It is the Mission of the Aggie Honor System Office to serve as a centralized organization established to educate about the Aggie Code of Honor, respond to reported academic violations of the Aggie Code of Honor, and facilitate remediation efforts for students found responsible for violations of the Aggie Code of Honor.
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Overview

“An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal or tolerate those who do” has long been Texas A&M’s Honor Code. Students are introduced to this simple, one sentence honor code prior to attending their first class through Fish Camp and New Student Conferences. Consistent with our mission statement, the Aggie Honor System Office makes a broad effort to educate the University community about the Aggie Code of Honor and integrity. Specifically, we strive to educate the community about the tenants of academic integrity. This report is an attempt to capture some of the proactive and reactive programs of our office while communicating some of the information related to common violations and sanctions.

The Aggie Honor System Office endeavors to support the mission, vision, and purpose of the University through intentional programming aimed at increasing the awareness around several of the University’s core values including integrity, excellence, and respect. We offer opportunities through our Honor Council and Honor Violation Separation Appeals Panel that contribute to student leadership and service opportunities. Additionally, we encourage and champion efforts across campus for students to exhibit excellence and integrity. Finally, our remediation and education programs reaffirm, despite the fact that some students err and are found in violation of the Aggie Code of Honor, they are still part of the Aggie Family.

Our office has also made strides in supporting the University's Quality Enhancement Program (QEP) of Aggies Commit to Learning for a Lifetime. We are supporting the Aggies Commit Precepts and Goals through our discussions with students and programmatic efforts. Our marketing campaigns and remediation efforts are asking students to intentionally reflect on expectations for how committing to a lifetime of learning and integrity will provide options for them after leaving Texas A&M.
By definition, much of our work is responsive in approach. We spend a great deal of time facilitating the process that governs accusations of Academic Misconduct. This work continues to be one of the core tenants that consume the majority of our time and effort. This work manifests itself through conversations with alleged violators, faculty with concerns about potential academic misconduct, and facilitating the processes of the Honor Council.

This year also required time and resources to be committed to integrating the Texas A&M Health Science Center and the Texas A&M University School of Law into the University’s Student Rules, including the rules that govern academic integrity and the Aggie Honor System Office. The partnerships that were developed throughout this process were critical in aligning our processes to best serve students and faculty.

Thank you for taking time to review this annual report. It is the first of its kind created by our office. We are excited to reflect on the past year and look forward to another fantastic year of spearheading educational efforts surrounding the Aggie Code of Honor.

Timothy C. Powers
Director, Aggie Honor System Office
Summary of 2013-2014

During the 2013-2014 academic year, the Aggie Honor System Office experienced an increase in the number of reported violations over 2012-2013. The increase was from 337 cases to 425 for the current year. This represents an increase of 25%. While it is not a goal or aim for the violation number to increase from year-to-year, this represents an ability for the office to effectively process an increased work load. Additionally, the number of cases referred to and processed by the Honor Council nearly doubled from 44 in 2012-2013 to 76 in 2013-2014.

The Aggie Honor System Office also realizes that this is the number of violations that are being reported to the office through the university’s official and established processes. One of the reasons for an increase in case load is continual efforts to educate instructors and faculty about our processes and rules. One of the indicators that our outreach efforts are reaching faculty is that 84 faculty referred violations to us for the first time this year. Additional efforts to educate and reach faculty throughout the university through presentation and marketing material will continue to be a focus for the near future.

Finally, it is vital that the charts and graphs in this report not be interpreted that one college has fewer or more students engaging in academic misconduct than other areas of the university. This information simply indicates the number of reported violations the Office received from each area this year.
Honor Council

Student and faculty representatives are responsible for conducting investigations, hearings, and appeals of suspected Honor Code violations. The Honor Council consists of faculty and students representing every college of the University.

