UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA HONOR SYSTEM

HANDBOOK FOR FACULTY MEMBERS AND TEACHING ASSISTANTS
August 2015

Dear Fellow Member of the Faculty,

We are pleased to introduce the latest version of the Honor Handbook, prepared by the Honor Committee, to help you understand the Honor System at the University of Virginia.

Professor Henry St. George Tucker introduced the Honor pledge in 1842, and the Honor System has been one of the University’s defining traditions ever since. The University Faculty has enjoyed the benefits of a system that advances the University’s academic mission by fostering a culture of integrity among the student body. We find that students at the University learn and grow more effectively because they are trusted. You, in turn, can expect to benefit from teaching in a culture of integrity and mutual respect – the Community of Trust, as it is commonly called.

While the Honor System is entirely student run, faculty members play a critical role in the System. We encourage you to fulfill your role as a member of the Community of Trust by reviewing the materials presented here and giving the Honor System your full support and trust.

We further encourage interested faculty to join and engage with the Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) which serves as a liaison between the faculty and the Honor System.

With warm regards,

Nina J. Solenski
Chair, 2015-2016

Margaret F. Riley
Chair-Elect

Joe Garofalo
Immediate Past Chair
Dear New Faculty Member,

My name is Katherine Kamis and I am the chair of the Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) for the 2015-2016 academic year. I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to join the Faculty Advisory Committee. Traditionally, FAC has served as a forum for the University’s faculty to participate in discussions with other faculty and students on how to further improve the Honor System for the University community. For the Honor Committee, FAC serves as an invaluable resource, providing key insight on how to ensure the continued effectiveness of the Honor System.

While the Honor System at the University of Virginia is student-run, each faculty member serves an integral role within that system. The Committee values the continued support and input of the University’s entire faculty. The Faculty Advisory Committee provides crucial feedback to the Committee on various ways to improve Honor at U.Va. In fact, many recent improvements in case processing and student fairness, including the Informed Retraction, stemmed from FAC discussions.

As a new faculty member, you can serve an important role on the Committee. We are always seeking new perspectives and ideas on ways to continue to improve our Community of Trust. Once again, I invite and encourage you to participate in future FAC meetings and all Honor-related activities around grounds. If you have any interest in contributing to the Faculty Advisory Committee, please contact me at kck5cv@virginia.edu. Thank you and welcome to the University of Virginia.

Sincerely,

Katherine Kamis
Chair, Faculty Advisory Committee
**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This document is your primary source for information about the workings of the Honor System at the University of Virginia. The following is a very brief overview of the topics covered herein. For further information regarding any topic, please consult the corresponding section of this handbook, or you can refer to www.virginia.edu/honor under the “About” tab. You can also call the Honor Committee offices at any time at (434) 924-7602.

- The University’s Honor System was founded in 1842 and is the oldest entirely student-run honor system in the country. 27 students are elected by the student body from each of the University’s 12 schools to serve on the Honor Committee for a yearlong term. Approximately 100 students selected through an application process also serve in supporting roles as Educators, Advisors, and Investigators and Hearing Advocates.

- An Honor Offense is defined as any Act of Lying, Cheating, or Stealing, where such act was committed with Knowledge, and is Significant.

- Although the Honor System is student-run, faculty members have a very important role within the System. The majority of cases handled by the Committee are cheating cases brought to the System by a faculty member or teaching assistant.

- If you think you may have witnessed an Honor offense or discovered cheating in your class, talk to an Honor Advisor or Committee Representative by calling (434) 924-7602, or contact the Committee through its web site at www.virginia.edu/honor. Discussing the matter with an Honor Advisor or Committee Representative is confidential and in no way binds you to report an Honor case.

- Honor cases are investigated and adjudicated by members of the student body. Detailed information about the case process is available beginning on page 10.

- Students found guilty of an Honor offense are permanently dismissed from the University, and those who have graduated from the University are subject to degree revocation by the General Faculty. Dismissed students, however, can and frequently do receive aid in their transfer to another institution from the Vice President and Chief Student Affairs Officer.

