



University Senate TRANSMITTAL FORM

Senate Document #:	15-16-31
Title:	Clarification and Codification on Declining Honor Pledge
Presenter:	Bryan Eichhorn, Chair, Senate Educational Affairs Committee
Date of SEC Review:	January 30, 2017
Date of Senate Review:	February 9, 2017
Voting (highlight one):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On resolutions or recommendations one by one, or 2. In a single vote 3. To endorse entire report 4. For information only
Statement of Issue:	<p>In March 2016, a proposal was submitted to the Senate Executive Committee (SEC) to revise the University of Maryland Policy on the Conduct of Undergraduate Courses and Student Grievance Procedure (V-1.00[A]). The proposal suggested that declining to sign the Honor Pledge be added to the list of issues that can be grieved under existing procedures in order to protect students who choose not to write or sign the Pledge. The SEC voted to charge the Educational Affairs Committee with reviewing the proposal and the University of Maryland <i>Code of Academic Integrity</i> (III-1.00[A]), and considering whether changes to University policy are appropriate.</p>
Relevant Policy # & URL:	III-1.00(A) University of Maryland <i>Code of Academic Integrity</i>
Recommendations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Educational Affairs Committee recommends that the Office of Student Conduct review and expand its educational efforts regarding the Pledge’s relationship to the principles and practices of academic integrity at the University. The Office of Student Conduct should collaborate with other offices as needed—such as the Office of Faculty Affairs, the Teaching and Learning Transformation Center, the Office of Undergraduate Studies, and the Graduate School—to develop a uniform and robust campaign that ensures that faculty and students are informed about the Pledge, its purpose, and its provisions. Outreach efforts should also ensure that the unique needs of international and graduate students are being met. • The Educational Affairs Committee recommends that appropriate revisions be made to the Faculty Handbook, the Undergraduate Catalog, and other resources that discuss the Honor Pledge, in order to align University guidance with the specific language of the Pledge in the <i>Code of Academic Integrity</i>.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Educational Affairs Committee recommends that the SEC charge the Senate Student Conduct Committee with conducting a thorough review of the Honor Pledge and its role in fostering a climate of academic integrity on campus. The committee recommends that the charge ask the Student Conduct Committee to consider whether the current language of the Pledge is appropriate and to consult with students during its review.
<p>Committee Work:</p>	<p>The Educational Affairs Committee began work on its charge in September 2016. It reviewed the <i>Code of Academic Integrity</i>, the University of Maryland Policy on the Conduct of Undergraduate Courses and Student Grievance Procedure (V-1.00[A]), and the Arbitrary and Capricious Grading Policies (III-1.20[A] and III-1.20[B]), and consulted with the proposer, the Office of Student Conduct (OSC), the Undergraduate and Graduate Student Ombuds Officers, the Office of Undergraduate Studies, the Student Affairs Committee, and the Student Conduct Committee.</p> <p>With the help of the Student Affairs Committee, the Educational Affairs Committee conducted informal surveys of students and faculty to learn more about current perceptions and uses of the Honor Pledge. The committee found no evidence that students are being punished for refusing to sign the Pledge. It did find that some faculty members give points or extra credit for signing the Pledge, which is a clear violation of the <i>Code</i>, but University policies on Arbitrary and Capricious Grading already provide students a mechanism for grieving grading decisions that are not based on performance in the course. As such, the committee sees no need to amend University policy. However, the committee’s research clearly indicates the need for improved education and outreach efforts, as well as a more comprehensive review of the language of the Pledge and its role in furthering the goals of the <i>Code</i>. The Senate Bylaws indicate that a holistic review of the Pledge falls within the purview of the Student Conduct Committee rather than the Educational Affairs Committee, so the committee agreed that further consideration by the Student Conduct Committee would be appropriate. After further consultation with the relevant offices, the committee voted unanimously to approve its recommendations at its meeting on December 6, 2016.</p>
<p>Alternatives:</p>	<p>The Senate could choose not to approve the recommendations of the Educational Affairs Committee calling for expanded educational initiatives and a review of the Honor Pledge.</p>
<p>Risks:</p>	<p>There are no associated risks.</p>
<p>Financial Implications:</p>	<p>There are no financial implications.</p>
<p>Further Approvals Required:</p>	<p>Senate approval, Presidential approval</p>

Senate Educational Affairs Committee

Report on Senate Document #15-16-31

Clarification and Codification on Declining Honor Pledge

January 2017

2016-2017 Educational Affairs Committee Members

Bryan Eichhorn, Chair
Ben Bederson, Ex-Officio Provost's Rep
Fasika Delessa, Ex-Officio SGA Rep
Linda Macri, Ex-Officio Graduate School Rep
Marcio Oliveira, Ex-Officio Division of IT Rep
Doug Roberts, Ex-Officio Associate Dean for General Education
Adria Schwarber, Ex-Officio GSG Rep
Ann Smith, Ex-Officio Undergraduate Studies Rep
Lindsey Anderson, Faculty
John Buchner, Faculty
Vedat Diker, Faculty
Jeffrey Henrikson, Faculty
Celina McDonald, Faculty
Abani Pradhan, Faculty
Kellie Robertson, Faculty
Dylan Selterman, Faculty
Elizabeth Soergel, Faculty
Ji Seung Yang, Faculty
Michelle Brooks, Exempt Staff
Cathy Fisanich, Non-Exempt Staff
Prasoon Gupta, Graduate Student
Anne Tavera, Undergraduate Student

BACKGROUND

In March 2016, a proposal was submitted to the Senate Executive Committee (SEC) requesting revisions to the University of Maryland Undergraduate Student Grievance Procedure (V-1.00[A], which was subsequently revised and renamed the University of Maryland Policy on the Conduct of Undergraduate Courses and Student Grievance Procedure). The proposal noted that students who might be punished for declining to write or sign the Honor Pledge had no recourse under University policy, and suggested that declining to sign the Pledge be added to the list of issues that could be grieved under existing procedures. The SEC voted to charge the Senate Educational Affairs Committee with reviewing both the proposal and the University of Maryland *Code of Academic Integrity* (III-1.00[A]), and considering whether changes to University policy are appropriate (Appendix 3).

