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This booklet is not intended to provide a comprehensive or detailed description of Honor Committee policy or procedure, but rather an overview of the Honor System for new students. In addition, because aspects of the Honor System may change from time to time in response to changing ideals and standards of the student body, recent changes in the Honor System may not be reflected in the material contained herein. For these reasons, students seeking detailed information about the current policies and procedures of the Honor System should refer to the By-laws and Constitution available at [www.virginia.edu/honor](http://www.virginia.edu/honor) or should contact the Honor Committee at (434) 924-7602.
Introduction

Welcome to the University of Virginia. The Honor System has been a defining characteristic of life at the University for more than 175 years. The Honor System is founded upon a commitment made by all University of Virginia students to never lie, cheat, or steal. This commitment is not imposed on students. It is instead a chosen ideal, one that underlies our common endeavor as students: the pursuit of the truth. Each student at the University has signed a pledge to abide by the Honor System on their application for admission. Students have also committed themselves to governing the system—the Honor Committee is made up entirely of your fellow students and the Honor Committee Constitution can only be altered by a student vote. In pledging to live with honor and in accepting this responsibility for the governance of the System, students at the University enter into a contract we call the Community of Trust.

The Honor System and the Community of Trust that it protects have real and tangible benefits for University students. At this University, a student is assumed to be honorable unless their actions prove otherwise. This presumption of honor accompanies a student in all interactions with fellow students, faculty members, administrators, and members of the community. The Honor System means that a professor will trust both your words and your work. The Honor System also means that you can trust a fellow student for no other reason than because they are a fellow student. This positive conception of Honor is the heart of our System.

Essential to maintaining our Community of Trust is the acceptance of individual responsibility. The foundation of the Honor System depends entirely upon the willingness of each student to live up to the standards set by the community of their fellow students. Administration of the Honor System rests with the students. For the community to remain strong, each student must be committed to bringing to the Honor Committee any member of the community who may demonstrate a disregard for these basic principles of honesty.

This booklet seeks to enhance your understanding of the basic principles upon which the Honor System is based, as well as provide a brief overview of how it operates.

If you have any questions concerning any facet of the Honor System, please contact an Honor advisor or Honor Committee member at:

HONOR COMMITTEE
4th Floor, Newcomb Hall
(434) 924-7602
http://www.virginia.edu/honor
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 the truth. Dishonest means are incompatible with this pursuit.

The System does not exist simply to punish students who commit Honor Offenses, nor to place restrictions on students that might conflict with their personal values; rather, its purpose is to promote an atmosphere of trust. Only with this atmosphere of trust can the University continue to foster the spirit of community that has helped define it for so long.

The Students’ System

The Honor System is entirely student-run. The standards of conduct deemed to be dishonest, the scope of the Honor System, and its various policies and procedures have all undergone gradual redefinition by successive generations of students who each evaluate the System according to their own values and principles.

The Single Sanction

If a student commits an Honor Offense by Knowingly committing a Significant Act of Lying, Cheating or Stealing, they breach the trust of the entire community. Students who are found guilty of an Honor Offense are permanently dismissed from the University (students found guilty following their graduation are subject to degree revocation by the General Faculty). By dismissing the person who has knowingly broken the trust placed in them, we can ensure an atmosphere of integrity and freedom from suspicion in our community.

“The Alumni know that the greatest treasure they left behind, or rather that they carried away with them, because it’s both, is the spirit of honor; they know that they have bequeathed this priceless legacy to you; they know that you are the custodians of a sacred trust.”

- Thaddens Braxton Woody, 1901-2000, Professor Emeritus of French
A Brief History of the Honor System

In 1842, in order to bring about better relations between students and faculty, Professor Henry St. George Tucker offered this resolution:

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.

In the more than 170 years since the inception of the Honor System, it has been administered entirely by students. Following the Civil War, the University’s Honor System became associated with the concept of the “Southern Gentleman.” Men were expelled for defaulting on payments of debts, cheating at cards, and insulting ladies. 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.

Throughout the twentieth century, the Honor System underwent numerous changes. Many students wanted to expand the system into a complete system of student government, covering all instances of student misconduct and the Honor Committee’s rules of conduct were first formalized during this period. The Honor System, as we now know it, was first established in 1909, and was revised in 1917 and 1934. In 1952 the Bad Check Committee was created in order to ensure continued good relations between the University community and local merchants. The Bad Check Committee was later dissolved, and its community relations responsibilities were assumed by the Vice Chair for Community Relations. The Honor Committee, recognizing that a complex ethical system based on current standards of behavior relied heavily on student input, began to emphasize open forums for discussion and exchange of information.

During the 1970’s, the Honor System underwent three major changes to better respond to student input and the increasing diversity at the University. First, students amended the System’s jurisdiction in order to increase its effectiveness. Instead of an unlimited jurisdiction, the scope of the System was limited to Honor violations committed within the boundaries of Charlottesville, Albemarle County or wherever a student represents themselves as a student of the University of Virginia. Second, students voted to eliminate the non-toleration clause of the Honor Pledge, which required students to report any potential Honor Offenses that they observed. Finally, the Conscientious Retraction (“CR”) was added to the System. The CR allows a student who has committed an Honor Offense, but who has no reason to believe that the act had come under suspicion, to admit their mistake, make amends with all affected parties, and remain within the Community of Trust.