- Students who believe they may have committed an Honor Offense can admit to that offense without suffering the penalty of expulsion by filing a valid and timely Conscientious Retraction (CR). A CR must be filed before a student has any reason to believe he or she may be under suspicion for committing the offense.

- Students who have been reported for an Honor Offense have the ability to admit such offense, file an Informed Retraction (IR) and take a two-semester Honor Leave of Absence, akin to an academic suspension. An IR must be filed within seven days of being notified about the Honor report by the Honor Committee.
• Faculty members interested in becoming directly involved with the Honor System are encouraged to join the Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC). FAC is a subcommittee of the Honor Committee consisting of students and faculty who serve as a liaison between the faculty and the Honor System.

• Honor is a core value of the University of Virginia, an integral part of its educational mission, and the foundation of the student experience. We sincerely hope you will give the Honor System your full support.

**WHY SHOULD I SUPPORT THE HONOR SYSTEM?**

“...we believe that we have here one of the finest of all honor systems—a system which is the most precious single possession of this institution.”

—Virginius Dabney
Author, Professor

“...we assert that, without honor, little else is worthwhile.”

—Larry J. Sabato
Professor of Politics

An education at the University of Virginia should prepare students to be thoughtful and engaged citizens of world. Alongside academic excellence, the University of Virginia strives to instill the values of honesty, integrity, and responsibility among the students who matriculate here. This is a core value of the institution and a key element of U.Va.'s mission. The Honor System exists to further that end by facilitating a culture of unwavering and unhesitating trust—the Community of Trust.

The Honor System is one of the University's most cherished institutions and its continued vitality depends largely on the support and engagement of the faculty. Both the Honor Committee and the faculty share the same goal: to ensure that U.Va. students conduct themselves with integrity, particularly in the classroom.

You will note that students deeply value the trust placed in them under the Honor System and can be counted on to comport themselves with integrity. We hope as a result you find that your experience teaching at U.Va. is a more pleasant one and your relationship with your students more positive and productive as a function of your trust in them.

Research suggests that U.Va. enjoys rates of cheating far below that of peer institutions. According to the Honor Committee Student Survey of 2012, only 5% of surveyed students reported that they believe they have committed an act of lying, cheating, or stealing. Various research surveys across institutions have found that 43%-75% of students admit to cheating alone (results seem to vary depending on how cheating is defined).

**HISTORY**

In 1842, the Honor System at the University arose as an attempt to ease tensions between the faculty and the student body. In order to bring about better relations between students
and faculty, Henry St. George Tucker, Professor of American Law, offered this resolution on July 4, 1842:

Resolved that in all future examinations... each candidate shall attach to the written answers... a certificate of the following words: I, A.B., do hereby certify on my honor that I have derived no assistance during the time of this examination from any source whatever.

Students responded so enthusiastically to a code of ethical standards in the classroom that they broadened its scope and assumed all responsibility for the System. In its beginning, the Honor Code became associated with the concept of the Southern Gentleman. During this period, no formal procedures existed—Honor violations were handled by a group of interested students or by the student body as a whole.

The Honor System and Honor Committee were first formally institutionalized in the early twentieth century. The Honor System was officially established in 1909 and was revised in the following years. During the early 1970s, the Honor Committee instituted the first reforms to govern a much larger and increasingly diverse student body. The Committee limited the scope of the System to Honor violations committed within the boundaries of Charlottesville and Albemarle County, or wherever a student represents him or herself as a student of the University of Virginia.

In 1977, the student body ratified the first Constitution of the Honor System, and since that time, students have occasionally amended this Constitution by popular vote. Decisions regarding the Honor System are marked by robust dialogue amongst the student body. Since its beginnings, the Honor System has been completely student-run. The ultimate authority under which the Honor Committee operates is a direct delegation from the Rector and Board of Visitors of the University, which is itself empowered by the Commonwealth of Virginia.

**PHILOSOPHY**

The central purpose of the Honor System is to sustain and protect a Community of Trust in which students can enjoy the freedom to develop their intellectual and personal potential. The concept of an honor system implies that students commit themselves to the pursuit of truth. Dishonest means are incompatible with this pursuit.

The System does not exist to punish students who commit Honor offenses. Instead, it is a positive compact among students, committing them to honor and integrity on the one hand, and allowing them certain privileges on the other.

