

Document 2.1 Body of Letter to Student Council from Provost Lingram

As you know, the chief responsibility of all educators at the university is to ensure that students receive the best education possible. Although a university education consists of many experiences that occur outside the classroom, the core element is to help students learn how to think critically, creatively, and responsibly about the world and their role in it. To this end, the ability to write clearly and originally is fundamentally important.

I write to you today to solicit the Student Council's views on an idea we are considering to confront an insidious threat to the success of our shared mission: plagiarism. Plagiarism—the use of another's words and ideas without proper attribution—has long been a threat to the integrity of writing by students and professionals alike. In the age of the Internet, however, with easy access to term-paper mills, plagiarism has become an epidemic on campuses all across the country.

At the suggestion of a number of department chairs representing all four of our academic colleges, I am investigating the purchase of a site license to CopyCatcher.com, the leading plagiarism-detection service. With a site license, any instructor in any department on campus can upload papers to CopyCatcher and quickly receive a report indicating whether the papers are original or contain plagiarized writing.

In these times of economic austerity, the university cannot afford to purchase this site license out of the existing operating budget. Therefore, we are considering proposing a \$3 increase in the student fee paid each semester by full-time students and a \$2 increase for part-time students.

The administration believes that CopyCatcher can be a highly effective tool in reducing the incidence of plagiarism on campus, thus helping us educate our students in the norms of academic conduct. In addition, reducing plagiarism will have the effect of protecting the students' investment in their education by ensuring that we maintain our well-earned reputation with graduate schools and employers for educating honest, skilled, and thoughtful leaders of tomorrow.

Would you please let me know the Student Council's views on this idea before the end of the month?

Sincerely,

Mary Lingram, Provost