In the spring of 1980, students voted to allow a panel of randomly selected students to serve as panelists in Honor Hearing. This change afforded an accused student two options — a panel of solely Honor Committee members or a mixed panel of Honor Committee members and randomly
selected students. In 1990, the Honor Committee put forth a referendum to allow Hearing panels to be comprised solely of randomly selected students. The referendum passed and students' jury panel options expanded to three choices.

In 2013, the student body approved another addition to the Constitution: the Informed Retraction (“IR”). This policy provides a student who has been informed that they have been reported for an Honor Offense the right to admit guilt, make amends with all affected parties, and leave the University for two full semesters before rejoining the Community of Trust.

In 2015, the Constitution was amended again by two referenda proposed by two Honor support officers. The first amendment requires the Honor Committee to hold a bi-annual popular assembly to facilitate discussion, ascertain pressing concerns, and generate potential measures to be put forth for student consideration. The second amendment requires that the Honor Committee respond to non-binding ballot questions affirmed by a majority of students in a University-wide election by putting forth a vote the following year in the form of a binding constitutional referendum. This amendment was later revised, via another constitutional referendum, and now requires that the Committee “enact a response” within one year.

In 2018, the Committee expanded the IR to include all reported Offenses and those self-reported by the student. This policy, often referred to as “additional admissions” ensures that any student who is reported is able to take an IR and, if they self-report all additional Offenses committed during their time as a student, return to the University with a clean slate.
A Brief Explanation of the Honor Process

Each student is charged with the responsibility to refrain from dishonorable conduct. Accompanying this individual commitment to abide by the Honor System is an even more demanding commitment — a responsibility to ask those who violate our standard of honor to leave the University, either temporarily, through an IR Leave or Absence, or permanently, through the single sanction at Hearing of dismissal from the University. Accepting these responsibilities is vital to the successful maintenance of our student-run Honor System.

Criteria

An Honor Offense is defined as a Significant Act of Lying, Cheating, or Stealing committed with Knowledge. Three criteria determine whether or not an Honor Offense has occurred. These three criteria are defined in the Honor Committee’s By-laws as follows:

1. “Act” shall mean any specific event or occurrence of Lying, Cheating or Stealing.
2. “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. Ignorance of the scope of the Honor System shall not be considered a defense
3. “Significance” shall mean, with respect to a particular Act, that open toleration of such Act would be inconsistent with the Community of Trust.

In order for a student to be found guilty of an Honor Offense all three criteria must be proven beyond a reasonable doubt.

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 their actions and make amends, without leaving the Community of Trust. This admission must be both complete (i.e., contains all of the required information) and valid (i.e., submitted before the student has reason to believe that their actions have come under suspicion by anyone). A student with the integrity and courage to come forward with a timely, good-faith retraction has thereby reaffirmed their personal commitment to honor and will be allowed to remain in the community.

To file a CR, a student should contact an Honor Advisor immediately. Generally, in order to submit a complete CR, a student must completely acknowledge committing an Act that might be an Honor Offense by describing the Act in question and making appropriate corrections and/or amends. In addition, the CR must be signed by all affected parties. For further information as to specific requirements for CRs in particular cases, students should contact an Honor Advisor or a
Upon submission to the Honor Committee, the CR will be reviewed for completeness and may be returned to the student for changes if necessary. The complete CR will be maintained in a confidential Honor Committee file unless the underlying Act is later reported, in which case the validity of the retraction will be evaluated in accordance with the By-laws of the Honor Committee. If a student is later reported for an Act for which they filed a CR, and the CR is deemed to be valid, it will act as a full defense.

**Informed Retraction**

A right afforded to every student under the Honor System, an Informed Retraction (“IR”) allows a student who has been reported to the Honor Committee for an alleged Act of Lying, Cheating, or Stealing to take responsibility for the commission of the Honor Offense and to make amends for it, both by admitting the Offense to all affected parties and by taking a full two-semester Honor Leave of Absence from the University community. The student may also self-report and take responsibility for any additional Honor Offenses they may have committed in their time as a student. The IR is a philosophical extension of the CR described above.

In order to provide consistency and clarity in the IR process, the Honor Committee requires students who wish to file an IR to complete and submit an Informed Retraction Form (“IR Form”), which requires the student to collect the signatures of all affected parties, the Dean of Students, the student’s Association Dean or Academic Dean and, if they’re an international student, an advisor from the International Studies Office. Upon submission to the Honor Committee, the IR Form will be reviewed and may be returned to the student for changes if necessary.

Because a student who submits an IR agrees, implicitly, to recommit themselves to the Community of Trust, each student may file a single IR during the entirety of their time at the University.