**The Student System:**

The Honor System embodies Mr. Jefferson’s ideals of self-governance: the Honor System is entirely student run. The system is administered by the Honor Committee, which is composed of students elected from each school at the University. Although no faculty member or administrator is directly involved in the Honor System, the Honor Committee does respond to faculty input through its Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC). The Honor
Committee also regularly consults with the Special Assistant to the Honor Committee, the
Vice President and Chief Student Affairs Officer, the Honor Committee Legal Advisor, and
the Office of the General Counsel.

The Single Sanction:

If a student knowingly commits a significant act of lying, cheating, or stealing, he or she
breaches the trust of the entire community. While students, by repeated referenda, have
affirmed permanent dismissal from the University as the sanction for Honor offenses, they
will have the opportunity again this year to affirm or change this sanction. While this is an
exacting standard, students have chosen to live by it and it remains a perennial topic of
debate and conversation amongst the student body. The Vice President and Chief Student
Affairs Officer aids many students who are dismissed from the University in transferring to
another institution.

WHO ADMINISTER THE HONOR SYSTEM?

The Honor Committee administers the Honor System under direct delegation of authority
from the University’s Board of Visitors. The 27-member Honor Committee is comprised of
two elected Representatives from each of the twelve schools of the University, except the
College of Arts and Sciences, which elects five representatives. A new group of
representatives is elected each spring. With the help of over 100 support officers, the Honor
Committee conducts Honor investigations and hearings, disseminates information on the
Honor System to new students and faculty, and establishes special programs and policies for
the maintenance of the System from year to year.

The Honor Committee also maintains several standing sub-committees:

—The Executive Committee, which consists of the Chair and the four Vice Chairs,
is responsible for the daily operation of the Honor Committee.

—The Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) is chaired by an elected Honor
Committee representative and is made up of faculty from across the University. FAC
serves as an advisory body to the Honor Committee—see page 6 for more detailed
information.

—The Community Relations and Diversity Advisory Committee (CRDAC) advises
the Honor Committee on its practices in regards to diversity. CRDAC is chaired by
the Vice Chair for Community Relations and is comprised of representatives from
different student groups.

—The Sub-Committee on Policies and Procedures exists to critically examine the
common procedures and written by-laws of the Honor Committee in order to
recommend changes when necessary. Past projects for this sub-committee have
included reforms to recruitment rubrics and juror feedback forms and an analysis of
the effectiveness of the Informed Retraction.
From time to time, the Honor Committee may create ad hoc committees to focus on special issues. These have included the single sanction, reducing the adversarial nature of hearing proceedings, merchant issues, graduate outreach, and more.

The Honor Committee is also aided in its operation by over 100 Support Officers:

—“Honor Advisors” are assigned to both investigated students and reporters. They serve as emotional support, and guide students and those who report Honor cases through the process.

—“Honor Investigators” serve as the impartial fact-finders in Honor cases.

—“Hearing Advocates” represent the Community of Trust and assist the accused student in the event of a hearing.

—“Honor Educators” are charged with educating the University community with regards to the Honor System.

**WHAT IS THE FACULTY ADVISORY COMMITTEE?**

The Honor Committee recognizes that the continuing vitality of the Honor System depends in large part on faculty support. Since faculty members are often best positioned to discover potential Honor offenses, the majority of reporters of Honor cases are faculty members and teaching assistants. In an effort to respond to faculty concerns, the Honor Committee created its Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) as a means for faculty input with regard to the Honor System. At regular FAC meetings, faculty and Honor Committee members discuss issues of Honor Committee procedures and policy. Ideas for many changes to the system, including some constitutional referenda, originated in FAC meetings.

FAC serves as a liaison for the faculty to voice their concerns and opinions to the Honor Committee. It is a body consisting of volunteer faculty and students currently involved with the Honor System. FAC meetings occur about once a month, and any faculty member is invited to join the Committee. The contact information of the current FAC Chair and a list of FAC members are available at the Honor website (www.virginia.edu/honor/standing-sub-committees/) if you are interested in getting involved in FAC or speaking with one of your colleagues.

