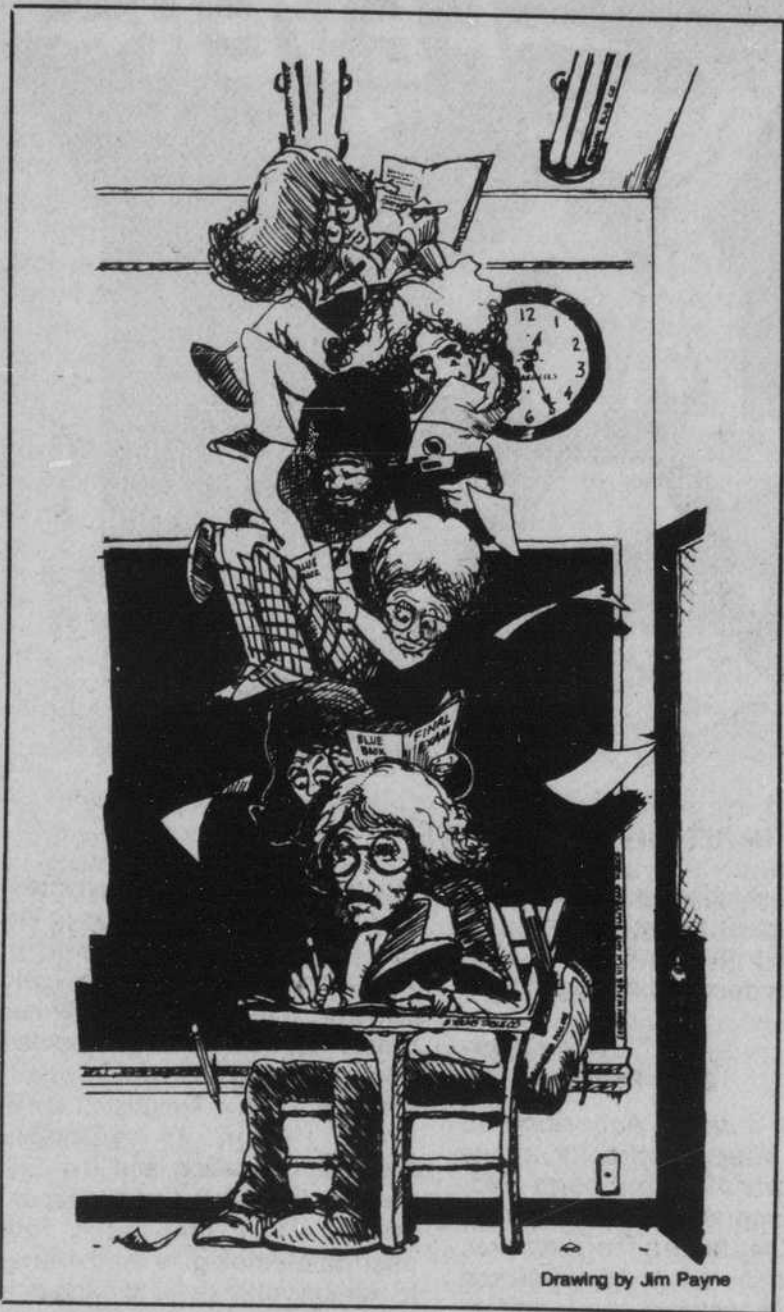


New code cracks down on cheaters



Stories by
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Now that finals week has arrived, it's appropriate to review the negative consequences that can occur when a student is accused of cheating. While few persons do cheat, the temptation is always there.

The University student conduct code was revised this year to include more stringent procedures for cheating incidents. Two education students were suspended fall term for plagiarism, and in more severe cases students may be permanently expelled from the University for cheating.

"Most cheating comes from students being inadequately prepared or being so afraid of failing that they lose perspective," says Jack Hart, chair of the student conduct committee. "One course is such an infinitesimally small part of the life ahead that it doesn't merit the anguish and agony that many students give it."

Hart says some "very serious students" cheat, but the worst kind of cheating occurs for the same reason shoplifting does — peer pressure.

"In a course to which a student has a frivolous attitude, it can be seen as a way of pulling one off against the establishment," he adds.

However, Hart doesn't think most cheating falls into that category. "When you talk about cheating, you're talking about several different things," he explains. "One of the most frequent forms of cheating is having someone else go take your test. Another is plagiarism."

Many students don't seem to know what plagiarism is, according to Hart. "Plagiarism is simply submitting someone else's work as your own," he says. "Particularly in the writing fields, you get familiar with someone's writing style and it isn't hard to tell."

Hart says the old code was very ineffective in dealing with cheating and plagiarism because cases went through the student court system.

"Students on the court were extremely reluctant to suspend fellow students," he explains.

The new code was written with the idea of getting away from "slap on the wrists" weaknesses in the old one. "Now it's almost a guaranteed suspension if you attempt cheating," Hart warns. "These days students consider grades more important than they did in the '60's."

Cheating cases can be handled informally between the student and instructor or student conduct officer, but a student cannot be expelled or

suspended without a formal hearing.

"There's a right of appeal all the way up and down the line. It can go all the way to the civil courts," Hart says. Faculty members are expected to advise students that they have some rights — they can hire their own attorney if they wish."

Hearings for cheating incidents are public. "It's really a trial," Hart says. "If the hearing officer finds the person guilty, the case can go on from the University. If a student is expelled from the University, it's forever."

