The Santa Monica Community College District Honor Council was held Friday August 15, 2008 at Santa Monica College Vice President of Student Services Conference Room 1900 Pico Boulevard in Santa Monica, California.

Minutes prepared by Dawna Kemper

I. Call to Order: SMC Honor Council Meeting – 10:05 a.m.

II. Members Present:

Dean:

Faculty Members: Greg Brookins
Dawna Kemper, HC Chair
Audrey Sandoval
Zorica Scuric
Esau Tovar

Staff Members:

Students: Claudia Garcia Perez
Samuel Nganga
Falice Torrence

III. Review of Minutes

IV. Honor Board: Debriefing on the Aug. 8, 2008 Hearing

A review of the case and its outcome led to the following suggestions:

- Provide the board more time to review the case in advance, particularly for complex hearings (multiple students and/or complex material to review).
- Consider meeting earlier (prior to the hearing) to review as a group (but without discussing the case; only to clarify any issues), or have an opportunity to look over the materials in advance in Judy’s office (to ensure confidentiality).
- Ensure in advance that both the faculty member and students involved clearly comprehend the exact charge (code violation) to be addressed in the hearing.

Related suggestions included:

a) on the disciplinary report form completed by faculty, include a box in which the exact code provision needs to be indicated (provide brief descriptions of the relevant provisions).

b) prior to the hearing, provide students with a form stating the code provision alleged to have been violated.

Also, on a related topic, we discussed Judy’s suggestion that we consider setting a firm schedule for Honor Board hearings, including a commitment from faculty and students (on a rotating basis) to hear the cases. This would streamline the process of scheduling the hearings. Members generally agreed this would be a good idea; we can discuss a schedule at the next meeting.
V. CCC Chancellor’s Office Legal Opinion re: Failing students for academic dishonesty

Discussion began with an overview of the legal opinion from the CCC Chancellor’s Office that automatically failing a student solely on the basis of an incident of academic dishonesty is not permissible; nor (in the legal opinion’s view) is it permissible in such cases to give a grade of “I” for Incomplete.

Esau mentioned this would require a change to our existing form; also discussed the likely negative reaction of faculty if this option is no longer available. Esau will bring up the issue in the next SMC Academic Senate Executive Committee meeting.

An email to Department Chairs re: the legal decision will go out from Judy’s office.

VI. Opening Day / VIP Day final planning

- Greg to speak at VIP Day
- Dr. Tsang to mention Honor Council in his Welcome remarks to faculty
- Dawna to address PT Faculty at Flex Day; also will give presentation to ESL Dept.
- Zorica to present at Life Sciences Dept. Flex
- HC Table at VIP Day:
  - Bookmarks
  - Sign-up sheet for more info re: HC

Zorica suggested contacting the bookstore about handing out bookmarks with each purchase. We also discussed talking with the bookstore about including the Honor Code on the exam bluebooks. (No assignment yet made as to who will follow up.)

VII. Student Outreach for 2008-2009

- Audrey volunteered to take the lead on Student Outreach planning for the coming year.
- Dawna has been in touch with Jonesy Harp; the video promos are on the way.
- Dawna and Audrey will meet with Associated Students’ Deyna Hearn.
- Esau suggested making connections with Alpha Gamma Sigma and Phi Beta Kappa; promote HC as an opportunity to fulfill their Community Service requirements.
- Esau mentioned we are on the schedule for two workshops this fall: Sept. 25 and Oct. 23. The topic is “Cheating: How it affects you, and what you can do about it.” We will plan content at the next HC meeting.

VIII. Turnitin update

Esau provided an update on the status of Turnitin plagiarism screening software. A “trial” license will allow faculty to use the system, campus-wide, for four months. The official license is anticipated effective Spring 2009. Currently, efforts are underway to integrate the software with eCompanion so that discrete faculty I.D.s do not have to be generated separately (which would delay the launch). The target for the “trial” roll-out is mid- to late-September. The Honor Council will be responsible for training and promotion of the software. Esau suggested we create a web page for faculty and students with info and “help”; can also link to videos from Turnitin. On-ground training could be held at 2-3 “open lab” sessions, possibly in the Assessment Center.

Meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m.
The next meeting will be on Thursday, September 18, 2008.