For further information as to specific requirements for the IR in particular cases, students should contact an Honor Advisor or a member of the Honor Committee, either by phone (410-924-7602) or online (www.virginia.edu/honor/reports-retractions/), or refer to the By-laws of the Honor Committee.

**Scope and Statute of Limitations**

Although a student should always conduct themselves honorably, a student is only formally bound by the Honor System in Charlottesville and Albemarle County, and elsewhere whenever a student represents themselves as a University of Virginia student. The geographic limitation is intended to prevent an over-extension of the System, for the Honor System can only act effectively where it is reasonably well-known and understood.

A case may be reported against anyone who was registered as a student at the time of an alleged Honor Offense, regardless of whether the student subsequently left the University for any
reason (including, without limitation, transfer, withdrawal, leave of absence, graduation, or failure to return to the University for any reason), at any time, whether prior to the case report and official accusation or thereafter, so long as the case is reported within two years from the date on which the alleged Offense occurred. Furthermore, a case may be reported against a University student for an alleged Honor Offense that Occurred within a period of two years after the University student was registered or enrolled, but only with respect to alleged Lying by such student in any University disciplinary proceeding arising out of such student’s own conduct, including without limitation, any proceedings of the University’s Judiciary Committee, the University’s procedures relating to the Policy on Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment and Other Forms of Interpersonal Violence, or the Honor Committee itself. With respect to a University graduate, if such a case is reported and leads to a guilty verdict (or the accused graduate is deemed to have left admitting guilt, as described below), the Honor Committee will refer the case to the General Faculty for degree revocation proceedings.
Investigation/Hearing Procedure

Report

The Honor System would not function if students did not hold one another accountable. Deciding to report an Honor case, however, can be very difficult. It is important to remember that one 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. Any consultation is strictly confidential and does not in any way obligate one to report a case. A trained Honor Advisor or Honor Committee member can provide detailed information about the process and answer any questions related to a possible report. They cannot, however, instruct a potential reporter as to whether or not the conduct they witnessed is, definitively, an Honor Offense, nor can they decide whether or not the case should be reported. After discussing the matter with an advisor or Committee member, if one believes that an Honor Offense has occurred and wishes to report a case, the Advisor or Committee member can formally begin the process. Once a case is reported, it cannot be withdrawn.

Investigation

During the investigation stage, two Honor Investigators are assigned to the case as impartial fact-finders. The Investigators interview the reporter, the investigated student and any others who might have relevant information. They also prepare a written transcript of all the interviews and collect any relevant evidence. The case proceeds to an Investigative Panel when the investigation is completed.

Investigative Panel

The Investigative Panel (“I-Panel”) is a rotating panel of three Honor Committee members. The I-Panel decides whether or not sufficient evidence exists to formally accuse the investigated student of an Honor Offense. The I-Panel decides whether an Honor Offense “more likely than not” occurred. If the panelists conclude that it is more likely than not that an Offense occurred, the student is formally accused of committing an Honor Offense. If the panelists conclude that there is insufficient evidence to make a formal accusation, the case is dropped, and the matter is considered closed. The I-Panel may also decide that the investigation was incomplete and instruct the Honor Investigators to investigate the matter further.

Accusation

Once formally accused, the student, now referred to as the “accused student,” is entitled to an Honor Hearing. An accused student who does not request a Hearing, as provided in the By-laws of the Committee, or who requests a Hearing but fails to attend such a Hearing, will be deemed to have waived their right to a Hearing and to have admitted guilt, whether or not such an admission is
expressly made. Such waiver and admission of guilt is generally referred to as “leaving admitting
guilt” (“LAG”).

Contributory Health Impairment Process
If any student (or former student) believes that they have a mental disorder or mental
condition which contributed to the commission of an alleged Honor Offense and/or renders them
substantially unable to understand the relevant Honor charges or to assist in their own defense, they
may wish to request a Contributory Health Impairment Hearing (“CHI Hearing”). The CHI process
is administered by the Office of the Dean of Students. If a CHI is, ultimately, found, the case is
resolved through the CHI process and the Honor charges are dismissed. If the CHI is not,
ultimately, found, the case is returned to the Honor Committee for further processing according to
its By-laws.

Hearing
If an accused student requests a Hearing, they have several options to consider. The student
may choose a Hearing that is open or closed to the public. The student may also decide between
three different types of student panels: a panel of randomly selected students, a panel of all Honor
Committee members, or a mix of random students and Committee members. Finally the accused
student may choose any fellow student to act as their Counsel in the Hearing. Students often elect to
have Counsel assigned to them from the Support Officer pool, as they are most familiar with the
Honor Hearing process.

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 the Honor procedures. The Hearing chair
also serves as a resource for members of the student panel who may not be entirely familiar with the
process. The student panel hears from witnesses and reviews all the evidence. Counsel for each side
have the opportunity to question witnesses, as well as to make a closing statement at the end of the
Hearing to question witnesses directly.