COMMITTEE WORK

Overview

The Educational Affairs Committee was charged on May 3, 2016. The committee reviewed the charge later that month, but had insufficient time to take action during the 2015-2016 academic year. Beginning in September 2016, the committee reviewed the *Code of Academic Integrity*, the University of Maryland Policy on the Conduct of Undergraduate Courses and Student Grievance Procedure, and the Arbitrary and Capricious Grading Policies (III-1.20[A] and III-1.20[B]). Additionally, the Educational Affairs Committee consulted with the proposer, the Director of the Office of Student Conduct (OSC), the Undergraduate Ombuds Officer, the Graduate Ombuds Officer, representatives from the Office of Undergraduate Studies, the Senate Student Affairs Committee, and the Senate Student Conduct Committee during its review.

To better assess students' experiences with the Pledge, the Educational Affairs Committee asked the Student Affairs Committee to gather student input on several key questions. The Student Affairs Committee conducted an informal survey of Student Senators and committee members, and received thirty-two responses. It shared its findings in a memo (Appendix 1) and a presentation to the Educational Affairs Committee. Faculty members of the Educational Affairs Committee also informally polled their colleagues about whether and how they incorporated the Pledge in assignments and exams, gathering responses from ninety-six faculty members. The committee discussed the results of both of these undertakings at its November meeting.

Based on its findings, the committee drafted several recommendations, which it shared with the Provost's Office, the Office of Faculty Affairs, the Office of Undergraduate Studies, the Graduate School, and the Office of Student Conduct. The committee voted unanimously to approve its recommendations at its meeting on December 6, 2016.

Pledge Background

The Honor Pledge was incorporated into the *Code of Academic Integrity* (*Code*) in 2001 as part of a student-led effort to promote academic integrity. It was students who first proposed the creation of a Pledge, motivated by a belief that too many of their peers were unaware of the *Code*'s existence. The Pledge was designed to be an optional exercise, largely in order to accommodate individuals who are uncomfortable signing pledges for religious or other reasons. While students can refuse to write and sign the Pledge, they must explain such a decision to their instructors. The *Code* is clear, however, that a student's choice regarding signing the Pledge cannot be considered in any grading decision or judicial procedure. While the Pledge may be optional, refusal to write and sign it does not exempt students from the obligations of the *Code* itself and cannot be used as a defense for academic misconduct. The current language in the *Code* addressing the Pledge is quoted below:

HONOR PLEDGE

4. On every examination, paper or other academic exercise not specifically exempted by the instructor, the student shall write by hand and sign the following pledge:

I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination.

Failure to sign the pledge is not a violation of the *Code of Academic Integrity*, but neither is it a defense in case of violation of this *Code*. Students who do not sign the pledge will be given the opportunity to do so. Refusal to sign must be explained to the instructor. Signing or non-signing of the pledge will not be considered in grading or judicial procedures. Material submitted electronically should contain the pledge, submission implies signing the pledge.

Committee Findings

Through consultation with the Director of the OSC, the Undergraduate and Graduate Student Ombuds Officers, and student Senators and committee members, the committee found no evidence that students are being punished for refusing to sign the Pledge. No one was able to cite a single, specific instance of a faculty member retaliating against a student who refused to sign. While a grading decision based on a student's decision not to sign the Pledge could be considered a form of punishment, University policies on Arbitrary and Capricious Grading already provide students a mechanism for grieving the assignment of grades based on factors other than performance in the course. As such, the committee sees no need to amend the Policy on the Conduct of Undergraduate Courses and Student Grievance Procedure, as requested in the proposal.

The committee did find that some faculty members consider the Pledge in grading decisions, which is a clear violation of the *Code*. Those consulted by the committee described courses in which signing and returning the Pledge is the semester's first assignment, or instances of faculty who incorporate the Pledge into the point structure of their assignments or provided extra credit for signing the Pledge. While relatively few of the students and faculty who responded to the survey and polls reported having encountered or engaged in such practices themselves, approximately one-third of student respondents expressed concerns that their grades would suffer if they refused to sign. Narrative comments also indicate a significant number of student respondents have feared their assignments would not be graded or would be subjected to a higher level of scrutiny if they refused to sign the Pledge.

The committee's research and the information gathered from the student survey and faculty polls clearly indicate the need for improved education and outreach efforts. The Student Affairs Committee survey indicates that 50 percent of the student respondents believe signing the Pledge is mandatory, with a similar percentage reporting having been told by an instructor it was required on one or more occasions. Feedback from the faculty members consulted by the Educational Affairs Committee similarly suggests that awareness of the Pledge and its function varies significantly. While the number of international graduate student respondents to the survey was too low to draw meaningful conclusions, anecdotal evidence considered by the Educational Affairs Committee suggests that international graduate students in particular may benefit from a more intentional and extensive introduction to the Pledge, given potential language barriers and variations between educational systems.

The committee identified a range of important online resources—among them the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs, the Faculty Handbook, and the Course Related Policies page maintained by the Office of Undergraduate Studies—that describe the Pledge in inconsistent language that is either inaccurate or misleading (a partial list of these resources can be found in Appendix 2). These discrepancies, in addition

to the significant confusion regarding whether or not the Pledge is mandatory, indicate a need for a more extensive and sustained educational initiative.