**WHAT HAS CHANGED IN THE HONOR SYSTEM RECENTLY?**

Although the Honor System is one of Virginia's oldest traditions, the System has evolved to keep pace with contemporary standards.

As a result, the Honor System is now more professional, fair, and legally sound than ever before. The Honor Committee is aided by a full-time Special Assistant who ensures institutional memory between Committees, ensures adequate training for Committee members and support officers, and aids the Committee in its day-to-day operations.
The Honor Committee is also much more efficient in its case processing today than in years past. The investigation of an alleged Honor offense now takes about three weeks, except in special circumstances. In cases where the student elects to file an Informed Retraction, the case will be closed in only one week. In the event that a full investigation and hearing do occur, the entire process is generally completed in one to three months. This has been aided by an altering of the investigation procedures, and by enacting greater timeline restrictions on all parties involved.

In the spring of 2010, the student body approved a constitutional referendum establishing more detailed public summaries of Honor Hearings. While student confidentiality remains a paramount priority, more facts regarding Honor Hearings will be released to better inform the student body as to the workings of the Committee. Public summaries are published in The Cavalier Daily and in a regular Honor Committee email newsletter.

In the Spring of 2013, the student body approved the Informed Retraction, a right now afforded all students under the Honor Committee Constitution. The Informed Retraction has assuaged many concerns about the severity of the Honor System by allowing students to take responsibility for their actions, learn from mistakes, and ultimately be forgiven once certain amends have been made. See below for a more detailed explanation of the IR.

This year we will once again consider major changes to the Honor System following the passing of three referenda which proposed changes to the Honor Committee's constitution and a reexamination of the system's single sanction. This year, the Committee will engage with the student body in considering multi-sanction system options.

**WHAT IS A CONSCIENTIOUS RETRACTION?**

A privilege afforded to every student under the Honor System, a Conscientious Retraction (CR) allows a student who has committed a dishonest act to admit his actions and make amends, if applicable, without actually leaving the Community of Trust. This admission, however, must be submitted before the student has reason to believe that his actions have come under suspicion. A student with the integrity and courage to come forward with a timely, good faith retraction has thereby reaffirmed his personal commitment to honor and will be allowed to remain within the community.

If a student approaches you about having committed a dishonorable act, and the student does not have any reason to believe he is under suspicion, you should encourage the student to see an Honor Advisor as soon as possible to file a Conscientious Retraction. A student may also approach you about making amends for a dishonorable act, which is a requirement for filing a retraction. You may ask the student to re-do the assignment, give the student a zero for the assignment in question, or require the student to complete additional work on the topic. It is your decision. You will be asked to sign the retraction letter to show that you and the student have discussed the matter and agreed upon a solution.

Upon submission to the Honor Committee, the Conscientious Retraction will be reviewed for completeness by the Vice Chair for Investigations and will be returned to the student for changes, if necessary. The completed CR will then be stored in a confidential Honor
Committee file. The CR will only be examined again if an investigation pertaining to the dishonorable incident is reported.

**WHAT IS AN INFORMED RETRACTION?**

A right afforded to every student under the Honor System, an Informed Retraction allows a student who has been reported for an Honor Offense to admit his or her actions once he or she is made aware that a report has been filed. If you choose to file a report, you will be asked some initial questions regarding the alleged Honor Offense. Your answers to these questions will be provided to the reported student, along with a letter outlining the Honor process. Once the student has these materials, he or she will have seven days to decide whether or not to file an Informed Retraction.

If the student elects to file an Informed Retraction, he or she will need to make amends for the act in question. This is accomplished in the following ways:

1. The student will admit wrongdoing to all affected parties, presumably including you, the reporter, and agree to accept any consequences for those actions, much like with a Conscientious Retraction. You will likely be asked to sign the Informed Retraction Form to show that you have discussed the matter with the student and agreed upon the appropriate amends.

2. The student will agree to take a two-semester Honor Leave of Absence from the University in order to make amends to the Community of Trust as a whole. During this time, the student will have the notation “Honor Leave of Absence” on his or her transcript. Such notation is removed after the suspension is complete, and the student is permitted to re-enroll.

