

## **HONOR SYSTEM**

The Honor Board is comprised of faculty and students whose responsibility is to determine, by measure of preponderance of evidence, whether a student is or is not responsible for the charges presented. The Honor Board is advised by a member of the Student Life staff who is charged with providing guidance and support to the Chair to ensure that the process is fair and follows the due process as outlined below. Ultimate authority of the Honor System and its outcomes resides with the President of the College.

### **Honor Pledge**

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Each student of Converse, by virtue of enrolling, is bound by, commits to abide by and strives to actively support the Honor Tradition. At the beginning of each year, during Opening Convocation, the student body affirms their commitment to the Honor Tradition with the following pledge:

*“I do solemnly pledge my honor that as long as I am a student at Converse College, I will faithfully uphold the principles of the Honor system, will cherish and guard its traditions, and will respect and observe its requirements. I make this pledge in view of the pledges of my fellow students, which signifies our mutual Trust and Resolve to keep our honor forever sacred.”*

Each new student signs the Honor Pledge during a formal ceremony and the parchment hangs in Wilson Hall during her years at Converse. She is also required to sign her initials, as a pledge, on all graded work. This signifies, on her word, that she has not received unauthorized help in her academic work. Failure to pledge academic work does not release the student from accountability to the Honor Tradition; instructors may choose not to grade unpledged work.

### **Honor Board Members**

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The Honor Board Chair, four representatives each from the Senior, Junior, Sophomore classes and two representatives each from the First-year class and Converse II student body, will be elected by members of the undergraduate student body to serve a one academic-year term on the Honor Board. Methods for these elections are outlined in the Constitution of the Student Government Association. In addition, three members of the College faculty will be appointed for three year staggered terms, upon recommendation of the Faculty Senate President and Vice President for Academic Affairs with approval of the College President.

### **Infractions**

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Infractions of the Honor System include lying, cheating, plagiarizing and stealing. These infractions are defined as follows:

*Lying* is the intentional statement of an untruth. Forgery (signing for another) is also considered an act of lying and thus an honor offense. Therefore, the signing for another or false representation on a college document is considered an honor offense.

*Cheating* is fabricating written assignments; giving aid to any student or receiving aid without the consent of the instructor on tests, quizzes, assignments, or examinations; consulting unauthorized work with the intent of subverting the purpose of the exercise. Cheating includes use of technology such as computers, phones, cameras or any other device that provides access to unauthorized information related to graded course material, tests, quizzes, assignments, or examinations. (An assignment shall be defined as any work, required or voluntary, submitted to an instructor for review or grade.)

*Double Assignments* are also a form of cheating. The use of one assignment (e.g. paper) to fulfill the requirements of more than one course will be considered a violation of the Honor System unless the student has received proper permission from the appropriate instructor(s).

*Plagiarizing* is the act of presenting the information, ideas, phrasing, or words of another as if they were one's own. Such an act is plagiarism whether a student acts through ignorance of proper scholarly procedures, fails to observe proper scholarly procedures, deliberately intends to deceive, or unintentionally fails to document or cite the source. Proper citation is required on all assignments submitted to an instructor for a grade including rough drafts, if assigned for a grade.

The following list, though not all-inclusive, demonstrates instances where citations would be required. (We gratefully acknowledge Dartmouth College's Institute for Writing & Rhetoric (<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~writing/sources/sources-citation.html>) for assistance in formulating this list.)

You must cite your source at the point you use the material. You **must** cite the source when you:

- use quoted material. Offset quotes with quotation marks or in block format.
- use or quote a significant word or phrase. Place the word or phrase in quotation marks.
- paraphrase or restate information, ideas or phrases in your own words.
- use figures, diagrams, graphs, music, song texts, artwork, films, computer code, etc. that are not your own.
- use problem solutions found on a website or other media.

Errors in style and formatting are not considered plagiarism. If you correctly paraphrase, mark quotations, cite your sources, and otherwise note what are not your ideas, words, information, etc., then you have not plagiarized. If, for example, you use MLA style when the assignment required APA, then you have committed an error in style and formatting. You should correct such errors as soon as you discover them. However, if you include proper citations but have strings of words from your source without indicating these words are not your own, this failure to paraphrase does constitute plagiarism.

*Stealing* is the act of appropriating that which belongs to another individual or the College. This may include 1) the intent to achieve an unfair advantage in academic matters, whether or not the advantage is a personal one, and/or assisting others in such acts (examples include theft of library materials, computer software/equipment, or information regarding course materials such as quizzes, tests or examinations, etc.); 2) the taking of others' belongings that do not belong to you personally such as but not limited to clothing, backpacks, purses, electronic devices, academic materials, and college services.

