Report of the Honor System Task Force
January 31, 2013

“I have neither given or received nor have I tolerated others use of unauthorized aid.”

MEMBERS OF THE TASK FORCE

Mark Farmer, Associate Professor of Foreign Languages and Literatures
Rick Gillman, Assistant Provost for Faculty Affairs (task force chair)
Michael Glass, Assistant Professor of Mathematics and Computer Science
Joe Goss, Assistant Director of Valpo Core
Jennifer Guziewicz, Graduate School Director of Academic Services
Michael Hagenberger, Associate Professor of Civil Engineering
Candace Kilpinen, former Honor Council chair
Ben Macy, President of Student Senate
Andrew Makowski, former Honor Council chair
Carly Mohr, Appeals Chair of the Honor Council
Brittany Pedavoli, Vice-Chair of the Honor Council
Bianca Spencer, member of the Student Senate
Jenn VanSwol, Executive Chair of the Honor Council
Amanda Zelechoski, Assistant Professor of Psychology
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose: In response to an increasing lack of confidence in the Valparaiso University Honor System by faculty and students, this task force was charged by the Faculty Senate in August 2012 to investigate the current situation and to make recommendations to the campus community about how to address perceived problems within the honor system. Specifically, the task force was charged to review the history of the honor system, to prepare a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis of the current system, and to make recommendations as to how the campus community can respond to this analysis and enhance the system.

Importance: Over the past 70 years, the honor system has become a defining feature of the Valparaiso University culture. Based on the highest principles of ethics and honesty in class work and campus life, the honor system is regarded as an expression of the Christian character of the University. At this time, the campus community needs to re-affirm the purposes for which it has an honor system: Its primary purpose is to assist in the character formation of our students. An important, but secondary, purpose is to maintain academic integrity in our courses.

Process: The task force used the early part of the fall 2012 semester to gather information. Its members read an extensive body of background material on honor systems and academic integrity. They conducted focus sessions with various faculty, student, and alumni groups. Surveys of the undergraduate faculty and students were conducted, with more than 100 faculty and 500 students responding. The latter part of the semester was filled with extensive discussions by the task force of its findings and their implications in terms of recommendations.

Findings: The task force found that there is broad, but fragile, support for the current honor system among faculty, students, and alumni. It is easy to find individuals who strongly support the system, others who strongly oppose it, and many others who are quite willing to support the system if it runs effectively. The task force finds that we arrive at our current situation through a long period of benign neglect in which the administration, faculty, and student populations assumed that all was going well without careful review.
The task force prepared a long list of recommendations, most of which need to be implemented in coordination with the others. Because of these interrelationships, this executive summary will not note particular recommendations. The recommendations are organized into the following categories:

1. Education
2. Recruitment
3. Resources
4. Authorized Aid
5. Policies
6. Constitution
7. Future Actions

The focus of the recommendations in the first six categories are items that the campus community can act on immediately, with their anticipated impact being demonstrated as early as the beginning of the 2013-2014 academic year. Specifically, the recommendations for Education, Recruitment, and Resources strengthen and re-affirm that we have a student-led and faculty-supported honor system for our undergraduate program.

The recommendations in the Authorized Aid, Policies, and Constitution sections attempt to provide guidance to the campus community on several topics and areas of concern.

The recommendations in the Future Actions section charge the campus community to actively address critical questions for which this task force was not equipped to provide immediate answers. These questions, such as types of penalties and radically different adjudication methods, need to be considered carefully, but the task force does not believe that the conversation can be productive until more immediate problems are addressed.
CHARGE TO THE TASK FORCE

Objective 2.1 of Valparaiso University’s Strategic Plan states that the University “will demonstrate through its academic and community practices that faith and ethics matter for learning, livelihood and life.” Action 2.1.2 under this objective calls for the University to “make the Honor Code a more visible and effective expression of the ethic of academic life at Valparaiso; link the values of the Honor Code to an intentional and integrated process for enhancing student ethical development in all areas of campus life and beyond.” With this purpose in mind, the charge to the Honor System Task Force includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Review the history and impact of the undergraduate honor system.
2. Determine the current campus attitude towards the undergraduate honor system.
3. Conduct a SWOT analysis of the undergraduate honor system.
4. Make recommendations on actions necessary to sustain the undergraduate honor system.
5. Complete this process in a timely manner.

WORKING PROCESS

The task force gathered general reading material about honor codes and about the Valpo honor system during the summer of 2012. As it read this background material, the task force planned its fall activities. From the beginning of the fall semester through the end of October, it gathered information via focus groups and open forums with students, faculty, and alumni. It conducted an electronic survey of both faculty and students. Beginning in November and through the end of the semester, the task force met twice weekly to discuss its findings and recommendations. The first draft of this report was written over Christmas break.

