.upenn.edu/honor/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://honorcouncil.groups.duke.edu/>

<sup>12</sup> Text available through GoogleBooks. See p. 43-47

[http://books.google.com/books?id=RLcbOkRMNjIC&dq=Improving+Assessment+through+Student+Involvement:+Practical+Solutions+for+Aiding+Higher+Learning+in+Higher+and+Further+Education&printsec=frontcover&source=bl&ots=\\_mcATbf-Ju&sig=kff683v0UJ2uLMGZu-yk3nWaYKM&hl=en&ei=vlvISe2CFYLUyQXFtpDLaw&sa=X&oi=book\\_result&resnum=1&ct=result](http://books.google.com/books?id=RLcbOkRMNjIC&dq=Improving+Assessment+through+Student+Involvement:+Practical+Solutions+for+Aiding+Higher+Learning+in+Higher+and+Further+Education&printsec=frontcover&source=bl&ots=_mcATbf-Ju&sig=kff683v0UJ2uLMGZu-yk3nWaYKM&hl=en&ei=vlvISe2CFYLUyQXFtpDLaw&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=1&ct=result)

<sup>13</sup> CASE, January 2001: <http://www.case.org/>

<sup>14</sup> Chronicle of Higher Education, October 15, 1999