Once all witnesses have testified, the student panel recesses for deliberations. In order to
find a student guilty of an Honor Offense, four-fifths of the student panel must agree that an Act of
Lying, Cheating, or Stealing was committed with Knowledge, and a majority of the student panel
must agree that the Act was Significant. Each of these criteria must be met beyond a reasonable
doubt. If any of these criteria is not met beyond a reasonable doubt, a not guilty verdict is rendered.

The Single Sanction
An accused student who is found guilty in an Honor Hearing, or deemed to have
“LAGged”, as described above, is permanently dismissed from the University. The notation
“enrollment discontinued” is placed on the student’s transcript to note the dismissal, though there is
no outward indication that the dismissal resulted from an Honor Offense. Dismissed students may
receive aid from the Vice President and Chief Student Affairs Officer if they wish to apply for transfer to another institution. If a student has already graduated, the Honor Committee will refer them to the General Faculty for degree revocation proceedings.

Appeals

A student who is found guilty of an Honor Offense may appeal the decision on the basis of “new evidence” or for “good cause” in order to raise issues of fairness in the underlying proceedings. Students may file appeals on an “expedited” basis so that they may continue to attend classes pending the outcome of this filing (in which case, unless a conviction is ultimately overturned, the date of dismissal will revert back to the original date of conviction or the date of the LAG, as applicable).

Confidentiality

Pursuant to Honor Committee policy, the identities of the parties and witnesses in an Honor investigation and related proceedings are confidential. Further, under federal privacy laws, the University may not disclose the identity of investigated students.

This confidentiality is maintained throughout the Honor process, and beyond. If an investigation is dropped, confidentiality is maintained. If a not guilty verdict is rendered, all materials and records of the Hearing and investigation are destroyed to preserve confidentiality. If a guilty verdict is rendered, the student is dismissed from the University, but the case remains a confidential matter.

The investigated, accused, or dismissed student may, however, decide to waive their right to confidentiality at any time. This may occur when they inform the Honor Committee expressly that they wish to waive their right of confidentiality or it may occur when they takes action inconsistent with confidentiality (e.g., by speaking with journalists, on the record, about their case or by requesting an open Honor Hearing).

Violations of confidentiality by students, including, without limitation, Honor support officers, student panelists, and witnesses, are governed by Standard 11 of the University Judiciary Committee’s Standards of Conduct.
Student Panels

In the spring of 1980, over 80% of the student body voted by referendum to allow randomly selected students to serve on panels in Honor Hearings. The change allowed an accused student who requested a Hearing the choice of a student panel composed of all Committee members or a mixed panel of Honor Committee members and randomly selected students. In providing this right, students also accepted the responsibility to serve on panels when requested. In 1990, the student body voted in favor of allowing an accused student to have the additional option of an all randomly-selected student panel.

The Honor Committee maintains a pool of random student panelists by periodically obtaining a randomized list of students from the University Registrar. Panelists attend an orientation where they are briefed in the Hearing process and their responsibilities as a panelist. The Hearing will usually last one full day. The Hearing chair provides knowledge of the Honor System and Hearing experience. The panelists ensure that Hearing decisions reflect the views of the student body. By devoting one day as panelist to the operation of the Honor System, each student can guarantee that the Honor System remains a vital and responsive aspect of University life.
Diversity and the Honor System

Some community members have raised concerns that the Honor System might have a disproportionate impact on minority students and international students. The Honor Committee is constantly working to ensure that the System treats all students with equal fairness, regardless of their background, race, ethnicity, or other characteristics. The Honor Committee shares in the University’s responsibility to ensure that students from many backgrounds thrive on Grounds.

To be a truly representative body, the Honor Committee has committed itself to maintaining a diverse support officer pool and reviewing constantly the experience of minority students within the system. Additionally, the Committee undertakes education and outreach initiatives to ensure that traditionally underrepresented groups have an active voice in the governance of the system.

As an additional measure to address these concerns and garner student opinion on the Honor System, the Committee established the Community Relations and Diversity Advisory Committee. The Honor Committee encourages any interested students to attend CRDAC meetings to help address these issues.
Cheating and Academic Fraud

All students at the University of Virginia are bound by the Honor Code not to commit “academic fraud,” which is a form of cheating. Academic fraud includes, among other conduct: plagiarism, multiple submission, false citation, and false data.

Plagiarism is when someone represents another’s ideas or work as their own original ideas or work. In its most blatant form, plagiarism is copying the words without indicating, through quotation marks and proper citation, that they were originally someone else’s. Plagiarism arises in less blatant forms as well, the most common of which is the use of paraphrased material without proper citation. Merely changing the order of another author’s words or ideas, or substituting one’s own words for another author’s original ideas, will constitute plagiarism unless they clearly acknowledge the source of those ideas. Moreover, if one uses certain words or phrases that are distinctive to their original source, they should use quotation marks around such words or phrases, as they appear within their paraphrased material, even if they go on to cite the original source.

Certain information in any discipline may be considered “common knowledge” and may be used without acknowledgment. What is considered to be common knowledge varies among fields; when in doubt, consult a professor or TA. The important question is whether one has represented someone else’s ideas or work as their own original ideas or works.