During September and October 2012, the task force conducted electronic surveys of both the faculty and the undergraduate student body. During this same period, it held discussions with a variety of members in the campus community: faculty who teach in the Valpo Core program, the
chairs in the College of Arts and Sciences, the Student Senate, international students, students who declined invitations to be members of the Honor Council, and alumni visiting for Homecoming. The findings from these activities are reported as part of the SWOT analysis below.

The task force met twice weekly in ninety-minute sessions during November and December to discuss its findings and to prepare its recommendations. These discussions were often quite wide-ranging with conversations about general principles in juxtaposition to conversations about specific cases (with redactions) handled by the Honor Council. Generally, they were collegial, but clear differences of opinion were voiced. Ultimately, most of the recommendations evolved from multiple conversations and usually with consensus among the task force members.

**HISTORY OF THE HONOR SYSTEM AT VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY**

The Valparaiso University Honor Code was established in 1943 under the inspired leadership of Barbara Bernthal, the first woman elected president of the student body. Under her leadership, students proposed that an honor system be instituted in all classes. At that time, using various forums, students indicated that they favored an unqualified honor system. Then “the proposition was placed before the faculty which, after much discussion, resolved that beginning with the fall semester of 1943, the honor system would govern all matters concerning honesty in academic work. Provision was made for the educational and judicial functions of the system to be administered by a student-faculty Honor Council” (Streitelmeier).

It is of particular interest that this occurred during World War II, when enrollment was particularly low – only 332 students. The first test of the honor system occurred immediately after the war when the system broke down under the influx of new students. Because of this, during the second semester of the 1946-47 academic year, proctoring was temporarily reintroduced in lower division courses. The following year, the honor system was fully restored. Details of how the system was administered at that time have been lost.
Since then, the honor system has been in continuous effect, with periodic revisions. The current constitution of the Honor Council appears to have been approved by the faculty and student bodies in 1982 (Schnabel), and the last general review of the system appears to have occurred in 1990 (Baepler). As a result of this review, the current Honor Code statement was adopted, with the unintended consequence of causing the School of Law to establish its own policy and practices which did not include the “toleration” clause and its implicit expectations of students (Berner). Since the 1990 review, the Graduate School, as it has grown and evolved, has also established its own practices for addressing violations of the honor system.

Periodically, the legality of the honor system has been tested, and just last year it was challenged as part of a civil rights case. In all instances, it has been found to be a structurally sound system of adjudication (Farha).

**SIGNIFICANCE OF HAVING AN HONOR SYSTEM**

Over the past 70 years, the honor system has become a defining feature of the Valparaiso University culture. Based on the highest principles of ethics and honesty in class work and campus life, the honor system is regarded as an expression of the Christian character of the University. This pride in, and expectation of, academic integrity actually predates the Lutheran era of the University. In his 1921 argument for the dismissal of the then president of the University, student George Simpson wrote,

> The first objection is that Dr. Hodgdon is parading before the public three or four high degrees which are considered by the student body to be false. They consider this to be a violation of professional ethics, or to put it in their own words, they call it professional dishonesty (Stimpson).

This comment reminds us that the Honor Code is not simply a method for controlling cheating, but represents the highest ethical standards to be upheld by the student body, the faculty, and the staff.
Alumni remember the Honor Code as a significant part of their experience at the University. Many alumni share stories about how the ethical behavior taught by the honor system has influenced decisions and actions in their professional and personal lives. There is at least one documented instance of an alumnus reporting himself years after graduation for a violation that had gone undetected at the time. A few months ago, one alumna wrote the following message to the Provost:

I did not truly come to realize that uniqueness of the honor system until I participated in an academic setting that did not use it. During law school, exams were proctored; so tight was the security during some exams that we were even escorted to the bathroom. Now some would argue that the stakes were higher as one derives her entire grade for a course from that one exam, but it always struck me as odd that as future attorneys, we would be afforded so little credit and respect. That's what stands out to me as one important feature of the honor system at Valpo -- from day one, we were treated as adults. Indeed, one isn't proctored when she fills out her income tax return. At its most basic level, life isn't proctored; we must learn early to be persons of integrity when the only one watching over us is the Lord and ourselves (Schroeder).

Having an honor system is a public statement by an institution that it is committed to developing the ethical character of its students. Any number of studies and reports, including Dey (2010), CAI (1999), McCabe (2001), and Chace (2012), note the significance of developing ethical character as part of a university education, particularly at liberal arts institutions. According to the Valparaiso University School of Law, “In general, an honor code is used to command respect for the academic process and to create and ensure mutual respect among peers and faculty” (VUSL).