The Honor Council was comprised of 27 faculty and 24 student members for the 2013-2014 academic year. These members participated in and supported the mission of the Aggie Honor System Office by:

- Attending more than ten opportunities for training and development surrounding academic integrity
- Conducting 65 investigations
- Facilitating and adjudicating 76 hearings and appeals
- Representing the University at the Leadership and Ethics Conference held at the United States Coast Guard Academy
- Volunteering during Academic Integrity Awareness Week prior to finals in December
- Consulting with faculty and administrators on issues related to academic integrity
- Assisting in the recruitment and training of future Honor Council members

When compared with previous years, this year required a higher level of participation by Honor Council members. The primary reason for this was an increase in the number of cases that were referred directly to the Honor Council process by reporting faculty. This critical group of volunteers continues to perform many other services that cannot be quantified.
Educational Awareness

The primary responsibility of the Aggie Honor System Office is to facilitate educational efforts around the Aggie Code of Honor and academic integrity. This manifests itself in a number of different efforts across campus.

This year, efforts were focused on presentations to various university stakeholders, structured training for students and faculty, and remediation efforts for students previously found responsible for a violation of the Aggie Code of Honor. Specifically, the office led:

- 28 resource tables
- 129 presentations and consultation meetings by the Director
- 162 individual meetings with students by Case Managers
- 7 presentations to Fish Camp participants
- 3 presentations at national conferences to educate other administrators about academic integrity and corresponding best practices

The Academic Integrity Development Program (AIDP) continues to be a key component of the Office’s educational efforts. The program consists of both in person and remote opportunities that were offered 19 times over the last academic year. This program serves four purposes and outcomes: 1) introduce students to concepts of integrity and ethical decision making, 2) educate students about academic misconduct and its definitions 3) equip students with university resources to avoid future incidents and 4) encourage students to reflect on their violation and what they have learned through the entire process. During this academic year, 94 students completed the program. Only one student who completed the AIDP at some point in the past was found responsible for a subsequent violation of the Aggie Code of Honor.

The Aggie Honor System Office staff facilitated a number of formal and informal educational opportunities with students, faculty, parents, and administrators.
Case Details: Reported Fall 2013 – Summer 2014

There were 425 cases of suspected academic misconduct filed through the Aggie Honor System Office’s online reporting system. Of these, 370 cases resulted in a finding of responsibility and the application of sanctions. The following charts detail methods utilized to track reports as they progressed through the process.

**Autonomous vs. Honor Council Process**

- 86% Handled Autonomously by Faculty
- 14% Referred to the Honor Council

**First Time vs. Repeat Student Violators**

- 99% First Time (420)
- 1% Repeat (5)
## Honor Code Violation Types

- Cheating: 46%
- Plagiarism: 35%
- Complicity: 7%
- Fabrication: 5%
- Multiple Submissions: 4%
- Falsification: 2%
- Violation of Departmental Rules: 0%
- Unauthorized Access: 1%

## Honor Code Violation Reports by Academic College

- College of Agriculture and Life Sciences: 38%
- College of Architecture: 5%
- College of Education and Human Development: 9%
- College of Geosciences: 5%
- College of Liberal Arts: 17%
- College of Science: 19%
- Dwight Look College of Engineering: 9%
- George Bush School of Government and Public Service: 5%
- Health Science Center: 19%
- Mays Business School: 5%
Academic College of Reported Students
- College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (39%)
- College of Architecture (13%)
- College of Education and Human Development (11%)
- College of Geosciences (9%)
- College of Liberal Arts (5%)
- College of Science (6%)
- College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences (5%)
- Dwight Look College of Engineering (4%)
- General Studies (4%)
- George Bush School of Government and Public Service (1%)
- Health Science Center (1%)
- Mays Business School (1%)

Primary Sanctions Applied to Violations
- Separation from the University (53%)
- F* in the Course (12%)
- F in the Course (12%)
- Honor Violation Probation (12%)
- Course Grade Reduction (6%)
- Grade of “0” on the related assignment (6%)
- Assignment Grade Reduction (5%)
- Complete Remediation Program (7%)
- Other (6%)
CASE DETAILS: REPORTED FALL 2013 – SUMMER 2014

Accused Student Classification

- Freshman: 38%
- Sophomore: 18%
- Junior: 23%
- Senior: 12%
- Graduate: 8%
- Non-Degree Seeking: 1%
Case Trends and Educational Opportunities

As stated earlier, the information noted in the previous graphs should NOT be interpreted that students in a particular college are violating the Honor Code at a higher rate than other students at the university. Similarly, these graphs do not mean that faculty in one or two colleges are being more aggressive in addressing academic misconduct. This information simply indicates that violations reported to the AHSO in those colleges are higher in number than elsewhere.

