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Council approves change in plagiarism definition

Honor Council reaches consensus, but concerns linger after year of debate

By LINDY BALDWIN
News Editor

More than a year's worth of work came to fruition on Monday when the Honor Council approved a resolution to change the Honor Code.

Despite the intense discussion, thought and time that went into the proposal, the process of altering the Code is not yet over—and some close to it still have doubts about the suggested change.

The issue in question is the Honor Code's definition of plagiarism. The current word-

ing of the Code places plagiarism as a subset of cheating. However, the term "cheating" implies intent—which, some argue, is not always a necessary component of plagiarism.

"Different faculty have vastly varying interpretations of what it [intent] is," explained Mike Anderson '02, policy chair of the Honor Council. "It's hard to infer intent from a student's paper—was it a benign accident, or a malicious intent to deceive? We've learned that words can be very blunt instruments when you try to cut through all the intricacies of potential Honor Council hearings."

Part of the problem is the idea that a student who did have intent would simply lie to the Honor Council and say that he or she never meant to plagiarize. Even in the most egregious cases, proving otherwise would be difficult and the student would most likely be acquitted, said Anderson. Several members

of the Honor Council therefore proposed changing the wording of the Honor Code so that students who did intend to plagiarize would no longer be able to exploit the implicit loophole, he said.

The first proposed change was to set plagiarism apart from cheating, and define it as "characterized by intent or gross negligence." The term "gross" was discarded in favor of the more moderate "unreasonable," and it was in this form that the proposed change first became public knowledge last spring.

Little action was taken, however, until students returned to campus this August. Anderson attributed this, in part, to a lack of a timeline. "This fall Will [Parker '02, Honor Council Chair] and Tara [Davidson '02, Honor Council Secretary] and I mapped out a strategy—committee meetings, public forums, and individual discussions with faculty mem-

bers—to structure the discussion," said Anderson. "That strategy has run its course, and we feel like we have the consensus necessary to move forward."

In the course of this fall's discussion, however, the term "unreasonable" came under harsh fire from Davidson's faculty, many of whom said that the word was open to too much interpretation. This modifier was therefore removed from the proposal.

"We knew that we needed to accommodate faculty concerns," said Anderson. "After all, faculty faith and support in the Code is vital—we appreciated their professional advice, and incorporated it into our resolution."

If the change is passed in its current form, the Honor Code will read, "Plagiarism is

see Honor Code, page 2



NOTHING A LITTLE PAINT CAN'T FIX: The possibility of a surplus of students on campus this spring has led to emergency housing options including converted lounges and vending areas.

RLO prepares for housing crunch in wake of attacks

Cancelled study abroad plans leave more students on campus this spring

By TRACY BANGHART
Staff Writer

Since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, much concern has been raised over the availability of spring semester housing at Davidson.

Fear generated by the attacks has resulted in fewer students choosing to go abroad next semester, leaving fewer rooms open to students planning to return from overseas. The situation has left many asking if there will be enough beds on campus in 2002.

Leslie Marsicano, Dean of Students and Director of the Residence Life Office, shares the concern. Since Sept. 11, Marsicano has received word from many students whose parents asked them to cancel their spring study abroad plans.

In response to such changes, RLO conducted surveys to determine students' general interest in studying abroad this spring. In the effort to gauge student opinion on emer-

gency housing options, members of the SGA were asked to fill out a survey that contained a choice of living spaces.

Such options included hotel rooms in Cornelius, College-owned houses off-campus, trailers on campus, the use of lounges as rooms and even the remodeling of "rooms on campus not originally designed as bedrooms," such as vending areas.

RLO has also discussed the possibility of allowing more students than usual to apply for off-campus housing next semester.

A primary concern with all emergency housing options has been the availability of phone and Internet lines. Concerns have also been raised concerning transportation for those students forced off campus.

Although RLO prepared for the worst in terms of housing next semester, the situation has fortunately become more manageable. Marsicano said she is, "not as concerned as I was this time last month" and doesn't think there will be a need for hotels or trailers next semester.

RLO won't receive any official numbers

see RLO, page 4

SAE acquitted on two of three counts by J-Board

Fraternity will sponsor educational awareness program in response to Oct. 6 late-night incident

By TIMOTHY COOK
Managing Editor

Sigma Alpha Epsilon was found not guilty on two of the three counts brought before the Patterson Court Judiciary Board last Thursday night. The next day, Dean of Students Tom Shandley approved J-Board's decision.

SAE was found guilty of the first charge of not stopping members or guests from throwing beer cans and shouting anti-gay epithets at the victims, Rory Adams '04 and his friend, Joe, who does not attend Davidson.

J-Board ruled that SAE is to draw up a resolution on how they will continue to handle the matter. Patterson Court Council

President and SAE brother Mathew Arbuckle '02 said that one of the ideas in the proposal is a homosexuality awareness program, which is tentatively scheduled for later this month. He hopes that this program will show that some good has come from the incident.

The incident in question occurred on Oct. 6 at SAE's annual open "Tacky Party," during which Adams reported that he and his friend were struck by beer cans and taunted with anti-gay slurs from the porch of the fraternity house.

Adams said he was pleased with the outcome, as he had expressed earlier that he didn't want SAE to get into trouble and was very happy to know that it was planning the awareness program.

The J-Board hearing was closed to the student body, but SAE invited a few members of the community, including the victims. The actual proceedings of the hearing will remain undisclosed in accordance with the Honor Code.

SAE is tentatively planning to sponsor the program on Nov. 28 at 7 p.m., but has not decided on a location.



The men's basketball team opens its season Friday at Halton Arena against the Charlotte 49ers. Tip-off is set for 8:05 p.m.

Davidson hasn't beaten its cross-county rival since 1996, but with last season's nucleus returning intact, there is hope that this could be the year for an upset.

See preview box on page 9 for details.

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