

THE HONOR COMMITTEE

An Update for December 1, 2007

The Honor Committee is lead by five executive officers and consists of a number of standing and ad-hoc committees. Below is a summary of the work those officers and committees have done in the past month (or will soon complete). Questions should be directed to the Chair of the Honor Committee, Ben Cooper (bencooper@virginia.edu).

Honor Chair Ben Cooper

The Committee has considered several proposals throughout the semester to modify its bylaws in several areas, including the appeals process, evidentiary rulings, and the scope of the Honor System. Final debate and voting on these measures will occur at the last meeting of the semester on December 2, and any new changes implanted will go into effect at the end of the year.

Though the Honor Committee saw a decrease in the number of alleged Honor offenses reported to it last year, it is now handling an average number of cases, likely as a result of increased awareness of the Honor System in the community.

Vice Chair for Trials Brian O'Neill

Brian is working to fulfill four trial requests. An open Honor Trial previously scheduled for December 3 was postponed to January 20, 2008.

Vice Chair for Investigations Linda Liu

Linda is currently overseeing four active investigations. This month, four other investigations ended with students being accused of honor offenses. One student has left the University admitting guilt.

She is also proposing an amendment to the by-laws on Sunday, December 3 that seeks to clarify the jurisdiction of the Honor Code outside of Charlottesville and Albemarle County. Finally, Linda revamped the system for evaluating support officer performance to reflect the substantial changes to the investigations process inaugurated last year.

Vice Chair for Education Allie Moore

Allie has begun work on remaking the "On My Honor" video annually distributed to first years. She hopes to reexamine the film's narration, content, and overall goals. In addition to a presentation to the men's basketball team, the educators will begin the new Honor FOA program at the end of this semester. Four FOA presentations will be given to members of the Greek community in the near future. Finally, the Honor Committee and the Minority Rights Coalition will be offering students free blue books, coffee, and information during final exams.

Vice Chair for Community Relations Josh Hess (Chairs the Community Relations Committee)

This month, members of the Community Relations Committee continued to work on an effort to improve the availability of flexible exams at the undergraduate level. The work done by Catherine Anne Daley and Sophie Staples (among many others) culminated in a presentation on flex exams to the Faculty Senate. Additionally, the committee has begun distributing educational information about the Honor System to Corner merchants. It has also been in contact with representatives from University Parking, the University Library, and Dining Services about ways to ensure the services they offer reflect the presumption of honesty UVA students enjoy. Finally, the committee plans to hold a roundtable discussion on spotlighting to develop concrete ideas on how to best address the challenges it presents.

Diversity Advisory Board, Chaired by Jon Overdevest and Kat Custodio

The Diversity Advisory Board held a meeting open to the community on Wednesday, November 28. The group talked about potential changes to jury selection and a diversity workshop targeted at members of the faculty. DAB also continues its peer advising program.

Faculty Advisory Committee, Chaired by Adam Trusner

FAC is working on a new program through which the Honor Committee can better reach out to University faculty. Under this program, members of the faculty would serve as liaisons between Honor and various academic departments at UVA.

Procedures Ad Hoc, Chaired by Alex Hawkins and Catherine Anne Daley

This month, the Procedures Ad-hoc discussed two proposals. One proposal examined ways to address concerns that the current case adjudication process provides incentives for guilty students to deny their guilt. Another sought to reduce the burden the system places on reporting witness.

On Sunday, December 3, the Honor Committee will vote on three proposals considered by the Procedures Ad-Hoc on rules of evidence and the appeals process.

Technology Ad Hoc, Chaired by Vanessa Trahan and Thad Darden

The Technology Ad-Hoc has made recommendations to the Executive Committee as to which vendors it believes will best rework the Honor Committee's website. Additionally, the ad-hoc has developed a comprehensive specifications document for a digital case processing program it hopes ITC will begin developing in the spring.