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## Honor Council Policies and Procedures

William Jewell College  
Updated August 2011

### I. Preamble

#### Honor and Integrity at William Jewell College

Since 1849, students, faculty, and staff have built years of tradition and excellence on this hilltop campus. The sense of tradition and excellence we embrace at William Jewell College is founded on specific core values, beliefs, and standards which guide our existence and vision for the future. Among these beliefs is a commitment to expecting more of ourselves, our peers, our colleagues and our college community.

Words such as *Achievement, Leadership, Respect, Responsibility* and *Service* not only describe our College, but convey how we intend to live a life dedicated to the common good.

At William Jewell College, concepts of freedom and personal responsibility are inextricably bound. The College community functions on the principle that each member will respect and protect the rights of his/her fellow citizens. Students are expected to develop values which represent mature, self-disciplined persons who appreciate the privilege of education and are willing to accept its responsibilities.

When one chooses a college, one commits oneself to that college's philosophy of education. At William Jewell College, this philosophy includes a dedication to high standards of conduct. The College values strongly the belief that the pursuit of academic knowledge is a commitment to personal integrity.

By subscribing to the William Jewell College Honor Code, all members of our community are responsible for insuring that other members of our community hold fast to the Honor Code. Consequently, students who possess *factual knowledge* of any committed violation(s) of the Honor Code are honor-bound to report said violation(s).

It is imperative that this pursuit and commitment serve as the foundation upon which all College endeavors stand. Students choosing to attend William Jewell College are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity and individual conduct and to hold one another accountable.

Therefore, we commit ourselves, as members of the William Jewell College community, to our Honor Code.

#### **The William Jewell College Honor Code**

***“As a member of the William Jewell College community, I commit myself to the highest personal standards of conduct and integrity. I will not cheat, lie, or steal, nor will I tolerate these actions by others within this community.”***

## II. Charge of the Honor Council

### A. Overview

While affirming the highest standards of honor and integrity in all pursuits, the William Jewell College student Honor Code addresses lying, cheating and stealing. Other student infractions are adjudicated according to the Standards of Conduct outlined in the *William Jewell College Student Handbook* unless that infraction involves lying, cheating, and/or stealing.

The basic accountability standards for the Honor Code include the first violation resulting in an appropriate penalty and the second violation may result in notation of the violation on the academic transcript, suspension or dismissal from the College. In certain cases, the first violation may also result *in suspension or dismissal if the violation* is determined to be egregious or accompanied by other acts of misconduct addressed in the Student Handbook. Violations will be kept separate in the two areas of academics and student life so, for instance, a student with one academic violation who then commits a Standard of Conduct violation will not be considered to have a second violation for the purposes of suspension/expulsion.

The Honor Council shall consider all cases involving second violations of the Honor Code. The Honor Council will be required to adhere to all due process rights outlined in the Student Handbook. The Council itself is the body that will adjudicate the alleged Honor Code violation, hear the arguments for both sides, determine guilt or innocence, and determine appropriate sanction(s). The sanction for a second offense may be notation of the violation on the academic transcript, suspension or dismissal from the College.

It is the Honor Council's responsibility to determine by two-thirds majority vote whether there is a preponderance of evidence that the student(s) in question has committed a violation of the Honor Code. If the student is found responsible for violating the Honor Code, the Council's responsibilities extend to determining what sanction(s) will be imposed. This sanctioning phase of deliberation requires only a simple majority vote of members present.

### B. Basic Rules of Honor Council Proceedings

1. All Honor Council proceedings are closed to the public.
2. In order for a hearing to take place, a quorum of council members (four students and one faculty/staff) must be present to call the hearing to order.
3. The student charged with violation of the Honor Code is allowed to have an advisor present during the hearing. The advisor is not permitted to address the Honor Council unless recognized by the Chairperson. Advisors are not guaranteed the right to speak during a hearing; instead, the right to speak is granted by the Chairperson based upon the circumstances of the hearing. All participants must be recognized by the Chairperson before they are allowed to speak or ask questions.
4. Students charged with violating the Honor Code have the right to have their case heard by the Honor Council within a reasonable period of time. However, investigations into an alleged incident do take time to complete. The Honor Council reserves the right to hear cases only after a thorough investigation of the matter is concluded.
5. It is critical that all participants and members of the Honor Council understand that this is an educational disciplinary body. Civil and criminal court comparisons are not accurate and should not be made with respect to this process.