When in doubt about plagiarism, one should err on the side of caution by employing quotation marks, where appropriate—around direct quotes and any words or phrases that are distinctly those of the original author—and clearly acknowledging their sources. Because nobody can anticipate and describe every act that may constitute plagiarism, if one is at all uncertain, they should speak to their professor or consult a standards manual in advance to determine whether their actions may put them at risk of committing an Honor violation.

Multiple Submission is the use of work previously submitted at this or any other institution to fulfill academic requirements in another class. For example, using a paper from a 12th grade English class for an ENWR 1010 assignment is multiple submission. Slightly altered work that has been resubmitted could also be considered fraudulent. With prior permission, some professors may allow students to complete one assignment for two classes. In this case, prior permission from both instructors is necessary.

False Citation is falsely citing a source or attributing work to a source from which the referenced material was not obtained. A simple example of this would be footnoting a paragraph and citing a work that was never utilized.
**False Data** is the fabrication or alteration of data to deliberately mislead. For example, changing data to get better experimental results is academic fraud. Professors and TAs in lab classes will often have strict guidelines for the completion of labs and assignments. Whenever in doubt about what may be considered academic fraud, immediately consult with the professor.
The Honor Committee

The Honor Committee is comprised of two Honor Representatives from each of the twelve schools, except the undergraduate College of Arts and Sciences, which has five. A new group of representatives is elected by the students of their respective schools in the spring semester each year. The twenty-seven member Honor Committee is ultimately responsible for the maintenance and administration of the Honor System. With the help of support officers, the Honor Committee conducts Honor investigations and Hearings, disseminates information about the Honor System to new students and faculty, and establishes special programs and policies for the maintenance of the System from year to year.

Executive Committee

The Honor Committee elects, from among its members, a Chair, a Vice Chair for Investigations, a Vice Chair for Hearings, a Vice Chair for Education, and a Vice Chair for Community Relations. All members of this Executive Committee sit as voting members. This five-member body is responsible for administering the Honor System’s daily affairs.

Community Relations and Diversity Advisory Committee

As described in the Honor Committee By-laws, the Community Relations and Diversity Advisory Committee (CRDAC) endeavors, first, to provide a formal mechanism for the University’s diverse student body to express its views and interests as they relate to the Honor System, and, second, to foster a constructive relationship between the System and the rest of the student body. For more information on how to get involved with CRDAC, you should reach out to the Vice Chair for Community Relations.

Faculty Advisory Committee

Faculty support is crucial to the longevity of the Honor System; therefore, the Honor Committee has created a standing committee to serve as a liaison between the faculty and the Honor Committee. The Faculty Advisory Committee channels faculty opinion to the Honor Committee and keeps the faculty informed about the Honor System.
Support Officers

Each year the Honor Committee selects a pool of students to serve as Honor support officers. Honor support officers undergo a semester of training that prepares them to serve in one of three support officer roles. The support officer roles have unique responsibilities and are crucial to the maintenance of the Honor System. The three different pools in which a support officer may serve are the Advisor Pool, the Counsel Pool (which performs both Investigator and Counsel roles), and the Educator Pool.

Honor Advisors

Honor Advisors provide support and information about the Honor System to both students and reporters throughout the course of an Honor case. In addition, Honor Advisors are expected to help maintain open lines of communication between investigated or accused students and the Honor Committee. All conversations between a student or witness and their respective Honor Advisor are strictly confidential.

Every individual who decides to report an Honor case is immediately assigned an Honor Advisor. This Advisor keeps the reporter informed of developments in the investigation and is available to answer any questions or concerns that the reporter may have.

Each investigated student is also assigned an Honor Advisor. This Advisor helps explain the report that has been filed against the student and what to expect as the case unfolds. Advisors help explain the student’s options (e.g., to file an Informed Retraction, to request an Honor Hearing, or to “LAG,” as described above) without attempting to influence the student’s decision in any way. Rather, the Advisor’s role is to support the student through what may be a difficult decision-making process.

If the accused student requests a Hearing after being formally accused by an Investigative Panel, their Honor Advisor works closely with their Honor Counsel throughout the Hearing.

If an accused student is found guilty at a Hearing, their Advisor continues to work with them through the course of any subsequent appeal proceedings, until the case has been finally resolved.

Honor Investigators/Counsel

Honor Investigators serve as impartial fact-finders during the investigation stage of Honor proceedings. A team of two Honor support officers impartially investigate each case reported to the Committee by interviewing witnesses and gathering other relevant evidence. An I-Panel, made up of three Committee members, reviews the evidence gathered during the investigation and decides to either formally accuse the reported student or drop the case.

If a case proceeds to a Hearing, Honor Counsel ensure a fair and balanced representation of both the accused student’s interests and the Community’s interest during the Hearing process. For the purposes of the Hearing, an accused student may select their own advocates from among the
general student body or the Honor support officer pool; otherwise, the advocates are assigned from
the support officer pool to the accused student.