An honor system will not eliminate academic dishonesty. Current research on the psychology of cheating and lying reveals that everyone does so to some degree and in some situations. Factors that increase the chances of someone being dishonest include conflicts of interest, physical exhaustion, watching others get away with being dishonest, and the possibility of others benefiting from the dishonesty. Surprisingly, neither the probability of getting caught nor the
value gained by the dishonesty is a significant factor in determining behavior. Inhibiting factors include moral reminders, signature placement, and honor pledges (Ariely).

As an example of these principles in action, Coursera, a provider of massive open online courses, recently began to ask students to sign an honor statement certifying that their submitted work was in fact their own. This action was in direct response to concerns about plagiarism and of having non-enrolled students completing the material on behalf of enrolled students (Young). As the research above suggests, Coursera anticipates that this simple action will reduce the tendency of students to be dishonest. In fact, there is significant literature on maintaining academic integrity in on-line courses, and many of the suggestions are currently used in our on-line courses (Hill).

This does not imply, however, that an honor system can be simply put in place and ignored. To be successful, they need to be nurtured and valued by the entire campus community. A recent commentary in The Chronicle of Higher Education discussed a recent cheating episode at Harvard University, which has an honor code, in contrast to several other institutions, and found no difference in behaviors (Dirmeyer & Cartwright). Their observation, consistent with several other studies, Schwartz & Tatum (2012), Sternberg (2012), and Brink (2012), is that for an honor system to succeed, there needs to be “a culture of academic integrity” that leads students to take enforcement of the rules seriously. The success of an honor system depends heavily on students’ expectations of their peers’ behavior and therefore requires significant resources invested in establishing those expectations and perceptions, while adapting to changing demographics and learning environments.

**TASK FORCE FINDINGS**

The principal finding of this task force, from which all other findings and recommendations follow, is that the honor system has been suffering from benign neglect from the students, the faculty, and the administration for a period of at least five years. This neglect has depleted the financial and human resources available to the Honor Council, led to a loss of institutional
memory among the members of the Council, the student body, and the faculty, and has resulted in the disappearance of archival resources. The blame for this neglect is deep and wide-spread, so there is no advantage in assigning it to any particular person or unit. However, to rebuild the honor system from its current state, it will take persistent effort by the students, the faculty, and the administration over several years. In the following pages, we outline the specific findings of the task force in the form of a SWOT analysis, followed by detailed recommendations for the long-term revival and enhancement of the undergraduate honor system.

In particular, we note that the strengths are generally in principle and in organization, while weaknesses are generally in application and process, consistent with benign neglect.

**Strengths**

1. The honor system has a long history at Valparaiso University and is deeply imbedded in our campus culture. It is a source of pride to many of our alumni.
2. The honor system increases Valparaiso University’s institutional distinctiveness.
3. The literature cited above suggests that the honor system represents best practices in maintaining academic integrity and in forming our students’ character.
4. There continues to be broad, though possibly shallow, support for the honor system among both faculty and students.
5. When operating effectively, the honor system helps to reduce the barrier between faculty and student, particularly at the advanced level, increasing the quality of the academic experience.
6. First year students seem impressed by the system and tend to rise to expectations. Some are overly honest and/or zealous in their application thereof.
7. International students, although very much in need of education about the system, appreciate the trust that is bestowed on them.
8. Many students feel that it increases the perceived value of a Valpo degree.
9. Organizational strengths include:
   a. Standard system of penalties.
   b. Existence of an appeals process, including review of decisions by the Provost.
   c. Requirement of deliberation and evidence before a decision is reached.
d. Recordkeeping which protects the University from lawsuits.
e. Provisions for educational components about the system and about academic integrity in general.