It is important to note that in these cases, the Honor Leave of Absence begins the semester following the submission of the Informed Retraction, and therefore the student may still remain enrolled during the semester in which the Honor Offense occurred.

**WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I SUSPECT AN HONOR OFFENSE?**

Deciding whether or not to report an Honor case against a student can be very difficult, as it seems to pit values of compassion against those of fairness and justice. It is important to remember, however, that you need not make this decision alone. Anyone who suspects a student has committed an Honor offense should speak with an Honor Advisor or a member of the Honor Committee. This consultation is strictly confidential and does not create an obligation to report a case. A trained Honor Advisor or Honor Committee member can give more information about the process and answer any questions related to a possible report.

After discussing the matter with an Advisor or Committee member, if you believe that an Honor offense has occurred, the Advisor or Committee member can formally begin the process by filling out a case status form with the information that you provide. Once a case has been reported and submitted to the Vice Chair for Investigations, it will be fully investigated by the Committee and cannot be rescinded.
We hope that you will make the commitment to report Honor offenses to the Committee. By reporting a case to the Honor Committee, you ensure that each student is treated equally and fairly by the system under which he or she has elected to live. The Honor System is equipped to investigate and adjudicate alleged Honor violations thoroughly, efficiently, and fairly.

**WHAT SHOULD I DO AFTER I REPORT A CASE?**

After reporting a case, it might be helpful to take down some notes about the offense in question. These notes should include as much information as possible about what made you suspect the offense, how you discovered it, any sources you may have used to confirm your suspicions, etc. Include any useful background or contextual information as well as the steps you took leading up to your decision to report the case. This will provide a contemporaneous reference for your later statement to the Honor investigators.

It is also important to retain any physical evidence you might have regarding the offense. This may mean not returning original papers or assignments to the student(s) in question. Your Honor Advisor will set up a meeting with to collect any evidence and copies of your notes, in the event that the student elects not to file an Informed Retraction. In order to most effectively investigate the case, the Committee needs all original documents potentially relevant to the investigation. If you would like this documentation returned at the end of the proceedings, just let your Honor Advisor know.

**WHAT SHOULD I TELL THE STUDENT REGARDING THE CASE REPORT?**

The Honor Committee recommends that you do *not* confront the student about the alleged offense until necessary. Alerting the student that he or she is under suspicion for committing an Honor Offense removes the student's ability to file a Conscientious Retraction (CR).

If the student asks you about the case after you have reported the investigation, you should tell the student that any questions he or she has related to the investigation should be directed to his or her Honor Advisor, or the student can call the Honor offices directly at (434) 924-7602.

**WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I REPORT A CASE?**

Shortly after the case report, an investigation will commence.

*Investigation:*

During the investigation stage, two Honor Investigators are assigned to the case as impartial fact finders. Investigators interview the reporter, the investigated student and any other person who might have relevant information. They will also interview both the reporter and the investigated student again to allow them the opportunity to respond to statements made by the other party. They then prepare a written transcript of all the interviews and collect any relevant evidence and compile them into the Investigative Log. When the investigation is completed, the case moves to an Investigative Panel.
Informed Retraction:

Once the Honor Investigators have met with you and collected your initial testimony, the investigation will pause for a period of seven days. During this time, the Advisor for the student will meet with the student, provide him or her with the relevant information necessary to understand the report, and the student will have seven days to decide whether or not to file an Informed Retraction, admitting to the offense in question, and accepting the consequence of an academic suspension, or “Honor Leave of Absence” to last for two full academic semesters. During the period of time when a student is deciding whether or not to file an Informed Retraction, no action is required on your part. If the student elects to file an Informed Retraction, you will be notified of this, and the student’s leave of absence will commence at the start of the following semester. If the student elects not to file an Informed Retraction, the investigation continues, and the remaining relevant information is collected and compiled for the Investigative Panel.

Investigative Panel:

The Investigative Panel, commonly called the “I-Panel,” is a rotating panel comprised of three Honor Committee members. The I-Panel members will review the evidence and testimony contained within the Investigative Log and decide whether an Honor offense more likely than not occurred. If the I-Panel concludes that it is more likely than not that an offense occurred, the student is formally accused of committing an Honor offense. If the I-Panel does not find enough evidence to make a formal accusation, the case is dropped, and the matter is considered closed.