During the Hearing, the accused student’s Counsel act at the discretion of the accused
student at all times. In accordance with the principles of the Honor System, Hearing Counsel do not
argue legal precedents, nor refer to decisions in past Honor Hearings; rather, Counsel are instructed
to constrain their arguments to the facts of the case and to refrain from making emotional or
inflammatory remarks to the jury panel.

When an accused student is found guilty at a Hearing, their Hearing Counsel continue to
assist them through the course of any subsequent proceedings, until the case has been finally
resolved.

**Honor Educators**

The role of the Honor Educator is to serve as a liaison between the University community
and the Honor Committee. Educators are the primary mechanism through which the Honor
Committee communicates information about the Honor System’s philosophies, policies, and
process. The role of an Educator is largely focused on finding the most effective ways to
communicate between the Honor Committee and the Community of Trust, which includes
undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, staff, and administrators.

In both education and outreach roles, Educators seek out current student opinions to share
with the Committee so that changes might be considered accordingly. Educators reach out to every
part of the larger University community through organizing and executing events, presentations,
forums and campaigns.
Getting Involved

Any student can become an Honor support officer. Support officers are recruited in the fall semester. The process consists of a short application and one round of interviews. Watch the Honor website, Facebook page, and Instagram account for postings about informational meetings, application deadlines, and times. If you are interested in running for a position on the Honor Committee, you must comply with any requirements set forth by the University Board of Elections (UBE). Elections are administered by the UBE and occur early in the spring semester.
Where to Go for More Information

For additional information regarding anything covered in this booklet, you should consult the Honor Committee’s website at www.virginia.edu/honor. You should also feel free to call the Honor offices at (434) 924-7602, reach out to Charlotte Paulussen (acp9zz@virginia), or reach out to the Special Assistant to the Honor Committee (Evan Pivonka).
Honor Committee Constitution

We, the students of the University of Virginia, in order to maintain the Honor System of the University and preserve the community of trust which that System fosters, and in recognition of the need to define formally the role of the Honor Committee as an integral part of that System, do hereby establish this Constitution of the University of Virginia.

**Article 1. Purpose and Derivation of Authority.** The Honor Committee, acting with the authority which has been delegated to it by the Board of Visitors, shall embody the interests and attitudes of the current student generation of the University of Virginia in performing those functions necessary and proper to uphold and to promote the Honor System.

**Article II. Powers.** The Honor Committee shall:

- Determine and publicize what constitutes, in the view of the current student generation of the University, an honor violation;
- Hear through honor panels appeals from accusations of honor violations;
- Exclude permanently from student status University students found to have committed honor violations;
- Record honor violations and announce the disposition of honor accusations, including the issues argued before the panel to which the accusation was appealed and their resolution, but not including the name of any student or other information that, alone or in combination is linked or linkable to a specific student that would allow a reasonable person in the community, who does not have personal knowledge of the relevant circumstances, to identify the student with reasonable certainty;
- Establish programs, policies, and guidelines for the operation and maintenance of the Honor System;
- Establish rules of procedure for appeals from honor accusations and from the findings of honor panels; and
- Inform present and prospective students and faculty of the philosophy and operation of the Honor System.

**Article III. Structure.** Section 1: The Honor Committee shall consist of two elected representative members from each school of the University and three additional representative members elected from the College of Arts & Sciences as determined by each School’s Constitution. Each member shall have one vote.

Section 2: The Honor Committee, by a majority vote, shall elect from among its members a chairman and four vice-chairman. The chairman shall reside at all meetings of the Honor
Committee, and a vice-chairman shall preside at their request and/or in their absence. The officers shall also perform other duties the Honor Committee may from time to time assign to them.

Section 3: The Honor Committee may provide for the selection of such officers as it may deem appropriate and assign to them such duties as it may deem appropriate: Provided, however, that one officer shall always be responsible for keeping the records of the Honor Committee.

Section 4: Honor Committee officers may be removed from their positions an Honor Committee officers by two-thirds vote of the entire Committee.

Section 5: Any elected officer of a school shall be eligible to sit on honor panels in accordance with such rules as the Honor Committee may establish.

Section 6: A quorum shall consist of two-thirds of the Honor Committee. Meetings may be called by the Chairman or by request of three of its members.

Section 7: Except as otherwise provided in this constitution or bylaws adopted under it, meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the latest edition of Robert’s Rules of Order.

**Article IV. Election and Removal.** Section 1. Honor Committee elections shall be conducted at least seven weeks before University Spring commencement exercises each year. Those elected shall take office the first Monday in April.

Section 2. Unless otherwise provided in a school’s constitution, an Honor Committee member may be recalled by a majority of those voting in a recall election in her school within a reasonable time after its receipt of a recall petition signed by at least ten percent of the students in the school.

Section 3. Unless otherwise provided in a school’s constitution, a vacancy shall be filled by another election within a reasonable time.

Section 4. The University Board of Elections or its successor body shall have the power to regulate Honor Committee elections.