10. The system catches and punishes a fair number of violators.

Weaknesses
1. As we have seen in the period leading up to this report, the existing oversight mechanisms are not sufficient to support the honor system when it is placed under stress or neglected.
2. This lack of oversight also implies that there are no accountability or assessment systems in place.
3. The Honor Council has no consistent budgeting mechanism to correspond to its position in the campus community. While it is in fact a student organization, it is performing a faculty and/or an administrative function.
4. The use of a standard first penalty of failure in the course is highly controversial. Some people see this as harsh and would prefer a graduated system of penalties. Others perceive cheating as cheating, regardless of the impact or cause.
5. The education component of the honor system, for both students and faculty, has largely disappeared. Thus, both students and faculty are largely ignorant of their responsibilities and the policies, practices, and procedures of the Honor Council.
6. Transfer students receive no education in the system and international students receive an insufficient level of training.
7. In the past few years, the training of student and faculty members has become sloppy. This is not the fault of any current members; prior to recent years, training had been done through the same ‘observation’ model, but the collective memory of the large body of student members and long-serving faculty members were able to transfer knowledge to new members. Only minimal procedures for training have ever been established.
8. Recordkeeping has been particularly inconsistent and substandard in the past several years, not the least because the Honor Council has physically moved almost every year for the past five years. Irrespective of these logistical difficulties, there is no guidance available as to what data should be maintained and/or shared with the campus.
9. The physical spaces and processes used are not necessarily the most efficient; they do not
guarantee the confidentiality promised by the system.
10. The recruitment systems for both student and faculty members are ineffective, at best, and
nonexistent, at worst.
11. The mechanics – processes – involved in the system are seen as obstacles, particularly the
time required of Honor Council members.
12. There are cross-listed undergraduate/graduate courses that face the challenge of “using” two
different systems concurrently to review alleged Honor Code violations.
13. The system does not have any mechanisms for issues of academic integrity that do not
involve graded work.
14. The procedures for addressing end of spring semester cases and summer cases are not very
robust.
15. Honor Code statements on syllabi typically do not clearly state that it is the student’s
responsibility to ask for clarification of authorized and unauthorized aid.
16. Instructors frequently fail to fulfill their responsibility to mitigate opportunities for violations
by actions such as repeating statements about authorized aid and spreading students out
during testing situations.
17. The constitution fulfills a dual purpose: a statement of principles and general guidelines as
well as a statement of operational policies and practices.
18. The system struggles to balance roles of being both educational and punitive.

Opportunities
1. The University operates under three different honor systems – undergraduate, graduate, and
law. If we encourage communication among the units, these three systems can mutually
support each other and provide opportunities for experimentation with different procedures,
penalties, etc.
2. Re-invigorating and enhancing the honor system provides opportunities for the University to
continue to strengthen its unique position among institutions of higher education, both
nationally and internationally.
3. First year students tend to bring an initial enthusiasm and interest about the system.
4. The increasingly diverse backgrounds (personal and professional) of faculty provide the campus with fresh ideas that may strengthen and refresh the system.

5. The honor system can be used to articulate and instill an intellectual framework of honesty. It can be used as a mechanism to create “teachable moments” which provide students with an opportunity for personal growth.

6. We have an opportunity to clarify the responsibilities of both the faculty and students towards maintaining the honor system. We have an opportunity to explore and highlight how the honor system is a system of shared responsibility.

7. A policy of punishment/consequences guidelines can be established to guide the Council and reduce unnecessary variability in its assignment of penalties.

**Threats**

1. As an increasing number of experiential opportunities (undergraduate research, study away, internships, employment) are available and promoted to students, there will be increasing difficulty in finding students prepared to commit the time needed to operate the system.

2. Along with the increasing number of experiential opportunities, there is a shifting sense among students as to which opportunities are deemed valuable or relevant to personal and professional goals.

3. Similarly, the increasing cost of college will force some students to select paid opportunities over general service to the campus community.

4. The changing demographics of our student population – specifically the shift away from a homogeneous Lutheran middle-class background – brings the challenge of articulating a single definition of academic integrity and addressing many different cultural understandings of academic integrity.

5. Changing technology and pedagogical techniques have significantly increased both the opportunity to cheat and the means with which to do so.

6. Changing cultural understandings in mainstream society are tending to lower the value of academic integrity relative to other values such as loyalty to peers. This creates ambiguity and anxiety related to the toleration clause.

7. The current system may or may not be scalable as the University implements its ambitious growth model.
8. Among recent graduates, the system is not necessarily well-regarded. This is also true among some current students.

9. There is a wide-spread perception that the system “just isn’t working,” both in the sense that the process is broken and in the sense that it does not deter cheating.

10. Conversely, there is also a sense of unwillingness to change the system among some members of the community.

11. There is an increasing lack of faculty and student involvement in the system and apparently corresponding increase in self-adjudication by faculty.

12. There may be a perception among faculty that they are not allowed to take pro-active steps to discourage academic dishonesty.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The campus community needs to re-affirm the purposes for which it has an honor system.

a. Its primary purpose is to assist in the character formation of our students. The system should enable them to assume responsibility for their own actions by developing a sense of integrity, and to develop a responsibility for the well-being of their community by holding others to these same standards.

b. The secondary purpose of the honor system is to adjudicate matters of academic dishonesty on campus.

c. For student members of the Honor Council, it should also develop their leadership capacities.

