

Judicial reform history encompasses long past

By Danielle Deaver
Editor in Chief

The road traveled to reach the point of a student-wide referendum on judicial reform has been long and occasionally torturous for those involved.

Judicial reform began several years ago, when a Judicial Council subcommittee began looking at reforming the system after complaints that the students, faculty and administration had lost faith in the system. They put together a report which became known as the "Harriger Report," after Katy Harriger, an associate professor of politics, a member of the Judicial Council and the subcommittee on judicial reform. Harriger spearheaded the endeavor.

Student Government and chairmen and members of the Judicial Board and Honor Council received copies of the report over the summer.

What they saw did not impress the students. "Frankly, a lot of us who became familiar with the document were not happy with it," senior Scott Plumridge, the president of SG, said.

The document was presented to many of the university's student leaders at the President's Leadership Conference in September 1997, where it also created debate among the students.

After seeing students' reactions at the PLC, the Judicial Council decided it needed more student input, Harriger said.

They added more students to the judicial reform committee, asked SG to submit suggestions about how they could improve the proposal and agreed to hold a student-wide referendum to gauge student reaction to the proposed reforms.

"I think (the proposal) has migrated somewhat in direction since the PLC because of the suggestions given by the Student Government, especially concerning the election of new student members," Ken Zick, the vice president for student life and instructional resources, said.

Plumridge said that SG formed a judicial reform committee comprised of members of the SG executive board and people from the judicial system. "Basically the goal of the group was to draft a document and then to present it to the Council," Plumridge said.

They finished the document in early November 1997 and took the draft before the legislature. The bills had been handed off to the Judicial Council as they were approved by the legislature, and the Council debated them for several months.

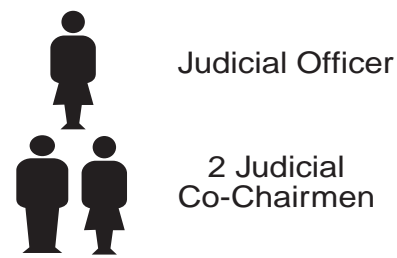
Thirteen of the 14 suggestions SG made were eventually included in the judicial reform proposal, Plumridge said.

SG suggested more student involvement, including letting students determine the verdict. They also campaigned for student-wide election of the Honor and Ethics Council student members. The Judicial Council's original proposal had said that the students would be screened through a committee.

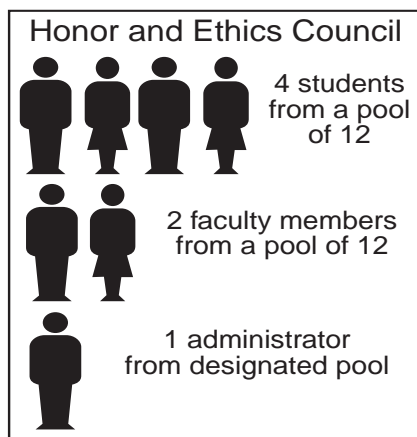
SG also advocated two student co-chairmen of the board, that students have a majority on the elections committee and that the Board of Investigators and Advisers be run solely by students.

"We have, I think in all cases, taken the advice on changing the proposal at the advice of the student leaders without compromising our proposal. I hope students realize we are trying to meet them halfway," Zick said.

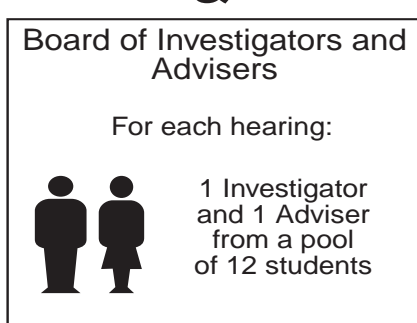
Proposed Judicial System



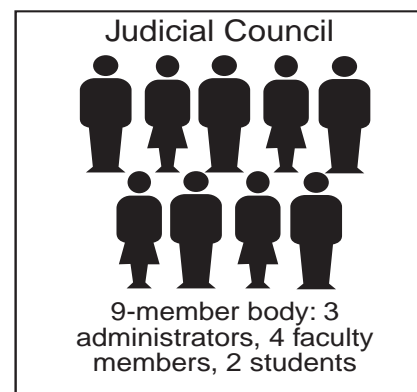
1
A case is given to a co-chairman, who assigns an investigator and an adviser from the Board of Investigators and Advisers.