6. If a student charged with an alleged violation of the Honor Code fails to appear before the Honor Council for any reason, after being notified of the hearing date, time and location, the Honor Council may proceed with the hearing and come to a resolution/decision without the charged student being present.

### **III. Honor Council Composition and Member Responsibilities**

- A. Honor Council Membership Rules:
  1. Honor Council members will be chosen from an available pool of appropriately trained students, faculty, and staff. In order to insure that the College maintains proper “institutional memory” of the Honor Council, at least one faculty or staff member from the previous year will be available to serve the following year.
  2. Eligibility: Students serving on the Honor Council must meet the following eligibility requirements.
    - a) Student members must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher.
    - b) Student members must be classified as a full-time (12 credit hours) student at William Jewell College.
    - c) Student members must be in good standing with the College.
    - d) Student membership requires a minimum commitment of one academic year and allows student members to serve a maximum of two years.
    - e) Student members are required to attend all training sessions and hearings, if selected from the pool for a hearing.
- B. The Honor Council will be comprised of seven (7) voting members as follows:
  1. Honor Council Chairperson.
    - a. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson will be selected by the President of the College from the pool of students approved to serve on the Honor Council. The Vice-Chairperson shall serve if the Chairperson is unavailable. The Chairperson of the Honor Council is responsible for leading the proceedings and serves as a regular voting member of the Honor Council.
    - b. Responsibilities of the Honor Council Chairperson include:
      - 1) administer and oversee the hearing process
      - 2) start the hearing and oversee the orderly and fair progression of the process
      - 3) recognize any person wishing to address the Honor Council during a hearing, the Chairperson does not have to recognize anyone within a hearing and serves as the authority to decide who speaks when and for what reason(s)
      - 4) is an active member of the Honor Council, may ask questions, and is a voting member
      - 5) responsible for meeting with the appropriate Vice President to prepare for each hearing
      - 6) responsible for relating relevant events of the proceedings at a later date if necessary (i.e., appellate hearings).
  2. Other Members of the Honor Council
    - a) In addition to the Chairperson, the Honor Council will be comprised of six (6) other voting members. The membership will include four (4) students and two (2) faculty/staff. Student members will be nominated by Student Senate, confirmed for eligibility by the Office of Student Affairs and approved for service by the Office of the

President. The faculty members will be nominated by the Faculty Council and will be approved for service on this council by the Office of the President. Staff membership will be appointed by the Office of the President, working in conjunction with the Office of Student Affairs and the Provost of the College.

- b) Responsibilities of Honor Council members (including the Chairperson) include:
- 1) possess knowledge of the WJC Community Standards and Policies as outlined within the Student Handbook
  - 2) attend all scheduled training sessions and meetings of the Honor Council
  - 3) must sign a confidentiality statement prior to serving on the Honor Council, if confidentiality is broken, the member will be subject to dismissal and possible disciplinary action
  - 4) remove themselves from a hearing if they feel they cannot work with the case in an unbiased manner
  - 5) reading all reports and supporting documentation/evidence regarding the case
  - 6) attentively listen to all parties involved in the case
  - 7) understand the educational philosophy of the College's student judiciary processes and implement these principles through all decisions
  - 8) render all decisions as to whether a violation of the College's Honor Code occurred and recommend appropriate sanctions for violations
  - 9) maintain confidentiality of the hearing process with the utmost of seriousness and importance; information should not be disclosed to any person, other than a Honor Council member participating in the hearing or College staff designated as participants in the process, including deliberation and the votes of individual members

C. Honor Council Advisor. In addition to the seven voting members, the Dean of Students will serve as advisor to the Honor Council as an Ex-Officio non-voting member. The Honor Council Advisor's role is to assemble the necessary resources for hearings and to provide technical and procedural advice, along with historical precedence on past disciplinary matters. The Dean of Students will provide full disclosure to the Honor Council of any rulings the Dean of Students may have made in the case as part of the background information on the case.

- D. Terms for member removal from the Honor Council
1. failure to comply with any of the responsibilities required of a member
  2. failure to adhere to all college policies
  3. alleged College policy violations by Honor Council members will have their case heard through the defined due process review system outlined by College policy
  4. the Vice President of Student Affairs and the Dean of the College/Vice President for Academic Affairs will review final results of the dues process review and determine whether the member in question is permitted to continue serving on the Honor Council

#### **IV. Notification and Processing of Charges**

- A. Upon discovering a possible violation of the Honor Code, the suspecting faculty/staff member will immediately inform the appropriate Vice President, who will confirm whether the student has had previous violations of the Honor Code.