This task force advises that, as much as possible, the following recommendations be implemented immediately and concurrent with the re-writing of the constitution in order to reflect consistency in practices. The task force notes that the 2013-2014 academic year is a constitutional revision year, so that this period of potential misalignment should not extend more than the single year.
Introduction to, and Education in, the Honor System

The task force’s findings indicate that there is a significant weakness in the educational process concerning the honor system. These weaknesses are most apparent at the new student and new faculty level, but there are also weaknesses in the continuing education of current students and faculty. Thus the first set, and most extensive set, of recommendations from this task force address issues of education. Although the recommendations are sub-grouped by intended audience, their collective purpose is to provide a systemic and interlinked approach to introducing and continually educating both students and faculty about the honor system.

General
1. All of the educational activities relating to the honor system should remind us that the primary purpose of the honor system is not to police cheating, but rather to build ethical self-discipline in each member of our community. The educational activities should also consistently remind people that the honor system is not a replication of the U.S. legal system in miniature, but rather a judicial system designed to support and enhance academic integrity on campus. It is designed to be student led and faculty supported. It should arrive at swift, certain, and consistent results.
2. The Honor Council should work with the Director of Instructional Design when preparing all educational materials and programs.
3. IMC and the Department of Communication should assist the Honor Council in developing a series of videos to address several needs including:
   a. A short video on why we have the honor system.
   b. A short video on how to put the ‘non-toleration clause’ into practice.
   c. A short video describing the processes involved in a case.
   d. A video of a mock trial for educational purposes.
   e. Short training videos for Honor Council members.
New Students

4. The Office of Admission should ensure that every campus tour and visit event includes an introduction to the honor system. The purpose of this presentation is to introduce prospective students to the system to illustrate the values we hold important.

5. The Assistant Dean for First Year Students should ensure that FOCUS events have a significant presentation and discussion about the honor system. The purpose of this presentation is to explain to incoming students why we have an honor system.

6. The Assistant Dean for First Year Students should ensure that fall and spring welcome events have a significant presentation on the honor system. The purpose of this presentation is to help students understand the expectations and limitations of the Honor Code.

7. The Director of the Core Program should establish and facilitate a mandatory fifth hour discussion about the honor system during the first two weeks of the semester for all Core students, with attendance required for transfer and Christ College students. The purpose for this session is to outline the processes by which the honor system works and to answer any questions.

8. The Honor Council should develop an “Honor Code Hotline” to answer pressing questions about application as students face complex or ambiguous situations.

9. The Office of International Programs, in partnership with the Honor Council and Director of Instructional Design, should design any additional educational initiatives that might be necessary for international students.

Continuing Students

10. The Registrar should design a system by which returning students can be required to review a presentation on the honor system to remind them of its standards, expectations, and their responsibilities. The task force imagines this presentation to be like those that employees complete concerning Harassment, Drug Use, and Privacy.

11. The Honor Council should work with the Provost’s Office to invite alumni back to campus to speak to the significance of the honor system on an occasional basis.
New Faculty

12. The Provost’s Office should ensure that the University-level new faculty orientation program include sessions that focus on the philosophy and practice of the honor system, respectively. Specifically, there should be discussions of why we have such a system and how cases are processed.

13. Deans and chairs should insure that all new faculty orientation sessions at the unit level include discussions of the policies and practices in place at the unit level regarding the honor system.

14. Deans and chairs should insure that all new adjunct faculty orientation sessions at the unit level include discussions of the policies and practices in place at the unit level regarding the honor system. Because adjunct faculty often do not participate in broader campus discussions, deans and chairs should also include some discussion of the philosophical and pedagogical purpose of the honor system in their programming for adjunct faculty.

15. The Director of Faculty Development should include a deeper study of the honor system as part of the proposed mentoring program for second and third year tenure-track faculty.

Continuing Faculty

16. Faculty should periodically sign a statement agreeing that they (a) will participate in the honor system, (b) understand their responsibilities to the system, and (c) will practice the principles of the system in their own professional and public lives. The task force imagines this review to be like those that they complete concerning Harassment, Drug Use, and Privacy, and hence this review should be set up by the Office of Human Resources.

17. As a matter of routine, faculty should share with students the significance of academic integrity in their own lives as members of professional communities. Examples of the latter might include:
   a. Noting their correct application of copyright law to classroom handouts.
   b. Acknowledgement of others’ ideas in the classroom (i.e. this is Newton’s method because Newton developed it).
   c. Sharing credit with undergraduate collaborators (talks and publications).
18. Colleges/departments should engage in unit-wide discussions about what is authorized and unauthorized aid within the unit. When there is consensus, this information can be communicated to students and shared with new faculty.

**Recruitment to the Honor Council**

A principal reason for the creation of this task force was the problems caused by having only a small number of students serving as members of the Honor Council. The task force’s findings identified several possible reasons for this small number, including a lack of information about the opportunity to serve and commitments to other types of academic, social, and financial opportunities. This particular problem will become even more acute as the size of the University grows significantly. Thus, this task force presents a series of recommendations radically changing how both students and faculty are recruited to serve on the Honor Council. These recommendations should be understood to be operating in alignment with the educational recommendations above.