The committee also discussed at length whether the current language describing the Pledge makes it difficult for students to exercise free choice. The committee expressed concern over the use of “shall” within the *Code*, which creates an ambiguous obligation. “Shall” suggests that a refusal to sign is a breach of a requirement, yet the *Code* explicitly states that refusal to sign is not a violation of the *Code*. The committee generally felt that “shall” should be replaced by language that more directly and unambiguously communicates that students are free to make a decision regarding the Pledge without fear of negative repercussions (e.g. “are encouraged to”). More importantly, the committee questioned whether the requirement that students explain a decision not to sign to their instructor is unreasonably coercive, given the fundamentally hierarchical nature of the instructor/student relationship. Finally, the committee questioned whether the stipulation that “submission [of an electronic assignment/exam] implies signing the Pledge” denies students the ability to actively choose whether or not to sign the Pledge.

The committee also identified potential ambiguity regarding the operative step in the Pledging process. While the *Code* initially directs students to “write by hand and sign,” all remaining references simply discuss “signing” the Pledge. The committee acknowledged that writing out the text of the Pledge, rather than simply signing, more effectively reminds students of their obligations under the *Code*, a belief shared by those who originally advocated for the Pledge’s adoption. However, the committee also recognized that “writing” the Pledge is complicated or even impossible in the case of electronic assignments or exams. The committee generally agreed that the *Code* should be revised to clarify the expectations with respect to writing and signing. Further, members identified a need for greater attention to the mechanics of the Pledging process, with the goal of better accommodating the increasing number and evolving nature of electronic assignments and exams. Finally, the committee discussed whether the Pledge would be less objectionable for some groups if it were instead called a “Promise” or “Statement,” as is the case at other universities.

While revisions to the *Code* may be warranted, the Educational Affairs Committee feels that the above concerns exceed the scope of its work under the present charge, as they touch on fundamental aspects of the University’s efforts to foster a culture of academic integrity. The committee feels these concerns merit a more sustained and comprehensive review of the Pledge and its role in furthering the goals of the *Code*, but the Bylaws of the University Senate indicate that such a holistic review of the Pledge and academic integrity at the University of Maryland falls within the purview of the Senate Student Conduct Committee rather than the Educational Affairs Committee. After reviewing a draft of the Educational Affairs Committee’s recommendations, the Student Conduct Committee agreed that a charge directing it to conduct such a review would be appropriate. The review should involve research into the literature on various approaches to influencing student behavior, as well as current practice at peer institutions. Additionally, the Educational Affairs Committee feels it is essential that any consideration of changes to the Pledge involve students in a significant way, given the central role students played in proposing and advocating for the Pledge’s initial adoption.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Educational Affairs Committee recommends that the Office of Student Conduct review and expand its educational efforts regarding the Pledge’s relationship to the principles and practices of academic integrity at the University. The Office of Student Conduct should collaborate with other offices as needed—such as the Office of Faculty Affairs, the Teaching and Learning Transformation Center, the Office of Undergraduate Studies, and the Graduate School—to develop a uniform and robust campaign that ensures that faculty and students are informed about the Pledge, its purpose, and its provisions.

Outreach efforts should also ensure that the unique needs of international and graduate students are being met.

The Educational Affairs Committee recommends that appropriate revisions be made to the Faculty Handbook, the Undergraduate Catalog, and other resources that discuss the Honor Pledge, in order to align University guidance with the specific language of the Pledge in the *Code of Academic Integrity*.

The Educational Affairs Committee recommends that the SEC charge the Senate Student Conduct Committee with conducting a thorough review of the Honor Pledge and its role in fostering a climate of academic integrity on campus. The committee recommends that the charge ask the Student Conduct Committee to consider whether the current language of the Pledge is appropriate and to consult with students during its review.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 — Student Affairs Committee Memo to the Educational Affairs Committee

Appendix 2 — Preliminary List of Electronic Resources Discussing the Pledge

Appendix 3 — Senate Executive Committee Charge on Clarification on Declining Honor Pledge (Senate Document #15-16-31)

Appendix 1: Student Affairs Committee Memo



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Memorandum

To: Bryan Eichhorn, Chair, Senate Educational Affairs Committee

From: Adam Berger, Chair, Senate Student Affairs Committee

Date: November 11, 2016

Re: Request for Assistance with Clarification and Codification on Declining Honor Pledge (Senate Document #15-16-31)

I am writing on behalf of the Student Affairs Committee (SAC) to address the questions you posed in your memorandum of October 6, 2016. After attending the Educational Affairs Committee's (EAC) September 30 meeting, I briefed the SAC on the basic elements of EAC's charge and shared your request. To inform our response, the SAC drafted an anonymous survey, which it administered to a select group of students (undergraduate and graduate student Senators and student members of the SAC) between October 24 and November 2. Additional information about the survey may be found in the Approach & Responses section. The survey's results are summarized in the committee's answers below, and more extensive data is contained in the Appendix. Please feel free to contact the Student Affairs Committee with any additional questions or concerns.

Do students understand that signing the Honor Pledge is optional?

Through its survey and in committee discussions over the course of two meetings, the SAC found that **a significant number of the students we consulted do not understand that signing the Honor Pledge is optional**. When asked if signing the Pledge is mandatory, for example, half of the students surveyed responded that that it was; the other half correctly indicated that it was not.