B. If a suspecting faculty/staff member determines, through a preponderance of the evidence, there is reason to believe a violation has occurred, the faculty member will inform the student and appropriate Vice President of the alleged violation. The faculty/staff member will ask the student to meet and discuss the situation. If the student does not respond after a reasonable attempt has been made to meet, the refusal to meet will be considered an admission of guilt, allowing the faculty/staff member to proceed with appropriate action.

C. If it is a student's first alleged violation and the student indicates a willingness to accept responsibility, the student may plead guilty and have their disciplinary case concluded by the faculty member (on academic issues)/student affairs staff member (non-academic issues). A student who has accepted responsibility and is sanctioned by the suspecting faculty/staff member may choose to have their case heard by the Honor Council, but only to contest the penalty.

D. If an alleged first violation is deemed egregious in nature by the reporting faculty/staff member and appropriate Vice President, the student's case may be referred directly to the Honor Council for review.

E. The Honor Council shall hear all cases involving alleged second offenses of Honor Code.

F. The Provost shall notify the charged student in writing of any charges requiring an Honor Council session involving Academic Affairs; the Dean of Students will make the same notifications in a case involving Student Affairs.

G. Students will be partly suspended (able only to attend academic-related activities, see VI.B.2) and will not be in good standing until the Honor Council rules on their case. The student will not be allowed to withdraw from the course in order to avoid an Honor Code process. Should a student withdraw from the College prior to adjudication of an alleged Honor Code violation, William Jewell will not release any transcript or other academic information until adjudication is completed.

## **V. Hearings of the Honor Council**

### **A. Pre-Hearing Meeting(s)**

1. Students charged with violation of the Honor Code can request to meet with the Honor Council Advisor to review the charges, ask questions about the Honor Council process, and seek advice.
2. The charged student should be a part of any pre-hearing meetings.
3. Some cases, based upon the circumstances, may require the Chairperson to be a part of pre-hearing discussions. If that need arises, the Honor Council Advisor will call such a meeting in which all compelled parties must attend.

### **B. Executive Session (Excludes the student charged with violating the Honor Code)**

1. The Chairperson will remind all Honor Council members of their commitment to confidentiality and will ask all members to sign a statement of confidentiality.
2. The Honor Council will read through all documentation related to the case including the document outlining charges, incident report(s), and any other supporting documentation.

3. Any members of the Honor Council who feel they are unable to hear the case based on the information presented during executive session should excuse themselves at this time.
4. During this time, the student charged with violating the Honor Code will be provided the same documentation that the Honor Council is reviewing. The student charged will be given as much time as they need to review the documentation.

C. The Hearing (All Participants)

1. The Chairperson will call the hearing to order.
2. Everyone present will be introduced.
3. The philosophy and role of the Honor Council, as well as the Honor Code, will be explained.
4. The Chairperson will ask the faculty/staff member bringing forward the allegation to present the formal charges and any other pertinent information related to the charges to the entire Honor Council.
5. The Chairperson will ask the student charged with violating the Honor Code to make a statement and/or present evidence on his/her behalf. In some cases the student may accept responsibility for the charges. In this event, the Honor Council may allow the student to propose a sanction(s) for consideration by the Honor Council.
6. The Chairperson will then open the hearing up for Honor Council members to ask questions. The Chairperson may ask questions of anyone in the room.
7. Witnesses may be brought forward.
8. If the student charged has questions of any witnesses, the student must run all questions through the Chairperson. The Chairperson may rule questions or arguments are not relevant or not appropriate.
9. The student charged will be afforded a final opportunity to make a closing statement.
10. After all questions and statements have been completed, the Chairperson concludes the hearing and will excuse everyone except for the Honor Council members for the deliberation/executive session phase of the hearing. The Chair may consult with the Honor Council Advisor.

D. Deliberation/Executive Session (Honor Council Members)

1. The Honor Council will decide whether to convict or acquit students in an Honor Code case.
2. The Honor Council may ask to speak to individual participants again, including the student charged, witnesses, or the faculty/staff member bringing forth the allegation.
3. The Honor Council has the right to review the charged student's disciplinary record as part of any deliberation.
4. The Honor Council will then decide guilt or innocence based on the preponderance of the evidence. Guilt requires a 2/3 majority vote of the members present. The vote's outcome shall be noted in the record of the proceedings.
5. If the student charged is found to have not violated the Honor Code, the hearing will be adjourned by the Chairperson and the student charged will be notified of the decision within a reasonable amount of time (24 to 48 hours).
6. If the student charged is determined to be in violation of the Honor Code, the Honor Council will then deliberate on appropriate sanctions. Final sanctions imposed by the Honor Council will require a simple majority vote of the members present. Once sanctions have been determined, the Honor Council will determine appropriate language to be used in the written findings/ruling to the student. The Honor Council Advisor will draft the written findings/ruling and the document will be signed by the Chairperson and one of the faculty members hearing the case.

