

Stephen F. Austin State University
SFASU Faculty Senate
Revisions to Cheating and Plagiarism Policy
M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Academic Affairs Council

FROM: Kandy J. Stahl, Ph.D.

Chair, Faculty Senate

DATE: 11/9/00

RE: Cheating and Plagiarism Policy

Please find attached the resolution regarding the Cheating and Plagiarism Policy, originally passed by Faculty Senate on 4/12/00. After much discussion in yesterday's Senate meeting, it was decided that this Resolution would be resubmitted in its original form. The Cheating and Plagiarism Policy, as currently written, allows students to withdraw from a course, when suspected of cheating, with no real consequence in our opinion. There is nothing noted on the transcript to indicate failure of any kind in the event that the student is found to be guilty. There is no policy in place for faculty to appeal a grade. Further, the current policy allows students the right to determine their course grades. This is the exclusive right of the faculty.

The Faculty Senate respectfully requests that the Academic Affairs Council reconsider modifying the current policy.

April 12, 2000 **passed**

November 8, 2000 **passed to resubmit**

BE IT RESOLVED:

Whereas, almost all students do their own work honestly and few are guilty of plagiarism or cheating, nevertheless because a small number do cheat or plagiarize, a university must have a just and consistent cheating/plagiarism policy. Because the Faculty Senate believes some changes and clarification are needed for the present policy, the Faculty Senate recommends these changes to the current policies on Cheating and Plagiarism (A-9.1) and Add/Drop (A-5):

The first paragraph in the current Procedure (A-9.1) suggests that the faculty member who accuses a student of cheating must also be the one who informs the accused student of his or her options for appealing the accusation. The Faculty Senate recommends that the wording of this section be changed to reflect students' responsibility to know what the University Policy and Procedure Manual and the SFA Student Handbook say about cheating and plagiarism. Whether cheating or plagiarism have occurred can be a complicated question, the Senate believes it unwise to add to the fundamental issue of whether academic misconduct has occurred the second issue of whether the instructor has explained the appeals process to the accused student.

The Senate recommends addressing the problem of students who have cheated and who then withdraw before the drop day with a "W" and receive no penalty. Presently, the "W" a cheater gets is no different from the "W" given to another student innocent of any cheating. The current policy states that if a student withdraws from a course prior to the awarding of a grade, mention of

the infraction can be placed in his/her student record. We feel this is a meaningless sanction because only the diploma and the transcript are likely to be seen by third parties such as potential employees or professional school admissions officers. Therefore, the Senate believes there should be an option to place an "F" or "WF" on the transcript of an offending student.

Present policy states that cheaters' grades must be withheld, but also states that a student can withdraw from the course. A contradiction exists because an instructor cannot "withhold" a "W" which has already been assigned in the drop process. To end this contradiction, The Senate proposes that from the 12th day until the drop day, the instructor should have the option of awarding a "WF" instead of a "W" to a student guilty of cheating or plagiarism. The drop system should be changed so that from the 12th day until the drop day the instructor will be notified that a student intends to withdraw. The instructor would then assign the W or WF; the policy would be to assign WF only because of cheating or plagiarism, not because of poor grades. An added benefit of this change in drop policy is that it would save faculty members the time and effort of preparing material for students who have withdrawn from class without any notification to the instructor.

These proposed changes would not diminish students' present rights to appeal any sanctions or penalties for cheating or plagiarism.