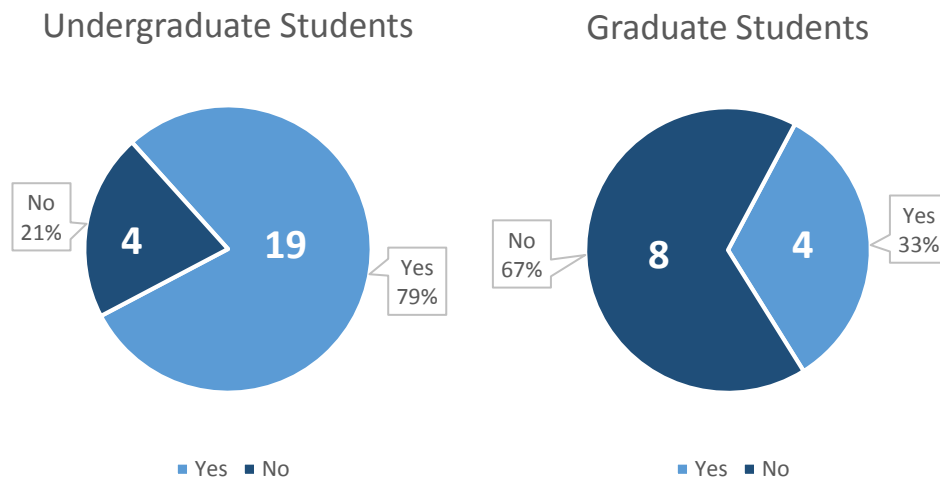
Additionally, nearly one-half of the respondents reported that they had been told by a professor in one or more courses that signing the Pledge was mandatory (see Question 2). One student, for example, shared that "nearly all of my professors have stated that the pledge is mandatory," while another related that, "while the word was never used, it was implied that exams wouldn't be graded unless it was signed." One student even responded that they had been told "we had to sign or [the professor] would assume we had cheated or received help." **It is important to note that the narrative responses suggest students who indicated they had been "told" the Pledge was mandatory are not necessarily distinguishing between an explicit requirement and one that is strongly implied.**

Do students feel that current outreach and educational efforts regarding the purpose of the Pledge and procedures for declining to sign it are sufficient?

More than 1/3 of the respondents believe that current outreach efforts are insufficient, an assessment also supported by the number of faculty providing incorrect information discussed above. In their narrative comments, some students reported that the Pledge was incorporated in a cursory or pro forma fashion, while one expressed a belief that professors simply assume that students understand the Pledge and its purpose. Two students indicated they only learned of the Pledge outside of a classroom—one from posters near the Office of Student Conduct, another through their SAC work on this survey. One student also observed that some international students might be in need of additional training, as many “do not entirely understand the importance of paraphrasing/citing another person’s ideas rather than copying them verbatim.” Additional narrative feedback may be found in Question 6.

The adequacy of current outreach efforts is one area where undergraduate and graduate students diverge. **While 15 out of 19 undergraduate students (79%) believe current efforts are sufficient, only 4 of 12 graduate students (33%) do.**

Do you think efforts to educate students about the Honor Pledge are sufficient?

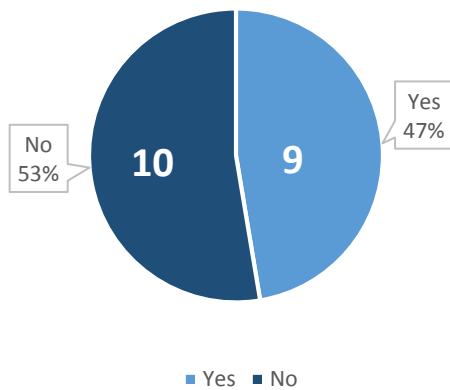


Does student understanding of the Pledge vary by degree type (undergraduate or graduate) or nation of origin?

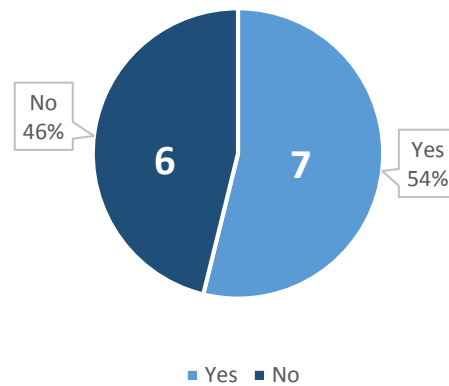
As noted above, the two populations exhibited different conclusions regarding the need for additional outreach and education. And as noted in our response to the first question, both undergraduate and graduate students reported similar levels of understanding, at least with regard to whether or not signing the Pledge is required.

Is it mandatory to sign the Honor Pledge?

Undergraduate Students



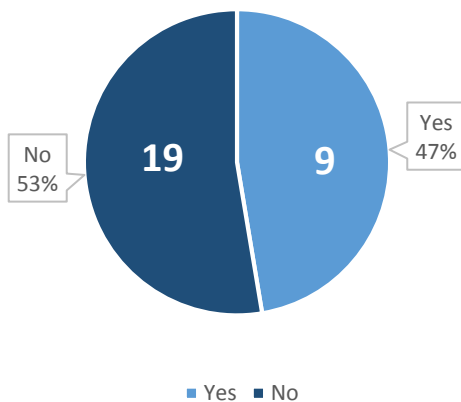
Graduate Students



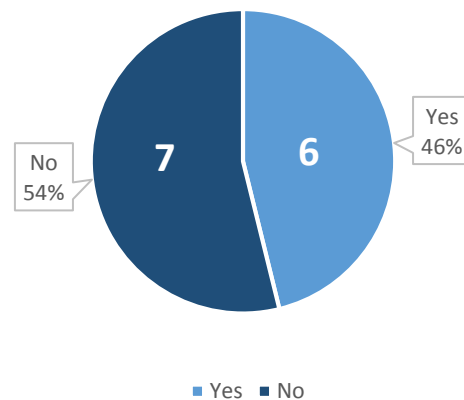
Similarly, roughly half of each category of respondent reported that a professor had told them the Pledge was mandatory.