**General**

1. The student and faculty membership on the Honor Council should grow at a rate consistent with the anticipated rate of campus growth.

2. The Honor Council should work with the Director of Instructional Design to develop standardized orientation and training materials and programs for new members.

**New Student Members**

3. One student should be nominated by election by their peers from each section of the Core, and four from Christ College freshman class at the mid-point of the fall semester. (Note that this step chronologically follows the sequence of educational activities described above for new students.) These names, along with recommendations from their instructors, will be forwarded to the Honor Council recruitment committee.
   a. These nominees will receive a general group training workshop in the latter part of the fall semester. Alumni members of the Honor Council might have a role in this event.
b. After their grade eligibility is determined at the end of the fall semester, they will receive individualized training during the spring semester. This may well involve training members to perform specific duties such as conducting investigations, managing records, or leading educational programs.

c. They will remain members of the Honor Council for as long as they are academically eligible, available, and active in their membership.

4. Other students, with attention to transfer and international students, may be nominated and added to the membership via the traditional faculty nomination method and serve after participating in the above training.

**New Faculty**

5. All of the undergraduate tenured faculty, tenure-track faculty, and lecturers, beginning in the spring of their second year, will serve as members of a pool of faculty to be called on to participate in hearings.

   a. These faculty will be divided into five cohorts, with each cohort responsible for sitting on hearings every fifth semester.

   b. The faculty who are members of the Honor Council will offer short training workshops for these new faculty the semester before they begin this service.

   c. Within a given semester, the cohort will be scheduled so as to provide some flexibility in response to faculty needs.

   d. Faculty participation will be recorded and reported to the appropriate dean/chair.

**Resources**

The task force is very concerned about the level of resources available to the Honor Council to fund its operation. In particular, the task force noted that the chair of the Honor Council is receiving a stipend approximately 1/3 that of other significant student leaders. The task force is very concerned that the physical space resources assigned to the Honor Council have been erratic and less than optimal for their operations. It is also noted that, although the Honor Council is a student organization, it has been tasked with a faculty and administrative function. With these thoughts in mind, the task force makes the following recommendations.
1. There should be a regular budget line for the Honor Council within the academic support budget of the University. Establishing the budget for the Honor Council should not be left to the Student Senate for two reasons: it has been historically erratic in its support, and, more importantly, it permits a conflict of interest for senators who may be facing charges or have been before the Council in the past. Funds for this budget line should be shared between the Student Senate and the administration, with some minimum taken off the top of the Student Senate budget.

2. The Honor Council budget should be approximately $15,000 in order to accomplish the following tasks:
   a. Compensate the chair and other members at rates comparable to other student leaders on campus.
   b. Provide for membership in the International Center for Academic Integrity (ICAI).
   c. Provide for two student leaders and a faculty advisor to attend the ICAI conference annually.
   d. Provide resources to maintain, organize, and archive its records properly.
   e. Offer robust educational opportunities to students.
   f. Conduct regular training and renewal workshops for its membership, the student body, and the faculty.

3. The administration should explore other compensation options for the officers, including items such as tuition waivers, free housing, or academic year scholarships.

**Authorized Aid**

As expected, the task force found an increasingly diverse set of questions and problems related to the issue of authorized and unauthorized aid. In response to these questions and problems, the task force feels the need to establish several guiding principles from which recommendations about practice can follow.

a. The goal of statements about, and practices involving, authorized aid is to create an environment in which the vast majority of students who are not inclined to cheat are not tempted to cheat. That is, they are not a draconian, burdensome set of rules attempting to control the small number of individuals who will cheat regardless.
b. It is reasonable to assume that behavior that would be suspect in a proctored environment will also be suspect in an un-proctored environment.

c. The pedagogical intent of an activity can influence the assumptions of what is reasonable authorized aid.

d. The goal is to prevent the use of unauthorized aid, not to punish students for violating policies.

With these principles in mind, the task force offers the following recommendations for faculty and students.

Faculty

1. All forms of plagiarism, as is historically true, are a violation of the Honor Code and do not generally need to be specified in a syllabus. However, in transition courses such as Core, a detailed discussion of plagiarism is necessary and appropriate.

2. Mobile technology – calculators, cell phones, translators, etc. – are unauthorized aid in all classroom testing situations unless specifically authorized by the instructor. Such devices should be turned off and kept out of sight.

3. Academic dishonesty in the form of misrepresentation (e.g. lying to an instructor) claiming academic credit for work that was not done, or gaining some advantage over classmates, are also violations of the Honor Code and do not need to be specified in an instructor’s syllabus in order to be enforceable.

