

The Gettysburg College Honor Code
Spring 2014 revision of sections 4.4-5 and 6.5
Background Information and Motions approved

1957: The Faculty established the Honor Code and delegated to the Honor Commission responsibility for the regulation of student academic conduct.

2006: The Honor Code was substantially revised:

The process to revise the Honor Code included an external review and an extensive internal review led by a special committee composed of faculty, administrators, and students.

Two complementary frameworks are embodied in the Revised Honor Code:

- a *retributive framework* giving the Honor Commission authority to punish actions that breach the College's principles of academic integrity;
- a *restorative framework* charging the Honor Commission with affording students who have acted dishonestly the opportunity to examine their behavior, learn from their mistakes, and begin the process of repairing their breach of the community's trust and academic values.

The Revised Honor Code established the **Conference Process** as a way to resolve complaints that could result in a first violation and to investigate potential second violations to be adjudicated by a hearing board; and provided for a **range of penalties** for first and second violations (SEE PENALTY Articles 4.1-4.5).

2011-12: The Provost established a special Review Committee to perform the first 5-year review of the revised Honor Code.

- After numerous campus-wide discussions and interviews with faculty, Student Senate, the Academic Advising Deans, the Provost and administrative staff, Honor Commission Faculty Advisors, and Honor Commission members, and extensive data analysis, the Review Committee found broad support for the new Conference Process and the outcome of cases handled by the Honor Commission under the Revised Honor Code.
- Key recommendations made by the Review Committee were within the purview of the Honor Commission to adopt, and the Commission has implemented them through changes to internal procedures. Other recommendations regarding penalties and the Appeal Process require approval of the Honor Commission, Student Senate, and Faculty.
- The Honor Commission is now bringing two Motions for Faculty consideration. These motions concern changes to the text of Articles in the Code and require approval by the Faculty, Student Senate, and the Honor Commission. The Honor Commission (20 Oct. 2013) and Student Senate (17 Feb. 2014) have already unanimously approved these Motions.

Motion 1: Revise Articles 4.4 and 4.5 as follows:

Current text Articles 4.4-5

4.4 Although Hearing Boards have the authority to consider and impose a penalty from the full range of penalties available and penalties ranging in severity up to and including failure in the course may be assigned through the Preliminary Conference, the normal penalty for first-time breaches of the Honor Code occurring within the purview of a particular course is failure in the course.

4.5 Normally, the penalty for a second offense shall be expulsion.

Revised text Articles 4.4-4.5

4.4 (a) Hearing boards have the authority to consider and impose a penalty from the full range of penalties available. (b) Penalties ranging in severity up to and including failure in the course may be assigned through the preliminary conference.

4.5 (a) Penalties for first time breaches of the Honor Code occurring within the purview of a particular course typically include failure of the assignment, grade reduction, or failure of the course. (b) Penalties for second violation cases normally include suspension or expulsion.

Rationale for changes to 4.4-4.5

- The proposed text reflects our actual practices regarding penalties over the last several years; clarifies the apparent contradiction in the current Articles on Penalties, 4.2—4.5 that both sets out a range a penalties for violations as well as a single normal penalty; and responds to the recommendation of the HC Review to revise these Articles.
- In accordance with the recommendations of the Honor Code Review (2011-12) to address penalty variability, the Honor Commission has adopted a set of guidelines for determining the severity of penalties that takes into account
 - a) that some violations are especially serious, e.g., violations that implicate or harm innocent students or involve substantial planning and deception;
 - b) that some circumstances or behaviors may increase a penalty, e.g., persistent lying throughout the adjudication process or violations involving end-of-the-semester work where the opportunity for restorative practices is limited;
 - c) circumstances or behaviors that may mitigate a penalty, e.g., honesty through self-reporting a violation or when confronted with wrongdoing, and the faculty member's expressed interest in the student remaining in the course;
 - d) for second violations, particular considerations for the sake of equity include e.g., the severity of the second and first violation or whether the

second violation indicates a pattern of behavior the student has failed or been unwilling to address.

Motion 2: Revise Article 6.5 as follows:

Current text Article 6.5:

The Appeal Board shall be composed of six members appointed by the Provost: an administrator and two Faculty Advisors of the Honor Commission who were not present at the original hearing, and three student members of the Honor Commission who did not serve as part of the original Hearing Board. The administrator designated by the Provost shall act as Chairperson of the Appeal Board. The new hearing shall otherwise be conducted under the rules for a Hearing Board described above.

Revised text Article 6.5

The Appeal Board shall be composed of seven members appointed by the Provost: three faculty members and three Honor Commission members who did not serve as part of the original Hearing Board, and a non-voting administrator appointed by the Provost who shall act as chair. The new hearing shall otherwise be conducted under the rules for a Hearing Board described above.

Rationale for Changes to 6.5

- Having a non-voting chair for Appeal Boards brings this process into line with the function of the non-voting chair of Hearing Boards (normally one of the co-chairs of the Honor Commission). This change was recommended by the Review Commission.
- The Board chair is responsible for making decisions about the conduct of the Hearing and for providing information to ensure equity in the consideration of penalties in accordance with the Honor Commission's guidelines. The Chair should carry out these responsibilities unencumbered by the additional responsibility of making a decision about whether a violation has occurred and a penalty.

Recommendations of the Honor Code Review Committee implemented by the Honor Commission:

- established penalty guidelines that indicate a rationale for greater and lesser penalties
- established guidelines for faculty bringing complaints to Conferences
- established guidelines regarding the Role of Advisors for persons acting as advisors to students responding to complaints
- in second violation cases, established policies regarding the discussion of first violations and equity considerations
- posts copies of the Honor Code Assignment Pledge in every classroom
- issues year-end reports on Conferences and Hearings in the *Gettysburgian*

Some Data

1991-2005: 470 cases were adjudicated; on average 31 cases per year.

2006-2013: under the Revised Honor Code:

- 425 cases were adjudicated; on average 61 cases per year.
- 71% of potential first complaints were resolved as violations.
- 27 out of 28 second complaints were resolved as violations.
- 82% (ave.) of potential first violations were resolved in Conferences.
- 14 appeal hearings were requested; 10 granted; in 8, the violation and penalty were upheld; in 1 the penalty was reduced; in 1 the violation was reduced and the penalty.