Psychological Evaluation Panel:

Students who believe that a mental disease or disorder may have contributed to the commission of an Honor offense may request a hearing before a Psychological Evaluation Panel convened for this purpose. Panels are chosen by the Vice President and Chief Student Affairs Officer. The Honor Committee refers such cases to the Vice President because it believes that judgments about the psychological status of students require professional resources.

Hearing:

At the hearing, the accused student is presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. A member of the Honor Committee serves as the Chair of the Hearing to ensure that the hearing runs smoothly and in accordance with Honor procedures. The Hearing Chair also serves as a resource for members of the student panel who may not be familiar with the Honor process. The student panel hears from witnesses and reviews all the evidence. Two Honor Hearing Advocates act as oral advocates for the Community of Trust, and two other Honor Hearing Advocates act as oral advocates for the accused student. Hearing Advocates have the opportunity to question witnesses on behalf of the student or the reporter of the case, as well as make a closing statement at the end of the hearing.
Unlike the jury in a criminal trial, the student panelists in an Honor Hearing are expected to take a leading role in developing the line of questioning at hearing. The student panel asks the first and final questions, and also determines whether or not to call back witnesses for additional testimony.

Once all witnesses have testified and Hearing Advocates give their closing statements, the student panel recesses for deliberations. In order to convict a student of an Honor offence, four-fifths of the student panel must agree that the student committed an act of lying, cheating, or stealing, and that such Act (any specific event or occurrence of lying, cheating, or stealing) was committed with Knowledge. Knowledge shall mean, with respect to a particular Act, that the actor knew, or a reasonable University of Virginia student should have known, that the Act in question might be considered an Honor Offense. One-half of the student panel must further agree that the offense was Significant. Significance shall mean, with respect to a particular Act, that open toleration of such Act would be inconsistent with the Community of Trust. If the student panel votes on this basis that Act, Knowledge, and Significance were proven beyond a reasonable doubt, the student is found guilty of an Honor offense. If the student panel finds the student not guilty, all documentation regarding the case is destroyed and the matter is considered closed. Original papers or assignments, however, can be returned to you through your Advisor.

Students convicted of an Honor offense at a hearing may appeal the decision against them on the basis of “new evidence” or for “good cause” in order to raise issues of fairness in the underlying proceedings. Though it does not happen often, a reporter may be asked to participate in post-hearing proceedings or in a second hearing if one is deemed to be necessary.

The Single Sanction:

If a student is found guilty at an Honor hearing, or chooses to leave the University admitting guilt to an Honor offense, that student is dismissed from the University permanently. A student dismissed under this sanction cannot return to the University in any capacity. The notation “Enrollment Discontinued” is placed on the student’s transcript to record the dismissal, though there is no outward indication that the dismissal resulted from an Honor offense.

As anyone may report an Honor investigation within two years of the alleged offense, cases can be reported against students who have already graduated from the University. If such a student chooses to leave the University admitting guilt, or is found guilty at an Honor hearing, the Honor Committee will refer the matter to the General Faculty for degree revocation proceedings.

**WHY IS EXPULSION THE ONLY SANCTION?**

Since the inception of the Honor System, students have maintained only one sanction for committing an Honor offense: permanent dismissal from the University. The single sanction encapsulates our uncompromising commitment to honesty and integrity and provides for both philosophical and practical consistency within the System. All students who are found
guilty of a significant act of lying, cheating, or stealing, where such act is committed with knowledge, must leave the Community of Trust in order to preserve that community for those who live by the Honor Code. Furthermore, the student body has consistently supported the sanction in multiple referenda. Over the past 30 years, referenda to change the sanction have been introduced by students roughly every 4-5 years. Students have upheld the sanction in every vote. It is a standard that students have chosen for themselves, and have reaffirmed again and again.

All students are aware that the only sanction for an Honor offense is expulsion: every student signs a statement of support of the Honor System on his or her application for admission. Further, all students are educated about the Honor System and its tenets when they arrive on Grounds through educational sessions during both summer and fall orientations. Educational sessions are also held with graduate students through their respective schools.