Hart says some things that would otherwise be considered cheating can be cleared with the instructor in advance, like submitting the same paper for different classes.

"The point of taking a different class is not to do the same work over," he remarks, stipulating that the student must clear it with both instructors. "If neither professor is told, it's an academic offense."

Asked about the practice some fraternities and sororities have of filing past tests and papers, Hart says it doesn't qualify as cheating.

"We had files when I was a fraternity man. Some were pretty good and some pretty bad," he reflects. "But if the professor lets the students keep their tests, I see no reason why they couldn't file them."

Student offenders get chance for due process

The student conduct code refers to cheating as "academic dishonesty." When a student is suspected of plagiarizing, cheating or furnishing false information to a faculty or staff member, the following procedure is put into motion.

- Student faculty conference. The faculty member involved with the student suspected of academic dishonesty meets with the student. The instructor is expected to discuss the option of having the case referred directly to the student conduct coordinator.

If the student is unwilling to meet with the instructor, or cannot do so within a reasonable time period, the case may be referred to the conduct coordinator for resolution.

If the faculty member is not available for a conference, the case may be conducted by the department head, dean, or by student conduct coordinator.

- Non-Contested Cases. When the student admits to cheating, the instructor imposes an appropriate academic sanction up to and including an N mark for the course. If the instructor thinks further disciplinary action is warranted, the incident may be referred to the student conduct coordinator for further action.

- Appeal. The student can always appeal the academic sanction to the instructor's department head or ultimately, to the dean of the college or school in which the incident took place.

- Contested Cases. When the student denies involvement in a cheating incident, the instructor is expected to refer the case to the coordinator of student conduct for resolution. The case will be conducted following procedures established in Section III of the conduct code (see time schedule of classes).

- Reporting Academic Dishonesty Incidents. Instructors are required to file a written report of each case of cheating with their respective department head, dean and the student conduct coordinator. These reports are confidential and are retained for record-keeping purposes as provided by the Student Records Policy.

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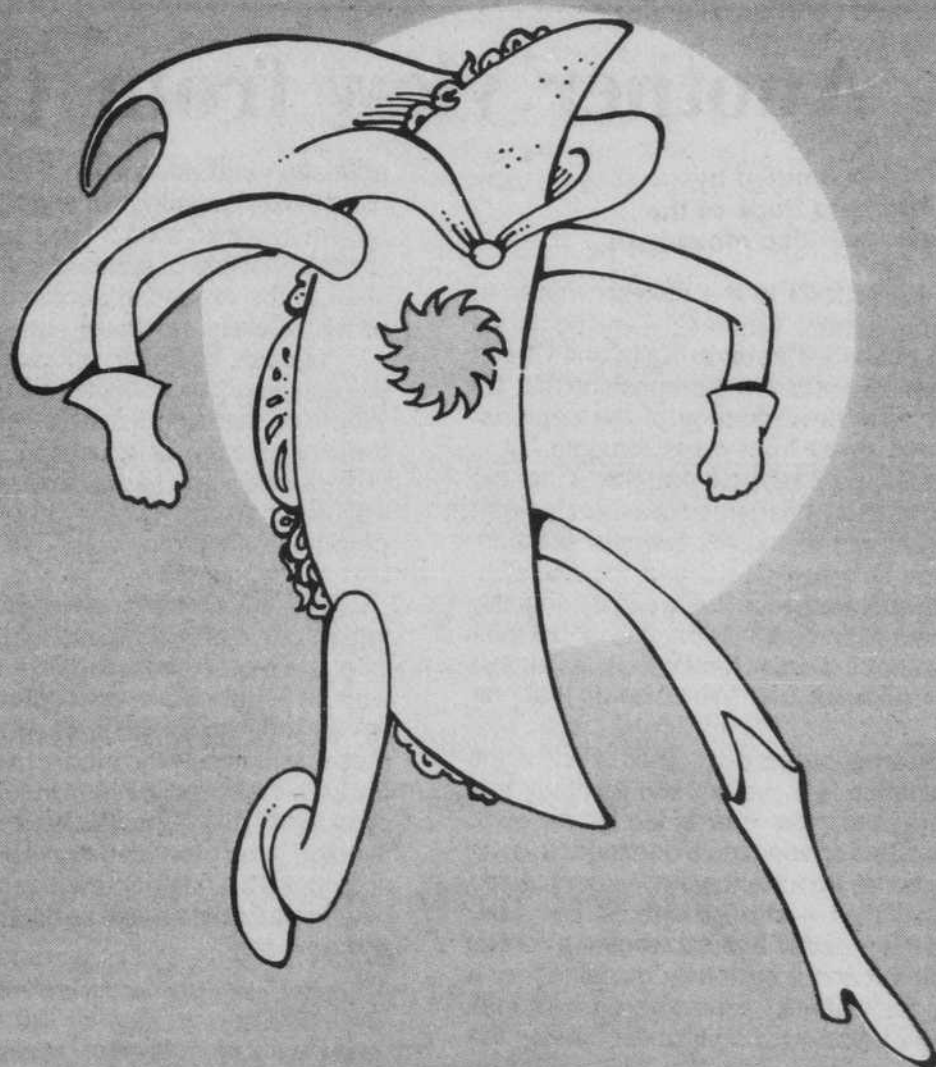
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