2
The case is heard and decided by the Honor and Ethics Council, chaired by one judicial co-chairman. Their finding can be:
• Not Guilty
• Guilty, Finding Accepted
• Guilty, Finding Appealed



3
Appeals are made to the Judicial Council, the policy-making body, whose decision is final.



Judicial reforms proposed

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educate themselves on the issue and vote, or not vote (at all)," Ken Zick, the vice president for student life and instructional resources, said.

In the referendum, students will decide whether to change the Student Government constitution.

Because it is the SG constitution, the "contract with the student body," a two-thirds approval of the voting body is necessary for any changes to be made to the constitution.

If the two-thirds approval is attained, the SG constitution will be changed after a confirming vote by the legislature.

The Judicial Council would probably then quickly vote the reforms into existence, according to Katy Harriger, an associate professor of politics and a member of the Judicial Council.

If two-thirds of the student body does not vote to change the SG constitution, the outcome of judicial reform is uncertain. Since the referendum deals only with changing SG's constitution, the Judicial Council could choose to pass the reforms it has proposed without a majority vote of the student body.

The question of what to do if this situation arises is being debated in the Judicial Council. "I think if the proposal fails by a majority viewpoint, the Judicial Council should reconsider the position on it," Zick said.

Robert Lovett, a professor of English, a member of the Judicial Council and the chairman of the subcommittee on judicial reform, had a different opinion. "The program's going to be implemented," he said. If the student referendum does fail, he said, "I

think (the students) will probably be very unhappy, but I hope that doesn't happen."

The Judicial Council was given the power by the board of trustees to change the judicial system without consideration of student opinion, according to Harriger.

"We had the authority to vote this in last fall and a lot of members wanted to do that," she said. "(But) there's a difference between having the authority to do something and actually doing it."

The Judicial Council must vote on its proposal before April 8, said Harriger, because that is when the elections for positions within the judicial system will be held.

If the system is changed, with or without the approval of students, the changes will be more detailed than they appear in the bill students will vote upon in the referendum.

Statutes explaining the way the system will run will be written by SG, which will then vote on the statutes in a legislative meeting.

The proposed changes to the judicial system on which students will be voting would essentially combine the Judicial Board and Honor Council into one deliberative body, the Honor and Ethics Council. Another board, the Board of Investigators and Advisers, would investigate cases and defend students appearing before the HEC.

Students would act as the chairmen of both boards, but instead of the system being completely student-run, one administrator and two faculty members would sit on the seven-person deliberative body in every case.

They would be chosen from a pool of three faculty members, selected by the dean of the college,

and the administrator would be selected by the vice president for student life.

Selection of the students sitting on both boards would still be done through a campus-wide vote of the student body, but all candidates would be screened by an elections committee prior to running.

The committee, composed of the president and speaker of the house of SG, two members of the legislature, the two judicial co-chairmen and one student member of the Judicial Council, would screen the students.

Only students with a GPA above 2.0 and no honor violations could run for a position. Election committee members would use students' judicial records to determine their past violations.

The committee would select two students for every seat on the board. The student body would decide on the 12 members, of which there will be three seniors, four juniors, three sophomores and two freshmen.

Four of those students, two faculty members and the administrator would be chosen from the pool for every hearing.

Administrators and faculty members were placed on the board because of a history of problems with inconsistent decisions from the student-run board, according to Harriger.

"I think it will bring to the board some type of institutional memory and a better deliberative process," she said. "I think faculty participation brings objectivity."

"We were really interested in having people on the panel who had experience," Zick said. "I would like to have emeriti faculty who have served on the Judicial Council."

Source: Student Government Report Nov. 21, 1997

Jamie Womack/Old Gold and Black

Few violations reach council

Student hearings commonly involve deception, stealing

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an honor code violation. Lane said, "Any university official, be it a residential adviser or a police officer, can report an honor code violation."

All reports submitted by residential advisers go through Residence Life and Housing before being forwarded to the offices of Clay Hipp, the judicial adviser, and Harold Holmes, an associate vice president and the dean of student services.

Police reports, however, go directly to the offices of Hipp and Holmes.

Lane said, "The judicial board is responsible for hearing cases involving 'deception in a social setting, and stealing.'"

So far this year, the judicial board has heard only three honor code violation cases.

In two of the three cases the students were found guilty.