4. All forms of aid are presumed to be authorized for online courses unless otherwise specified by the instructor. In this context, instructors thus have an additional task of providing clear support to students so that they can reasonably be expected to avoid using unauthorized aid.

5. All faculty members should include clear and informative statements describing authorized aid and unauthorized aid in their syllabi. These statements should note that it is the student’s responsibility to be aware of the standards and to make inquiries with the instructor when in doubt. Faculty should remind students of the standards as part of each major assignment and exam.

6. Faculty members may choose to proctor an exam or series of exams if they have immediate and viable reasons for doing so. (i.e. a student asks them directly, or there is some general evidence of cheating) The faculty member must report their action to the Honor Council and
include the reason(s) for proctoring the exams. The frequency of proctoring should be part of the Honor Council's annual report, and frequent proctoring by an individual faculty member will be reported back to the appropriate dean/chair for review.

Students
7. Non-native English speaking students may be allowed the use of translation aids approved beforehand by the instructor in consultation with the Office of International Programs.
8. When signing the Honor Code, students affirm that they understand the definition of authorized aid for that assignment. They should be sure that they do so by asking their instructor for clarification when in doubt.

Policies
The task force’s findings show significant levels of frustration with the various policies and practices of the Honor Council. Not least among these is the application, or a lack thereof, of the standard penalty. Some say it is too harsh, some say that it is applied inconsistently; others simply are frustrated with the slow nature of the process itself. In response, the task force makes the following recommendations, with the intent that cases can be handled swiftly, consistently, and with certainty.

Penalties
1. The standard penalty should remain failure in the course. The task force recognizes that this is of significant concern to many people across campus, so an additional recommendation on this matter is listed under Future Actions.
2. The Honor Council should review the criteria for extenuating circumstances, publish them, and strictly adhere to them.

Internal Processes
3. The time table for reporting and processing violations should be shortened significantly. The task force recommends (with appropriate modifications) that the seven calendar day reporting window and three week hearing window be established in the ad hoc changes adopted by the Honor Council this year.
4. The Honor Council should provide a mechanism for a student advocate to work with the accused during the investigation and hearing process to assure due process is followed. These advocates may also be interpreters who are able to assist non-native English speaking students.

5. Students need a clear description of what is meant by the toleration clause. The goal for students is not to actively police each other, but when they encounter a situation in which they believe a violation has occurred, they are expected to report it. Students are not to turn a blind eye to inappropriate behavior, and are expected to report noticeable, blatant, alarming cheating/situations. Students should be vocal in preventing violations before they happen.

6. Students should be encouraged to report incidents to their professors. This creates a second path for students to use in their reporting; either report directly to the council as is traditional, or have the professor report it, in which case the student then assumes the role of witness.

7. The Honor Council should ensure that policies and procedures to protect the confidentiality of student accusers are in place and strictly adhered to.

8. Faculty generally report violations with the assumption that the accused is guilty; they are often therefore incredulous at a finding of non-guilty. To maintain their confidence in the system, the Honor Council should report back to the faculty member the rationale behind any decisions not to advance a case to a hearing and any finding of not-guilty.

9. In combined undergraduate/graduate classes, graduate students will be reported to the Graduate Honor Council as directed by the Graduate School Catalog and undergraduates will be reported to the Honor Council.

Accountability

10. The Honor Council should work with staff in Information Technology Services to establish a database system that can be used to collect and report data.

11. The student and faculty leadership of the Honor Council should prepare an annual report on the work of the Honor Council and the state of the honor system and present it to the University Council and other public audiences through appropriate media. While maintaining confidentiality, this annual report should include the following data:
   a. Number of reported violations.
   b. Number of hearings.
c. Number of appeals.
d. Number of repeat offenders.
e. Percent of cases initiated by students.
f. Distribution of outcomes, noting reasons for findings of not guilty.
g. Distribution of types of violations.
h. Distribution of cases, hearings, and outcomes by various categories (i.e. college, course, gender).
i. Reasons for reversals on appeal.
j. Average time involved in adjudicating cases.
k. Data on participation of Honor Council members.

12. The faculty advisor position should be expanded to a three person team. While working together, one person will oversee case-related issues, another educational/recruitment activities, and the third regular operational details. Each of these three individuals should receive workload credit for this assignment.

13. The three advisors, plus nine other tenure-track faculty (appointed by college in accordance to governance practice), should be voting members of the Honor Council.
   a. Each of the 12 should sit on a number of hearings per year to be familiar with the process and to assure consistency of practice and outcome.
   b. Each should provide faculty input into the Honor Council discussions on the constitution, policy, and practice. This requires attending Honor Council meetings as well as hearings.
   c. Each should serve as liaisons to the students and faculty in their colleges.
   d. Each should provide training to other faculty serving in the panel member role.