7. The Chairpersons will adjourn the hearing.

E. Post-Hearing

1. The student charged will be notified by the Chairperson and the Honor Council Advisor of the Honor Council's decision within a reasonable amount of time (24 to 48 hours).
2. The decision of the Honor Council is communicated to the student charged in writing and signed by the Chairperson. If found responsible, the letter will also explain, in detail, any sanctions.
3. The student charged will also be told what the appellate process is and how to proceed with an appeal of the Honor Council decision, if they deem that necessary.
4. All records of the hearing will be kept on file by the appropriate Vice President.

VI. Sanctions

A. First Offense.

1. In first academic offenses, the faculty member may impose a penalty such as failing the assignment or failing the course, as specified in the course syllabus. The student will not be allowed to withdraw from the course in order to avoid an Honor Code process. The faculty member shall report any action and penalty to their relevant supervisor (e.g., department chair or associate dean) and to the Dean of the College.
2. In first student life offenses, the student will go through the disciplinary process outlined in the student handbook. The student will be notified verbally as well as in writing of their first honor code violation. The Dean of Students will receive a copy of the letter that will include any sanctions given to the student through this process.

B. Honor Council Sanctions: If the Honor Council finds a student responsible for charges, it may impose the following sanctions:

1. Temporary or Permanent Notation: A notation on the student's William Jewell College academic transcript noting conviction of an Honor Code offense. A temporary notation will remain on the transcript until graduation, unless otherwise stated by the Honor Council.
2. Partial Suspension: A suspension of the student's normal rights to participate in extra-curricular, co-curricular, and other non-academic activities. The student may continue to live in College housing. The student will continue to attend classes and may use academic resources. The student will not be in good standing during the suspension.
3. Full Suspension: A formal separation of the student (without refund) from WJC during a specific period of time. The period of suspension can range from one semester to an indefinite period of time. The student will not be in good standing during the suspension.
4. Dismissal: Permanent separation of the student from WJC. Expulsion is permanently noted on the student's William Jewell transcripts.
5. Suspensions or dismissal will result in notation on the student's transcript. If a suspended student later wishes to return as a matriculated student to the College, the student may petition for readmission to the college. Suspended students returning to Jewell and completing a degree will have the notation of suspension expunged from their transcript. If a student suspended for an Honor Code violation is re-admitted and

is found to be in violation of a subsequent Honor Code violation, the student will be permanently dismissed from the College.

## **VII. Appellate Review**

- A. The accused student has the right to appeal any disciplinary decision by any disciplinary body (Honor Council, College Conduct Committee, informal adjudication by Student Affairs staff), for any reason (i.e. they can appeal the verdict or the sanctions resulting from the verdict), as outlined in the Student Handbook.
- B. Once the student charged has been notified of the Honor Council's decision, the student charged must then express in writing the intent to formally appeal the decision within 48 hours after the initial decision is delivered (verbally or written, whichever is first). The student must submit an appeal in writing to the appropriate Vice President outlining specific grounds for the appeal. The written appeal must be submitted within 48 hours of indicating the intent to appeal.
- C. Students appealing an Honor Council ruling will have their appeal heard by a three-administrator appellate review panel consisting of the Dean of the College/Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Vice President for Enrollment and Student Affairs, and the College President. Reviewed appeals will take into consideration a wide-range of issues including, but not limited to, the student's due process rights, how the hearing was conducted, and clear and compelling evidence of unfairness.
- D. The reviewing appellate panel may request additional information and/or request a meeting with the student charged, the Chairperson, the entire Honor Council, and/or the faculty/staff member bringing forth the charges to discuss the appeal. The reviewing appellate is not under obligation to meet with the parties involved in the case. The appellate may make the decision to proceed on the appeal without having an additional hearing and has the authority and autonomy to uphold the decision, reverse the decision all together, or change the decision by making the decision/sanctions either more or less severe. The reviewing appellate will deliver a final written decision related to the appeal to the student charged, the appropriate Vice President, and the Honor Council.
- E. Once appeal procedures have begun, the student will be on partial suspension (see VI.B.2) and not in good standing, pending action by the appellate review panel.