Lane added that there have been some suspensions, but he would not comment any further.

The Honor Council is responsible for hearing all other honor code violations.

According to one of the members, junior Matthew Jamison, the Honor Council has heard three cases

so far this year or semester and has three more scheduled.

Of the estimated 500 violations that Hipp encounters each year, only a small portion of those are honor code related, he said.

He added that there are normally around 25 to 30 honor code violations each year, half of which deal with social situations, such as lying about one's age.

The other 12 to 15 usually involve academic situations such as plagiarism or cheating.

According to Hipp, the cases that come before the boards vary in topic. He said, "The violations I deal with each year usually include a broad variety of cases."

"The punishments for honor code violations are granted on a case by case basis," Hipp said.

The Constitution of the Student Government states that the minimum punishment for an honor code violation is probation, and the maximum penalty is suspension or expulsion.

The Constitution also states that second offenders receive expulsion regardless of the charge. The only exception to this is if the Honor Council votes to reduce the punishment to a suspension.

Some students question the ef-

fectiveness of the honor system. Freshman Brad Roehrenbeck said, "In theory the honor system would be more effective than other systems of government if used properly."

He added that it is too easily used against students, rather than in protection of students.

Freshman Doug Batchelet agreed. "The honor system is meant to both restrict us and protect us. If we are unable to use it in support of our own innocence, then it is not doing its job."

Resident adviser sophomore Frank Wilson said he believes the honor system is ineffective, though he believes this is the fault of the students, instead of the fault of the enforcers.

"As a resident adviser I find that some students respect the honor system and give truthful answers; however, there are also students who blatantly disregard the honor system and lie," he said.

Wilson added that students must realize that the honor system grants them many freedoms, which they would not have under other systems. He said the honor system would be the most effective system if students respected it and abided by it.

SG approves English honor society Sigma Tau Delta's constitution

By Suzanne DuBose
Old Gold and Black

Student Government has recently approved the constitution of the English honor society, Sigma Tau Delta.

"It still has to go through the Student Life Committee and be approved by the faculty," said senior Amy Speas, the chair of the student government charter committee.

This chapter of Sigma Tau Delta has been in existence on campus and nationally recognized since May 1990.

However, the English honor society never gained official university recognition, but hopes to achieve this status before next semester.

"It will possibly be fully approved by the end of the semester," Speas said.

Bill Moss, an English professor and the Sigma Tau Delta faculty adviser said, "It

had never actually been officially recognized."

The English honor society has been struggling to regain its original success and to recapture student interest after a decline in membership and recent organizational difficulties. Presently the organization has only a dozen members.

"It (the constitution) is sort of an attempted resurrection. ... The department and students were interested in reviving it," Moss said.

"I think it is a really good thing for Wake Forest," said Sigma Tau Delta president senior Keith Krut.

Problems with the computer systems at the controller's office, the replacement of many of the society's student advisers and the loss of its national banking records are just now being overcome by the English honor society.

"Once we get officially recognized there are scholarships, writing contests, and even a national publication that we can be involved in."

Bill Moss

English professor
Sigma Tau Delta faculty adviser

"The treasurer couldn't find our account number so we had to open a new account," Moss said.

The current members of Sigma Tau Delta have worked hard this year to rebuild the organization.

"We're trying to stimulate interaction

between the faculty and the students so people realize what an amazing English department we have here," Krut said.

The English honor society takes part in many activities, ranging from information sessions on graduate schools and careers for English majors to receptions for interested English majors and graduating seniors and their parents.

"We're already putting together a gathering of all the professors and the seniors and their parents," Krut said.

"They have also talked about tutoring reading and writing at various schools," Moss said.

Also, Sigma Tau Delta is in charge of the campus publication *The Omega*, which was recently renamed *The Revenant*.

"It's published by the English honor society, but anyone can enter articles," Moss said.

"It's really a collection of essays. ... We hope to be putting out one every semester," Krut said.

After being officially recognized by the university, the English honor society hopes to participate in many of the organization's national opportunities.

"Once we get officially recognized there are scholarships, writing contests and even a national publication that we can be involved in," Moss said.

Students can become members of Sigma Tau Delta after completing at least two upper division English courses if they are in the top third of their class and have at least a 3.0 GPA in all of their English courses.

Most students apply during their second semester junior year and may find applications in the department of English office in Tribble C 201.