Have you ever been told by a professor that signing the Honor Pledge was mandatory?

Undergraduate Students



Graduate Students



With regard to **international students**, the committee is unable to draw any meaningful conclusions, given only 3 respondents identified as such. The respondents are originally from Brazil, France, and India. All were graduate students, 2 thought signing the Pledge was mandatory, and 1 reported having been told by a professor it was required.

Have students encountered instances where signing the Pledge was associated with points on an assignment?

Our survey did not find evidence that this is a widespread practice. Only 4 of the 32 students who responded had ever encountered assignments where signing the Pledge was explicitly associated with

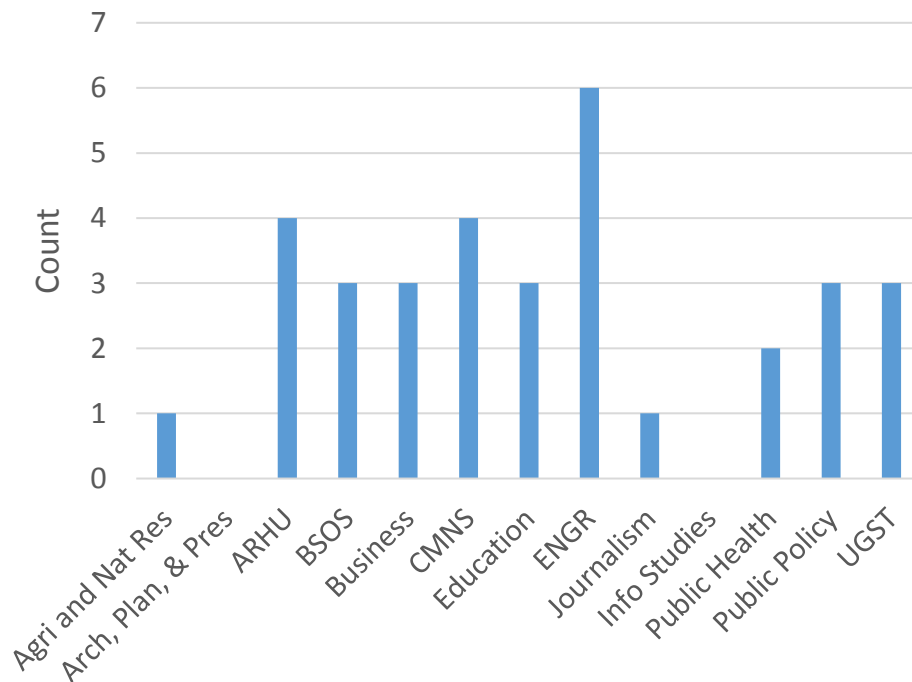
points. One received extra credit for signing, while another was a teaching assistant in a course where it was integrated into an assignment's point distribution. One student also reported that an exam would not be graded if the Pledge was not signed.

However, it is clear from the narrative responses to Question 2 and Question 3 that a number of students have either been told explicitly, or assumed, that assignments would not be graded without a signed Pledge. In this sense, then, there is clearly an impression in a number of students' minds that a decision not to sign could negatively affect their grade. Additionally, **more than one-third of respondents have feared they would be punished for refusing to sign the Pledge** (see Question 4). **Despite this, none of the respondents reported actually having faced repercussions for declining to sign.**

Approach & Responses

The survey was designed and administered using Qualtrics. Responses were completely anonymous. It was distributed to all undergraduate Senators (28), all graduate Senators (11), and the student members of the SAC (9 undergraduates and 5 graduates). Given 5 student members of the SAC are also Senators, the total number of individuals surveyed was 48. No demographic data was captured in this survey, beyond degree type, College, and country of origin.

We received 32 responses (though one participant did not answer every question): 19 from undergraduate students and 13 from graduate students. The distribution by College appears below:

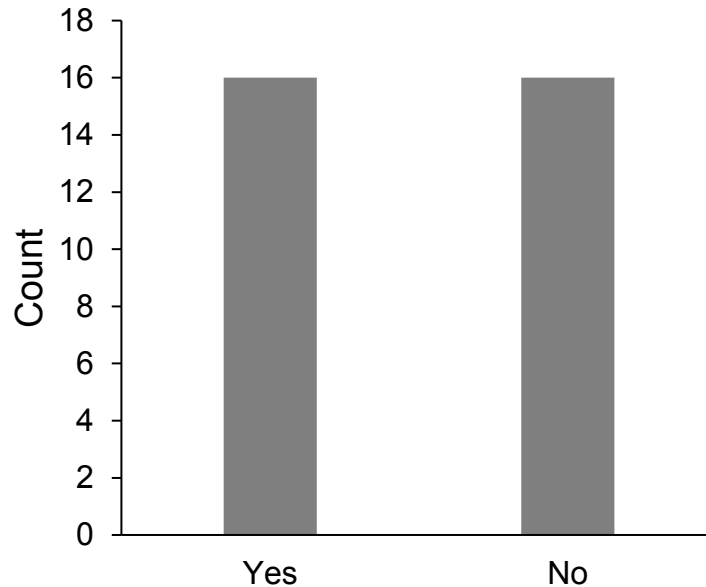


In our discussion of the results, SAC members noted that the group of students surveyed was not necessarily representative of the broader student population, given they are all either student leaders or individuals who have volunteered their service on a Senate committee. Given this sort of student is more likely than their peers to be aware of or interested in University policies, however, the SAC thinks any potential skewing can be accounted for when assessing students' awareness of the Pledge.