**Article V. Rights of the Accused.** Section 1. Every student accused of an honor violation shall have the right:

To appeal the accusation to an impartial panel, that panel to consist, at her election, of elected school officers only, both elected school officers and student jurors, or student jurors only who are not elected school officers. Where charges against two or more students will be heard at the same trial, the panel shall be of the kind agreed upon by such students and, lacking such agreement, shall consist of both elected school officers and student jurors.

(a) **Panel of Elected Officers**

There shall be at least seven panel members and whenever possible, there shall be two elected officers from the school of the accused and one from each of the remaining schools.

(b) **Panel of Both Elected School Officers and Student Jurors**

There shall be at least two panel members from the school of the accused, at least eight and not more than twelve panel members, and three elected officers on a panel of less than eleven
members, three or four elected officers on an eleven-member panel, and four elected officers on a
twelve-member panel.

(c) Panel of Student Jurors Only:

There shall be at least two members from the school of the accused, and there shall be at
least eight and not more than twelve panel members, and no panel member is to presently be a
member of the Honor Committee.

To be advised in writing of the nature of the accusation;

To be informed of the nature of the evidence to be used against her;

To have all proceedings against her help publicly or privately at her election. Where charges
against two or more students will be heard at the same trial, the proceedings shall be help either
publicly or privately, as agreed upon by such students and, lacking such agreement, shall be held
privately.

To be given a reasonable time to prepare for a hearing before the panel;

To be assisted by counsel of her choosing from the student body;

To confront and to cross-examine witnesses against her;

To present evidence and witnesses in her own defense;

To be heard in her own defense;

To refuse to testify against herself; and

Section 2. No student shall be found to have committed an honor violation unless:

The evidence against him or her supports, beyond a reasonable doubt, an accusation of an
act of lying, cheating, or stealing that she knew or a reasonable University of Virginia student should
have known might constitute an Honor Offense, to the satisfaction of at least four-fifths of the
panel hearing her appeal; and

The act is significant, i.e. open tolerance of such an act would be inconsistent with the
Community of Trust, to the satisfaction of at least a majority of the panel.

The panel shall take one vote on the criteria of act and knowledge, and, if necessary, a
separate and subsequent vote on the criterion of significance.

Section 3. Every student found to have committed an honor violation shall have access to a
record of the proceedings against her and may appeal the panel’s findings on the basis of new
evidence affecting that finding or of a denial of a full and fair hearing in accordance with this
constitution.

Section 4. All records of the proceedings against a student not found to have committed an
honor violation shall be destroyed.

Section 5. Notwithstanding any other provisions in this constitution, a student leaving the
University upon accusation shall be deemed to have admitted the honor violation.

Section 6. A student who has been reported for an honor violation shall have the right,
within one week of being informed of the report by the Honor Committee, to file an Informed
Retraction admitting guilt and waiving all other rights guaranteed under this constitution. A student
filling an Informed Retraction shall be excluded for two full semesters from student status, and shall
subsequently be permitted to return to the University, provided that the student has not previously filed an Informed Retraction.

Article VI. By-Laws. Honor Committee by-laws shall be consistent with this constitution and shall be adopted by a majority vote of the Honor Committee.

Article VII. Self-Governance. Section 1. Every second year, the Honor Committee shall, in accordance with its most fundamental purpose, convene a popular assembly open to the general student body with the following aims: to facilitate discussion on the state of the Honor System; to ascertain the pressing concerns of the community; and to generate potential measures to be put before the student body for consideration.

Section 2. Should a majority of voting students vote affirmatively on a non-binding question of opinion pertaining to the Honor System in a University-wide election, the Honor Committee shall, in the following year, put such questions before the student body as a binding constitutional amendment.

Article VIII. Amendments. Amendments to this Constitution shall be proposed (a) by a vote of two-thirds of the entire Honor Committee, or (b) by a petition meeting the requirements, including the form of the petition and all signature requirements, set by the University Board of Elections (or any successor organization, hereinafter, the “UBE”), from time to time. In either case, proposed amendments take effect, if at all, upon ratification by three-fifths of those students voting in a referendum election, provided that at least ten percent (10%) of the entire eligible voting population has voted in favor of such amendments. The validity and deadlines for receipt of petitions and signatures, election dates, vote counts, and other matters relating to the process and administration of elections, shall be determined by the UBE.

Article IX. Ratification. Section 1. This constitution shall take effect on March 21, 1977, if ratified by three-fifths of those students voting in a referendum election to be held February 22 and 23, 1977.

Section 2. Honor Committee members elected on February 22 and 23, 1977, or in subsequent run-off elections, shall take office on March 21, 1977, and shall serve until the expiration of the regular 1977-78 term in accordance with Article IV, Section 1, above.

Section 3. The Honor Committee shall bring its existing literature, rules, and by-laws into conformity with this constitution.
“The compact of honor here at the University of Virginia is not negatively conceived. It does not merely prevent you from lying, cheating and stealing. It is a positive commitment. It calls on you to tell the truth, to live honestly, to advance on your own merits. And most of all: it requires a deep respect, even a love for each of your fellow students…we assert that, without honor, little else is worthwhile.”