14. Just as academic programs undergo a regular periodic program review, so should the honor system. This task force suggests that this period be seven years, either beginning immediately after this report is completed, or immediately after the constitution is amended to reflect the recommendations of this report. The Provost’s Office should be responsible for initiating this review process.
Constitution
As noted in the historical section of this report, there has not been a significant review of the honor system or its constitution for more than 20 years. Therefore, a team consisting of student members of the Honor Council, a representative of the General Counsel’s Office, and representatives of the faculty should work over the summer of 2013 to make the following changes to the constitution.

1. The constitution and related policies should be re-written to address the recommendations above.
2. The constitution should be simplified, focusing on the overriding principles and guiding structures of the system. Policies and operating procedures should be established and delineated in stand-alone documents.
3. The constitution should clarify the significance of “intent to cheat” in the decision making process of the Honor Council.
4. Rather than being accountable solely to the President, the Honor Council, via the faculty advisory team and its student leadership, should be accountable (for reporting data and constitutional changes) to the University Council.
5. Changes to the constitution and major policies should be approved by both the Student Senate and Faculty Senate.

Future Actions
This task force has worked diligently over the past seven months to complete its data gathering, its analysis, and to prepare the recommendations above. Oftentimes, it found itself discussing very particular points of the conceptual and operational structure of the Honor System. Thus, in order to complete its assigned task, it needed to prioritize its efforts. The result is the set of recommendations above, which the task force considers both essential and feasible to implement in the immediate future. However, the task force recognizes that this leaves several issues of importance to both the students and the faculty unresolved. Therefore, the task force also makes the following recommendations, which it believes can be addressed after basic education, trust, and participation issues are resolved in the next few years.
1. In 2014-2015, the Student Senate and Faculty Senate should charge a new task force to:
   a. Review the policy of a standard penalty for a violation. The current task force found strong interest among both faculty and students in providing a graduated system of penalties. But there are good reasons, offered by a minority, for not doing so, both at the principle level and on the implementation level. For example, the task force considered the following option:

   Faculty members are encouraged, particularly for students new to our campus, to directly address issues with students whom they have perceived to have violated the Honor Code through ignorance. These warnings or moderate reprimands are not accompanied by a penalty, but rather are an opportunity for the student to correct his/her behavior. However, the task force decided not to include it as a recommendation because it could add inconsistency into the process as one instructor might consider a violation as resulting from ignorance and another might decide the same violation is intentional and report it to the Honor Council.

   b. As part of a review of the penalty system, consider the disparate impact of penalties on various groups of students.

   c. Consider how we might, or if we should, implement an arbitrated or mediated system of resolution. The current task force considered this idea, but ultimately decided that the honor system was currently under too much pressure to attempt to make that large of a change.

   d. Consider a policy which advises colleges/departments/faculty on the distinction between violations of policy, and penalties associated with them, from the actual use or tolerance of unauthorized aid and the penalties associated with these acts.

2. There was also interest in merging the undergraduate and graduate systems. This task force offers a working solution to the two-system problem, again believing that the campus was not ready to make the step to a complete unification. This should be addressed in the future.

3. The Assistant Director for Instructional Technology and staff in the Information Technology Services should work with the Honor Council to review, recommend, and support technology-based approaches to insuring academic integrity in online courses.
4. The Honor Council needs to develop a process by which all of the cases pending from the end of the spring semester are resolved promptly, rather than held over to the following fall semester.
REFERENCES


Baepler, Richard, memo to the faculty, Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana, May 1990, Valparaiso University archives.

Berner, Bruce <Bruce.Berner@valpo.edu>, e-mail communication, Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana, January 2010, Valparaiso University archives.


Farha, Darron, December 2012, verbal communication with Assistant Provost Rick Gillman, Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana.


Hill, Christopher (ed.), “Promoting Integrity in Online Education,” *Distance Education Report*, May 2010.

Honor System Task Force, collected focus group notes, Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana, 2012.

Honor System Task Force, faculty survey, Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana, 2012.

Honor System Task Force, student survey, Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana, 2012.

Schnabel, Richard, minutes of a faculty meeting, Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana, April 1982, Valparaiso University archives.

Schroeder, Caitlin <Caitlin.Schroeder@valpo.edu>, “Subject: Valpo Honor Council,” October 2012, e-mail communication to Provost Mark Schwehn, Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana.


Strietelmeier, John, Valparaiso’s First Century, Valparaiso University, 1959.


Valparaiso University, Honor Council budget, 2012.

Valparaiso University, Student Senate organizational leadership stipends, 2012.