The University’s policies on addressing academic misconduct and violations of the Aggie Code of Honor require violations to be reported to the office for adjudication and processing. This requirement is not necessarily understood by all course instructors, which may be at the root of the reporting disparity. Attempts to relay this critical piece of information are ongoing through various educational efforts.

The information presented in the following graphs represents one of the most concerning trends for cases referred to the Aggie Honor System Office. International students are represented in our office at a much higher frequency than resident students at every classification level when compared with their makeup of the student population. This information is most telling at the graduate level where despite only making up 29 and 47 percent of master’s and doctoral level students respectively, they represent 70 and 73 percent of cases filed against students in those classifications. This presents an opportunity for us to be more intentional about reaching our future initiatives, as outlined on page 14 of this report.
CASE TRENDS AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

TAMU Student Enrollment by Residency Status
Fall 2013

Violation by Student Residency Status

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Peer Institution Comparison

As part of the annual review process, the Aggie Honor System Office contacted select offices responsible for the academic conduct process at institutions from the Vision 2020 Peer Institution list, the Association of American Universities, and the Southeastern Conference. Requests for information were submitted to 30 institutions that fit into one of the previously mentioned categories. Several of these offices responded with information regarding their academic conduct cases. Some of the information we gathered is included in the following tables.
These two tables indicate two key findings. First, the two most prevalent violations for Texas A&M are also the most prevalent violations for four of the five peers who provided information. Second, and perhaps most concerning, is Texas A&M is one of three institutions in this information set that experiences an increase in student violations as a percentage during each undergraduate year.
2014 – 2015 Initiatives

1. **Conduct additional outreach to International Students:** The gathered information regarding the residency status of student violators is concerning. The traditional efforts of speaking at International Student Orientation, International Student Conferences, online educational efforts, and Graduate Student Orientation have not been enough to reduce the number of international students who are reported for academic misconduct. The Aggie Honor System Office will be implementing additional efforts to proactively reach this group of students. These efforts include partnering with the Offices of Undergraduate Studies, Graduate and Professional Studies, and International Student Services to communicate the importance of academic integrity and details about how the academic culture in the United States differs from other parts of the world.

2. **Attend faculty meetings:** The Director will continue to seek out opportunities to present at departmental and college faculty meetings. Clearly communicating the process associated with the Aggie Honor System Office will foster relationships and provide a better understanding of our goals and services.

3. **Initiate meetings with students:** Students who have opted not to meet with Case Managers have been involved in subsequent violations more frequently than students who have met with Case Managers to discuss the process and what a subsequent violation would mean. Case Managers will now meet with all first-time violators and explain to them the process, potential sanctions, and ensure that students have an understanding of academic misconduct.

4. **Assess and improve the Academic Integrity Development Program:** Although few students who complete the Academic Integrity Development Plan are involved in
subsequent violations, there is little assessment done surrounding desired learning outcomes for this program. This assessment will be created and implemented this year.

5. Modify and improve the departmental assessment plan: Assessment opportunities exist within the office that have not been explored or developed. These opportunities include a plan to evaluate desired learning outcomes for students accused of violations and student members of the Honor Council. These measures will be implemented and reported on during the 2014-2015 annual report.

6. Initiate the Departmental Comprehensive Program Review: The Aggie Honor System Office will conduct a Comprehensive Program Review in the Fall of 2015. The office will begin to make preparations for this review over the next twelve months.