Appendix

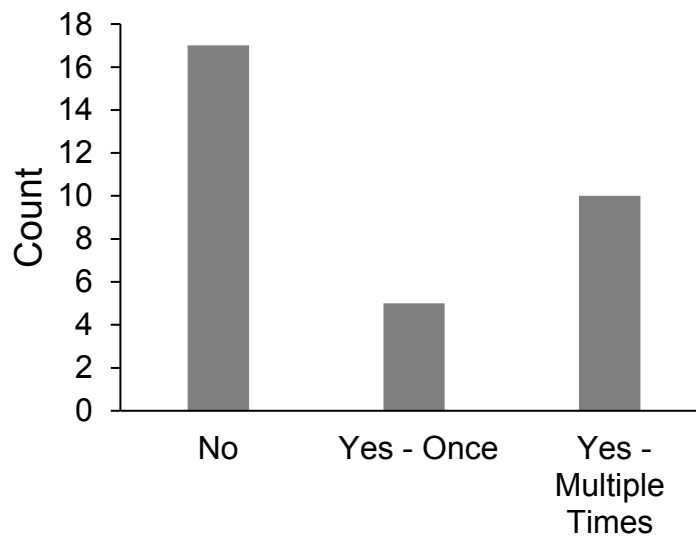
Question 1

Is it mandatory to sign the Honor Pledge? (please answer based on your initial thoughts and do not change your answer after going to the next page)



Question 2

Have you ever been told by a professor that signing the Honor Pledge was mandatory?



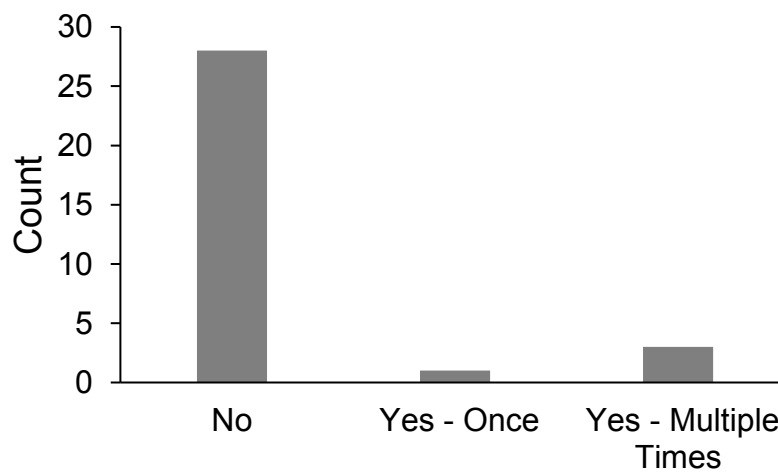
Those who answered “Yes” were asked to elaborate:

- It's always just understood that's what you do
- I remember being asked to sign the honor pledge before an exam in just one of my classes during my first year.

- "Make sure you sign the honor pledge before you hand in your exam," or "Sign the honor pledge on the cover sheet before you begin."
- It was mandatory to sign it on an upper-level (400-level) exam I took.
- Nearly all of my professors have stated that the pledge is mandatory.
- On several occasions it was stated that it must be filled out and signed.
- Before every midterm & final
- While the word was never used, it was implied that exams wouldn't be graded unless it was signed.
- Before you begin your exam, sign the honor pledge.
- We, students are always required to sign the honor pledge and start the test. I remember one professor who once said, if the honor pledge is missing, the answer script would not be evaluated.
- We would not have our exam graded if the pledge was not signed.
- In one of my classes my professor told us we had to sign or he would assume we cheated or received help.

Question 3

Have any of your professors associated signing the Honor Pledge with points (regular or extra credit)?

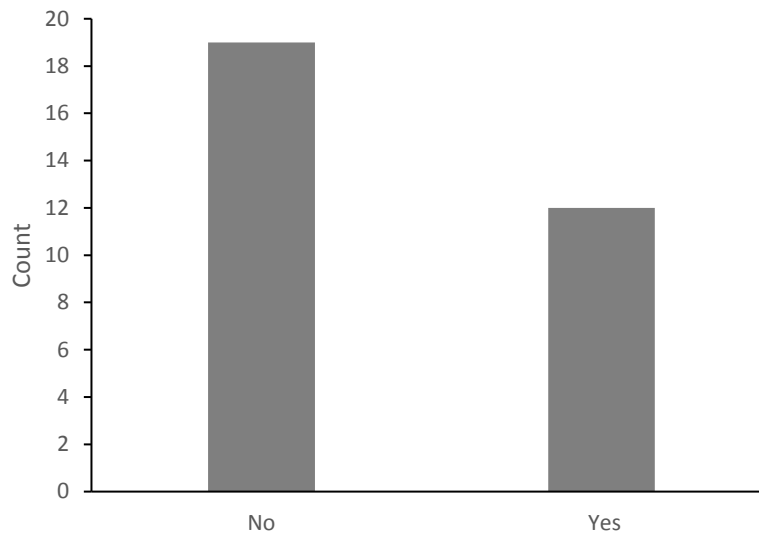


Those who answered "Yes" were asked to elaborate:

- Not in a class I took but in a class I was a TA. The professor assigned one point to students on an essay assignment for writing and the honor pledge on the first page of their assignment.
- Would not have exam graded without the pledge signed.
- I received one extra credit point for signing it.
- CHEM exams

Question 4

Have you ever feared you would be punished if you didn't sign the Honor Pledge?