The single sanction is not intended to punish students. The primary objective of the sanction is the preservation of the Community of Trust. Students who have violated the trust of the community can no longer receive its benefits. Since it is not meant to punish students, the Vice President and Chief Student Affairs Officer may assist students who have been convicted of an Honor offense and who wish to transfer to another school. She will not, however, assist students who will not be truthful to their new institution about the reason for their dismissal. The University has been very successful in helping these students transfer.

**If I Decide to Report a Case, What Is My Time Commitment?**

The Honor Committee recognizes that your time is limited and makes every effort to respect the time constraints on faculty at every stage of the process. After your initial conversation with an Honor Advisor to report a case, an Honor Advisor will be assigned to you for the entirety of the case and will contact you to set up a meeting with two impartial investigators (members of the Honor Support Officer pool). This meeting with the investigators will typically last around an hour. The investigators will interview you about the alleged Honor offense, transcribe their questions and your answers, and collect any relevant evidence and correspondence.

After this initial meeting, the Investigated Student will be provided with the information from your interview, as well as with a packet of information on the Honor process, and on the procedures for filing an Informed Retraction. The student will then have seven days to decide whether or not to file an Informed Retraction. If a retraction is filed, the student will likely ask you to sign the Informed Retraction Form and outline any specific amends the student must make. Once this is accomplished, the case is considered closed, the student will take a two-semester leave of absence from the University, to commence at the start of the following semester. No further action will be required on your part.

If the student elected not to file an Informed Retraction, the investigators may meet with you once more, for no more than an hour, to gather any additional important information, evidence, and correspondence. They will then interview the student and any witnesses that
you or the student identifies. The entire investigation is usually completed within three weeks.

At the completion of the investigation, an Investigative Panel will convene. This panel, described in detail below, will decide whether or not to officially "accuse" the student of an Honor offense. Investigative Panels typically occur on weeknights and last an hour or two.

If the Investigative Panel formally accuses a student of an Honor offense, the student has the option to either request a hearing or leave the University admitting guilt. If the student fails to request a hearing within seven days, he will be deemed to have left admitting guilt (LAG). If the student requests a hearing, the reporter must attend the proceedings and testify. Honor hearings occur on weekends, and usually last most of one day, though the reporter’s testimony generally requires under an hour.

In all, the entire process usually lasts one to three months, from investigation to hearing. Though a reporter is expected to participate in the process, your time commitment during this period should not be extensive.

**WHAT ABOUT THE STUDENT’S GRADE?**

Although the Board of Visitors delegates the authority to sanction students for dishonorable behavior to the Honor Committee, this authority does not extend to the grading decisions of faculty members. If, for example, a student panel does not consider a particular act of cheating to be an Honor offense, the Committee cannot force the faculty member to give the student a passing grade on the assignment in question.

Faculty members have the discretion to assign grades, or take other appropriate academic measures, regardless of the outcome of an Honor investigation. The assignment of grades and other academic measures are subject to University policies and procedures, including grade appeals. For more information regarding the policies and procedures in place in your school, you should contact your Dean or Department Chair.

**PLAGIARISM**

Plagiarism is one of the most common forms of academic dishonesty and one that you may likely encounter as a faculty member. We encourage you to work with the Honor Committee and the Teaching Resource Center to find ways both to better educate students about plagiarism and also find tools useful for identifying plagiarized sources. The Honor Committee has developed an extensive plagiarism guide that disseminate to students and faculty. It can be found here: [http://www.virginia.edu/honor/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/PlagiarismSupplement2011.pdf](http://www.virginia.edu/honor/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/PlagiarismSupplement2011.pdf)

The following websites may also be helpful to you and your students:

- [http://www.academicintegrity.org/](http://www.academicintegrity.org/)
- [http://www.rbs2.com/plag.htm](http://www.rbs2.com/plag.htm)
DIVERSITY AND THE HONOR SYSTEM

Over the years, there have been serious concerns that the Honor System acts in a disproportionate way against minority students. This disproportion is specifically reflected in the number of reports coming to the System. Some refer to phenomenon as an issue of “spotlighting” and “dimming.” Spotlighting, some allege, occurs when those who naturally stand out from those around them draw more scrutiny than do their peers. Conversely, “dimming” refers to the potential for some students to avoid notice as they more readily blend in.

