Honor System Improvements, March 2012 to March 2013
Cynthia Cyrus, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education
Report to the Faculty Senate of 12 March 2013

It has now been one calendar year since the delivery of the Honor System report by Bobby Bodenheimer, Vanessa Beasley, and Joy Calico et al. The report in its final form had 28 recommendations, summarized at the front of the report and discussed in detail in the main body. (The report is available online: http://www.vanderbilt.edu/facultysenate/files/HonorSystemReportBodenheimerEtAl2012.pdf)

I am happy to report that we are either mid-discussion or completely done with the majority of recommendations:

1. The website and reporting system were updated, the reporting structure adjusted, and our educational processes adjusted to better inform both students and faculty about the honor system and its implications. For instance, a pilot Visions module was developed, and a new Faculty Orientation presentation designed. Outreach continues to particular departments and cohorts on a by-invitation basis. (R1, R4, R5, R6, R9, R11, R12, R28.)

2. We have begun regular meetings of the 10 schools’ Honor System representatives, and have secured all records and adjusted the ARB processes according to the Senate’s recommendations, although we are holding the legal review of the procedures and constitutions until after the arrival of the new General Counsel. (R14, R21, R24, R25, R26, and pending: R13, R19, R22.)

3. We opted not to hire a paralegal but instead to hire a case manager, which should help with some of the workload issues (R16, R20).

4. We are testing incentive models for faculty advisers this year, and working on developing a graduate/professional honor code module, but we anticipate delivery of the latter in Fall 2014 since that work will take some time to make it applicable across the multiple constituencies. That said, revisions to the graduate and professional school processes and a discussion of the actual wording of the honor code are both underway. (R1, R8, R17, R18.)

There are three large areas (other than the General Counsel’s review) that are still pending at this point:

1. I will be forming an “Opportunities for intervention” task force during Fall 2013; that group will be reviewing and expanding the recommendations of R2b. In the meantime, I have invoked the help of the deans, the associate deans, VSG, and the honor council members themselves in finding ways to increase the visibility of the honor system and to remind students and faculty of the honor code at particularly strategic moments in the semester. VSG, for instance, wrote to students immediately prior to final exams during Fall 2012, and the Chancellor and the Dean of the Commons both hosted academic integrity dinners this fall.

2. During Summer 2013, we plan to undertake a thorough overhaul of the information for Faculty, devising a more current (and effective) FAQ, with help from our Faculty Adviser pool (R1b).

3. I have chosen to hold the discussion of faculty roles and expedited options until the next academic year (2013-14) so that we have adequate time to consider those issues with the attention they deserve.

I will be providing the detailed annual undergraduate honor system report to the Student Life committee, but data on outcomes are publicly available on the academic integrity website, http://www.vanderbilt.edu/academicintegrity/data/

I would like to acknowledge GL Black and Cara Tuttle Bell, whose joint leadership in the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity has made so much of this work possible.