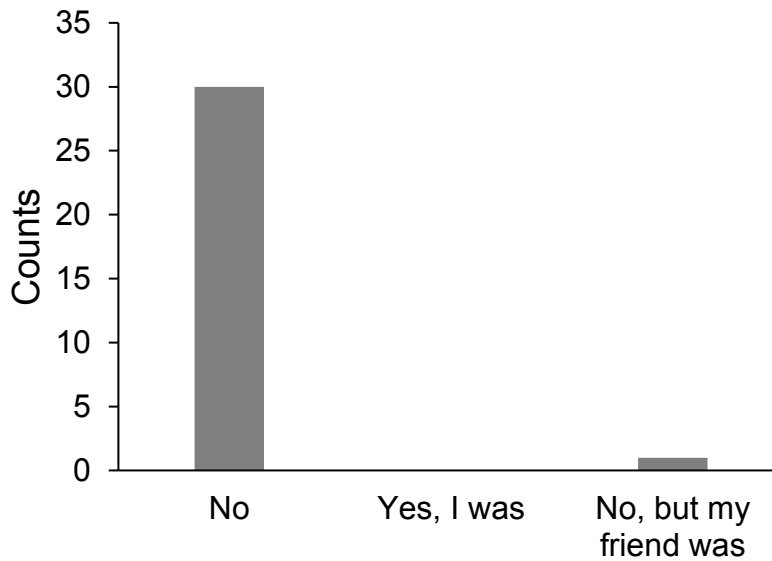


Those who answered “Yes” were asked to elaborate:

- Its like writing your name on an exam. There are no points for it, but you just have to do it.
- I feel like it would be a slap in the face to not write the honor pledge.
- Since it is written on the front of most test booklets, I have feared that if I chose not to sign it I could be accused of academic dishonesty.
- There's an underlying feeling that if you refuse to sign that you are viewed as guilty.
- They may assume you were cheating.
- While signing the pledge may not technically be mandatory, I am not sure what would happen if you did not sign the pledge.
- I was afraid that professors would scrutinize my work to a far higher degree than the average student if I did not sign it and there
- I assume that in not signing the honor pledge, I am stating that I received unauthorized assistance. I'm sure my professors would then look into the matter.
- I feared my exam score would be disregarded and I would receive a zero if I did not sign.
- Some professors have hinted that it would invalidate your exam
- I think people would assume I'm cheating.

Question 5

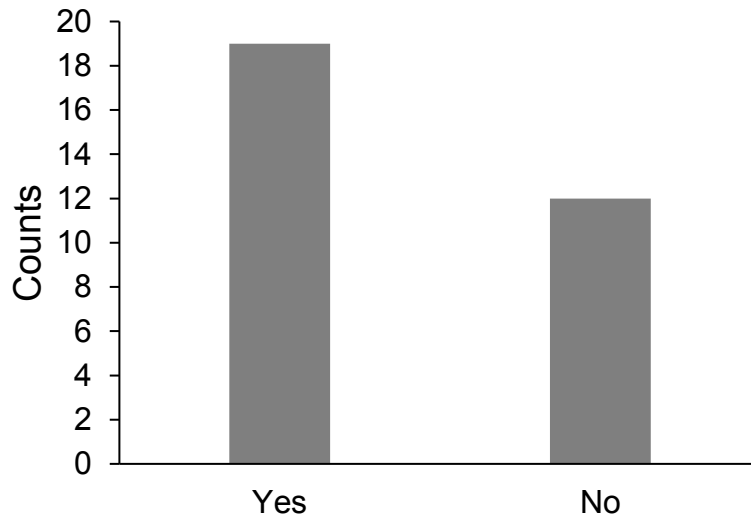
Have you ever been punished for not signing the Honor Pledge?



The student who indicated a friend was punished explained that “Points on a paper were associated with signing the Honor Code in a Minority Health class.” While this is an important piece of information, this was not the sort of punishment the SAC was intending to investigate, which suggests the question could have been more clearly phrased.

Question 6

Do you think efforts to educate students about the Honor Pledge are sufficient?



Those who answered “No” were asked to elaborate:

- I had never heard of it until I volunteered in the student affairs committee of the university senate and we had to discuss it.

- Most professors do not discuss it and take it for granted that students know what the pledge is and why we have to sign it
- I personally do not know anything about the honor pledge apart from the posters hung outside the Conduct Office in the Mitchell Building
- I believe that international students from different cultures might benefit from a required "academic integrity" crash course. My experiences with international students indicate that the many international students do not entirely understand the importance of paraphrasing/citing another person's ideas rather than copying them verbatim.
- Its more or less an after thought thrown into every syllabus and or pre-test speech. More could be done to speak to its importance.
- not current efforts. At my previous institution our president gave a talk about academic integrity during orientation. that as effective
- I think that simply reading it and signing it on exams and other assignments is enough for students to understand and be aware of the pledge and the weight it holds.
- I did not know this was even a thing. I vaguely remember a professor saying something about it.
- More needs to be said in class.
- No one mentions it until its exam time.

Question 7

In your opinion, why does the University have an Honor Pledge?

- Remind students to abide by standards of honesty and integrity in academic work
- To remind students of the rules of academic integrity
- to prevent cheating
- To keep students accountable. To place values on the degrees that we get from the University.
- To discourage cheating and remind students about plagiarism rules
- It looks nice, makes the university prestigious, and most institutions also have it.
- To remind students what is expected of them and to blatantly set the standards
- While I am unfamiliar with why the honor pledge is in existence at UMD, Texas A&M has a similar code of honor that I have heard is quite successful and very present in the daily happenings of the student body.
- To serve as an active reminder that cheating and plagiarizing are not acceptable under any circumstances.
- I think it is necessary because it speaks to the integrity of the university.
- The honor pledge is a respectable academic standard and encourages students to have integrity in their work.
- To provide grounds of reasonable expectation for charging students with academic dishonesty, if there are any policy infringements. So the university can say "You clearly knew what you were doing was wrong."
- To make students think twice about cheating on an assignment.