Asian students, international students, and student-athletes in particular have seen a disproportionate number of cases reported against them at various times.

It is vital to note, however, that once a formal accusation has been made, statistics reveal that the rate at which students are found guilty of an Honor offense is indistinguishable among sub-groups of students.

The Honor Committee and its Support Officers recognize that for the Honor System to truly create a Community of Trust at the University, all students must be included; any student or group of students alienated from the Honor System presents a problem for the System. Accordingly, the Honor Committee has taken a much more proactive stance in its approach to the issue of minority student perceptions of the Honor System. Steps have been, and continue to be, taken to increase minority student participation in the System through aggressive recruiting, creation and maintenance of the Community Relations and Diversity Advisory Committee, and a program of diversity training for Honor Committee members. The Honor Committee has also committed to developing a rigorous research survey to study the serious concerns surrounding reporting.

ACADEMIC RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO STUDENT-ATHLETES

Professors often have questions about the special services provided to student-athletes to assist them in balancing academics and rigorous training and game schedules. The following information should help to dispel myths and ease suspicions regarding the type and amount of academic resources available to student-athletes.

The academic resource center available to student-athletes serves as an extension of the academic assistance resources available to all students at the University. Some of the resources specifically available to student-athletes include supervised study hall centers, graduate student mentors who help teach students study and time management skills, and weekly tutoring sessions. Tutors are usually graduate students at the University, so they understand and are bound by the Honor System. Further, if a TA is tutoring a student-athlete in a class they are teaching, they must meet with the professor to determine what type of assistance is appropriate for that particular class. In addition, while review sessions are
held at exam time, these are only general sessions—not sessions for specific classes (i.e. a
general American History review, not a review for History of the Civil Rights Movement).

Professors and teaching assistants with questions about the resources available to student-
athletes are encouraged to contact Adrien Harraway, Associate Athletics Director for
Academic Affairs (434-982-5300), or they are welcome to sit in on a study hall or tutoring
session.

**HOW CAN I DO MY PART TO MAINTAIN THE COMMUNITY OF TRUST?**

—Include an “Honor Policy” section on your syllabus that details what does and does not
constitute an Honor Offense in your class. If there are assignment-specific policies, it is
beneficial to note these on the syllabus as well. Review your specific class policy with your
students on the first day of class. Honor Support Officers may also reach out to you prior to
the start of a semester to provide Honor information for your syllabus and volunteer as a
resource for your class.

—Post relevant Honor materials online through the University’s Collab system. Collab can
be accessed at [http://collab.itc.virginia.edu](http://collab.itc.virginia.edu).

—Take the time in the first class to explain that the Honor System is important to you and
how it specifically applies to the class. Research regarding college cheating reveals that, when
a student believes a faculty member is supportive of the school’s Honor system or academic
integrity policy, that student is much more likely to take that policy seriously.

—Require your students to pledge all their written work and examinations. Research also
suggests that simply re-affirming a commitment to honorable behavior reinforces this
standard and can help combat cheating. Almost all University classrooms have this pledge
posted at the front of the room. The standard Honor pledge is: *On my honor as a student, I have
neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this exam/assignment.* This pledge may be modified to
suit the needs of a particular assignment or exam.

—If you are aware of an Honor Offense, please contact the Honor Committee at (434) 924-
7602.

—Consider allowing students to take un-proctored examinations or give take-home exams,
if appropriate. The more students are allowed to see the benefits of living in the Community
of Trust, the more likely they are to support it.

—Unless you have a strong reason to believe otherwise, take your students at their word.
The Department of Student Health will not provide notes of excuse to students who miss
class due to sickness.

—If your class requires a written assignment such as a paper, take some time to review
proper citation with your class and/or discuss plagiarism. This is especially important in
classes with predominantly underclass students.
ENTER
BY THIS GATEWAY
AND SEEK
THE WAY OF HONOR
THE LIGHT OF TRUTH
THE WILL TO WORK FOR MEN
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