- Larry J. Sabato
Professor of Politics

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

- Virginius Dabney
Author, Professor

“Learning what the world is like; learning what mankind is like - these are hindered if students lie to another, or steal, or claim something is the fruit of their labors when it really is someone else’s.”

- Kenneth G. Elzinga
Professor of Economics

“The Honor System is a high convention among men and women who have chosen to seek truth, by which it is mutually agreed that no end, however important or however desirable, will justify the use of dishonest means in its attainment”

- T. Munford Boyd
Professor of Law

“I do a lot of yard and handiwork for an elderly woman in Charlottesville. Because I am a University student, she not only leaves her doors unlocked for me but also trusts me to tell her how many hours I’ve worked.”

- Rob Manoso, CLAS 2009

“Honor at UVa to me is not about being perfect all the time. It’s about always striving to act as your best self, and knowing that the community and culture of this place are built in a way to help you do so.”

- Alicia Underhill, COMM 2016

“Honor is important to me because it provides a simple yet encompassing rule for daily action on how I want to live my life.”

- Raj Das, CLAS 2017
Attachment A: HONOR PROCESS CHART

Report

Reported

Student is Notified

Student is Interviewed

IR Meeting with the Investigated Student

Full Investigation

If the student does not elect to file an IR, or elects to file an IR and a CHI hearing request, a full Honor investigation will proceed.

Investigative Panel (I-Panel)

A rotating body of three Honor Committee members convene to determine whether to formally accuse the student or drop the case.

Student Requests Hearing on Contributory Health Impairment (CHI)

A student who believes that they had a medical or mental condition that contributed to the commission of an Honor offense can request an I-Panel hearing any time within 7 days after a formal accusation by an I-Panel. The CHI process is overseen by the Dean of Students.

Student Requests CHI Only (no IR)

If the student requests a CHI Hearing prior to I-Panel (without electing to simultaneously file an IR), the case will proceed through a full investigation, and an I-Panel will be convened. If the I-Panel drops the case, both the Honor charges and the CHI request will be dismissed. If the I-Panel accuses the student, the Honor proceedings will be paused and the case will be submitted to the Dean of Students for evaluation of the CHI Hearing request.

Student Requests CHI + IR

If the student submits both a CHI Hearing request and an IR Form during the IR Period, the case will proceed through a full investigation, but no I-Panel will be convened; if the CHI Hearing request or CHI claim is ultimately denied and the case is returned to Honor, the student’s IR will be deemed to have been accepted on the date on which the case is returned to Honor.

Honor Probation

A student who files an IR is immediately placed on “Honor Probation,” but is permitted to complete the current term, subject to any restrictions or limitations imposed by the school, department, or course in question. A student on Honor Probation or the Honor Leave of Absence is barred from enrolling in courses.

Honor Leave of Absence

At the beginning of the subsequent Fall or Spring semester, the “Honor Leave of Absence” will commence, and the student will effectively be suspended until two full academic semesters (one Fall and one Spring) have elapsed.

Committee

If a student submits a CHI Hearing request following a formal accusation, the Honor proceedings will be paused and the CHI request will be submitted to the Dean of Students.

Hearing

If the accused student requests an Honor Hearing, they will select or be assigned Counsel. At the Hearing, a student panel will determine whether the accused student committed an Honor offense. The student may select a panel comprised of randomly selected students, Honor Committee members, or a mix.

Student elects to file an appeal on the basis of good cause or new evidence. If the appeal is granted, potential avenues for relief include (but are not limited to): a new I-Panel, a new Hearing, or dismissal of the underlying Honor charges.

No Appeal

Student elects not to file an appeal

Appeal

Student

Not Guilty

The student panel determines that at least one of the three criteria of Act, Knowledge, and Significance are met beyond a reasonable doubt. Four-fifths of panelists vote that the Act was Significant.

Guilty

The student panel determines that the three criteria of Act, Knowledge, and Significance are met beyond a reasonable doubt. Four-fifths of panelists vote that the Act was Significant.

Student Requests CHI + IR

If the student submits both a CHI Hearing request and an IR Form during the IR Period, the case will proceed through a full investigation, but no I-Panel will be convened; if the CHI Hearing request or CHI claim is ultimately denied and the case is returned to Honor, the student’s IR will be deemed to have been accepted on the date on which the case is returned to Honor.

*In order to have the IR Form deemed complete, and accepted by the Vice Chairs, the student must obtain the signatures of the “affected parties,” as well as a signature from the Dean certifying that they completed an exit meeting.

1 This flowchart is intended to illustrate the Honor process in a general way, and does not reflect procedural details or provisions that may apply only in specific cases. For a detailed description of Honor investigations, the Informed Retraction, the Hearing on Contributory Health Impairment, Honor Hearings, and appeals, see the By-laws of the Honor Committee.