- We sign the honor pledge in order to for the University to make certain that we are aware of the rules regarding academic integrity before any assignment/exam.
- The honor pledge is intended to encourage academic integrity. It should be enforced to have the desired affect.
- I think that the honor pledge helps keep students acutely aware of academic integrity, and provides a signed contract which the appropriate governing body can leverage in the event of plagiarism or other academic disshonesty.
- Remind students just before assignments what Honor Code they agreed to.
- For students to acknowledge to themselves that they will not cheat.
- I always assumed it was for legal purposes.
- The University has an honor pledge to ensure that students know that there are consequences if they decide to cheat.
- To minimize cheating in the tests.
- To reduce and prevent plagiarism and other people doing the work for the students.
- To have students acknowledge that there is a code of conduct, which may cause students not to cheat.
- So that students are aware of the consequences of cheating
- To ensure honesty in the students.

Question 8

Please share any additional thoughts or concerns you have about the Honor Pledge or further explanations to any questions above.

- I think the honor pledge is drilled in enough and understood enough that it doesn't need to be rediscussed in every single class by every single teacher.
- We should be given a separate amount of test time to write the pledge. It is really annoying that we get timed on some exams, yet we have to spend about thirty seconds regurgitating the honors pledge. Instead of just being able to sign that we know what it is.
- I think the pledge itself is useful to instill a sense of honesty in students. Education around the pledge and rules surrounding its signage/non-signage should be made clearer to students (although it seems obvious).
- I think it's a normal thing it have. It can be annoying when you have to write it before a test, but that's the worst thing really and that's not even a bad thing
- it should be enforced.
- I'm still not entirely sure what there is to discuss or educate people on (which may just go to show that I am not educated enough on the subject)
- If someone wants to cheat, that person will cheat. It is the fact of dishonesty that signing not to do something dishonest, does not necessarily stop the dishonest act.
- The honor pledge should not be mandatory to sign but should be listed on every course syllabus and mentioned within the first week of class.

Appendix 2: Preliminary List of Electronic Resources Discussing the Pledge

Electronic resources that discuss the Pledge

- [Academic Integrity Orientation](#)
- [BSOS Academic Integrity page](#)
- [Graduate Catalog](#)
- [Honors College Academic Integrity page](#)
- Math Department websites ([here](#) and [here](#))
- [Office of Faculty Affairs Academic Integrity page](#)
- [Office of Student Conduct flyer](#)
- [Res Life Training Module](#)
- [School of Public Health Handout](#)
- [Smith School Academic Integrity Page](#)
- [Student Honor Council 1](#) & [Student Honor Council 2](#)
- [TLTC](#)
- [UGST Course Related Policies page](#)
- [Undergraduate Catalog](#)

Appendix 3: Charge



University Senate CHARGE

Date:	May 3, 2016
To:	Madlen Simon Chair, Educational Affairs Committee
From:	Willie Brown Chair, University Senate 
Subject:	Clarification and Codification on Declining Honor Pledge
Senate Document #:	15 16 31
Deadline:	February 15, 2017

The Senate Executive Committee (SEC) requests that the Educational Affairs Committee review the attached proposal that requests that the University of Maryland Policy on the Conduct of Undergraduate Courses and Student Grievance Procedure (V-1.00[A]) be amended to clarify that when evaluating student performances faculty may not take into account whether a student has signed the Student Honor Pledge or has declined to do so.

Specifically, we ask that you:

1. Review the [University of Maryland College Park Code of Academic Integrity \(III-1.00\[A\]\)](#).
2. Consult with the proposer.
3. Consult with the Director of Student Conduct.
4. Consult with the Undergraduate Ombudsperson.
5. Consult with a representative of the Office of Undergraduate Studies.
6. Consult with the Student Conduct Committee.
7. Consult with the University's Office of General Counsel on any proposed recommendations.
8. If appropriate, recommend changes to current policy.

We ask that you submit your report and recommendations to the Senate Office no later than February 15, 2017. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact Reka Montfort in the Senate Office, extension 5-5804.

Attachment

WB/rm



University Senate PROPOSAL FORM

Name:	Chuck Englehart
Date:	3/24/2016
Title of Proposal:	Clarification and Codification on Declining Honor Pledge
Phone Number:	
Email Address:	chuck@umd.edu
Campus Address:	n/a
Unit/Department/College:	M.S. Telecommunications
Constituency (faculty, staff, undergraduate, graduate):	Part Time Graduate Students
Description of issue/concern/policy in question:	The Honor Pledge is intended to be a requested but optional pledge that students write on different assignments. The Honor Council states: "If a handwritten Honor Pledge and Pledge signature do not appear on a paper or examination, faculty members should ask the student for an explanation. Doing so has the added value of encouraging teachers and students to discuss the importance of academic integrity and the best ways to promote it. Students remain free to decline to write or sign the Pledge and should not be penalized for exercising that right." However, if a student is penalized for not writing the pledge there is currently no recourse.
Description of action/changes you would like to see implemented and why:	I would like to see the "UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE" amended to add a section allowing students to seek recourse in the event they are punished for not writing or signing the pledge. This would show the campus community that the Honor Pledge is not compulsory and that it is a student's decision. This gives more weight to the pledge as it is not simply something that must be signed for course credit.
Suggestions for how your proposal could be put into practice:	This is a very simple change. A statement can be added under section B.I. of the "UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE" to reflect a student's right to recourse if they are punished for not signing the pledge.

Additional Information:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Who would be affected (both positively and negatively) if your proposal was put into action?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Students would be positively affected. They would have codified assurances of the implied rights spoken to by the Student Honor Council○● Are there any financial consequences that would result from this proposal?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ No.
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Please send your completed form and any supporting documents to senate-admin@umd.edu or University of Maryland Senate Office, 1100 Marie Mount Hall, College Park, MD 20742-7541. Thank you!