TILT Honor Code Task Force

Question 1: What is the current system at CSU and what are the strengths and weaknesses of that system?

The system at CSU is considered a "Conduct Code" system with defined roles for both Faculty and other Instructors and for administrators via the Office of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services (CRSCS). There is only a decision-making role for students when a case reaches the University Appeals Board constituted by a majority faculty and a minority student representatives and chaired by a faculty member.

Instructors have the option of choosing how any incident is initially handled. Using the rules and processes laid out in the Student Conduct Code and General Bulletin, they may handle it themselves, ask for CRSCS to meet with the student to consider a University sanction in addition to their grading penalty, or refer the case to CRSCS to determine if the Conduct Code has been violated, to impose a University sanction, and to authorize the Instructor to impose the grading penalty of their choosing. The Instructor of Record has the sole authority to determine a grading penalty. Students have the right to appeal a decision at any level, but they cannot appeal the grading penalty.

CRSCS serves as a "clearinghouse" for records of informal actions taken by Instructors and for formal discipline records for hearings conducted by that office.

More details can be found at: http://tilt.colostate.edu/integrity/ and http://www.conflictresolution.colostate.edu/home

Task Force Input

Strengths of CSU's current system:

- Allows collaboration across units and across Academic Affairs and Student Affairs
- 1-on-1 meetings with student and a hearing officer allows better challenge/support
- Allows referral to someone else for a hearing
- Allows Hearing Officer (or BIT/Case Management) to get into serious personal issues
- Allows "file only" option
- A flexible system – allows a range of outcomes and sanctions
- Using honor pledge may have reduced cheating in PACe courses
- Allows faculty/instructor prerogative
- It is a system that can be applied to all modes of delivery (distance, online, blended, in-person (residential and off-campus)

Weaknesses of CSU's current system:

- Causes student confusion on who is imposing grading penalties
- If CRSCS overturns a faculty decision it causes loss of faith or trust
- Can the Instructor appeal a Hearing Officer decision? (Yes)
- Student can withdraw (or take an "S" if a first year COE student) to avoid the academic penalty.
- The perception that CRSCS will "side" with the student
- The feeling that a case can't be "proved" without physical evidence results in cases not being pursued.
- Our procedures are disproportionately implemented.
- Our system is more reactive then proactive.

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- A de-centralized system allows inconsistency in what consequences students receive.
- Should we consider providing a rubric or guide regarding the range of consequences to facilitate more consistency?
- The Honor Pledge isn't consistently used across classes and departments. This may cause students to not take it seriously since some professors ask them to sign it and some don't.
- A required course or seminar which teaches academic integrity would be beneficial for students. Teaching students how/when to properly cite sources may cause fewer accidental plagiarism issues.
- The current system is very vague. When/where do students learn about the system and what happens if they violate academic integrity?
- There is no "annual report" to show outcomes of the system.

Should we look at this question from the perspective of campus stakeholders?

Students: strength is the opportunity for hearing with independent party (CRSCS), and being a universal system

Faculty: strength is having a consistent system, weakness is lack of awareness of the system

University: weakness is that it may not enhance the culture of integrity/honesty at CSU? – It is not part of everyday thinking or a consistent message from administration (i.e., "Academic Integrity" not as much a part of our vocabulary as "retention" even though it is a core value.)