

7 February 2007

Dear MBA Students,

In December, 2006, the Smeal Honor Committee investigated a report of a *potential* Academic Integrity violation. Upon careful review with the professor from the class and the students involved, it was determined with full certainty that NO violation had occurred. The students were promptly notified of the outcome and their full cooperation was greatly appreciated.

As we continue to pilot the MBA Honor Code program, it is important to note that our process will only improve with the vital input and feedback of our stakeholders. In the spirit of learning and of constructive dialogue, we would like to highlight some important takeaways from this experience.

1) Situational awareness is paramount. As integrity-driven leaders, we must be mindful of our actions and respect the perceptions of our colleagues. As such, Our Honor Code includes a statement about the *appearance of impropriety*, and we are all responsible to manage ourselves accordingly.

2) The ambiguity of the circumstances poses an interesting challenge for how and when to pursue a matter that *may or may not* constitute a breach. We hope to discuss this important issue at an upcoming Academic Integrity meeting, and we look forward to your input. In this case, the report was made because of uncertainty as to what actually happened, not as an accusation of wrong-doing. Our process was designed to clear students who did nothing wrong, as much as it was designed to impose sanctions on those who do violate the Academic Honor Code. Indeed, in this case the students were cleared completely through the process.

3) Procedurally, the Committee identified a number of ways to streamline the process through which AI incident reports are handled. The most significant of these is the institution of a “smart guard” step at the beginning, during which the AI Officer, or the Officer’s designee, will evaluate the immediately available information to determine if a formal investigation is warranted on the basis of probable cause.

We invite you to reflect on these learning opportunities, and if you would like to share your thoughts with us please do so by contacting any of us by email. Once again, we thank all of you for your ongoing commitment to honor and academic excellence in the Smeal community.

Sincerely,

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