In addition to lying, cheating, plagiarizing and stealing, the following expectations also apply and will be addressed by the Honor Council:

*Multiple/repeat Offenses.* Multiple offenses of the honor system will be taken seriously and may have significant outcomes. Repeat offenses may also result in significant sanctions because it is expected that a student found responsible and held accountable for an honor offense should learn from her mistake.

*Classroom Expectations and Procedures for Academic Work.* A Converse student's word is her bond and as such abiding by these regulations protects the freedom granted by our Honor Tradition. College-approved accommodation plans may govern or override specific regulations. All Converse students are expected to abide by and uphold these standards both individually and collectively. Any faculty member or instructor may come and go from classrooms during exams. A violation of these procedures is a

violation of the Honor Tradition and should be reported: 1) Electronic devices may not be used in the classroom unless permitted by the individual instructor; 2) Giving or receiving information regarding a quiz, test or exam before, during or after such situation is not allowed; 3) Quizzes, tests and exams must be taken in a classroom within the building they are administered unless otherwise approved by the instructor of that specific course; 4) Students are subject to the fixed time limit; 5) Students may not comment on the level of difficulty, specific content, or the general nature of any quiz, test or final examination to students yet to take the quiz, test or final examination; 6) All backpacks and personal bags must be left in the front of any examination room while completing the exam; 7) Only work carrying the student's pledge shall be graded; 8) Student's written work must be her own. She may ask for support but may not have someone correct it for her; 9) All creative writing must be original; 10) Students are expected to prepare all papers utilizing proper citation.

*Breach of Confidentiality.* In order to maintain the integrity of the Honor Tradition, all information related to the student, the evidence, the testimony and the outcomes are to be kept confidential by all involved in the case. Those bringing charges, as well as accused students, should seek guidance from the Advisor to the Board, or the Chair of the Board.

*Failure to complete sanctions.* Each Converse student is expected to respect and uphold the Honor Tradition of the College and thus abides by and completes any sanctions imposed upon her. Failure to comply with and complete sanctions may result in additional action by the Honor Board, Appeals Board or the Vice President for Student Life/Dean of Students.

*Note:* It will be considered in an individual's favor in determining penalty, if an individual tells an untruth concerning a matter but later, on her own initiative, tells the truth concerning the same matter before she is confronted with the untruth. Lying during the process of resolving an alleged honor offense is considered a breach of the Honor System and may result in additional charges.

### **Reporting a violation of the Honor Tradition**

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In order to preserve the effectiveness of the Honor Tradition, reporting a violation of the system is of utmost importance. Faculty, instructors, staff and students must report probable violations, within a reasonable timeframe, to the appropriate individual(s).

- If an instructor, student or staff member suspects an honor violation, he/she should document the concerns and confront the student as soon as possible. The accusing person should request a private meeting with the accused student where the specific charge should be discussed. The accusing person will note the charge and ask the accused student to make contact with the Honor Board Chair. The accusing person will then notify the Honor Board Chair of the meeting and the charge.
- Documentation of the incident in question should be made by all parties on the Honor Violation Incident Report form available on the Student Life/Student Government web page or through e-mail to [honorboard@converse.edu](mailto:honorboard@converse.edu). Additional documents or evidence should be given directly to the Chair of the Honor Board.
- The Honor Board Chair and/or Vice Chair, in collaboration with the Honor Board Advisor, will review submitted documents and conduct an initial investigation to determine if there is sufficient evidence to move forward with a case.

## **Hearing Process**

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The College Honor Board facilitates resolution of reported honor violations. The Honor Board Chair and/or Vice Chair, with the guidance of the Honor Board Advisor, will review each report and evidence submitted and will conduct an initial investigation. If there is sufficient evidence to warrant a case, the Chair will make contact with the accuser and accused student and follow these procedures:

### Procedural Overview

The Honor Board Chair, Vice-Chair, or Advisor will provide an opportunity to meet with the accused student to cover their rights and procedures and will use their best efforts to clarify charges, exchange names of witnesses, and review evidence related to the case. This meeting is not required but provides an opportunity to answer questions and prepare a student for the process.

### OPTION I

#### Honor Board Sanction Hearing

If the student admits responsibility, she may choose to present her case for Administrative review and be sanctioned by a sub-set of the Honor Board which will include the Advisor to Honor Board, one faculty representative of the Board and two of the Executive members of the Honor Board; either the Chair, Vice-chair, Secretary or Treasurer.

### OPTION II

#### Hearing

If it is requested by the student, or determined through initial review of the evidence, that a hearing is necessary, the Honor Board Chair will convene the Board in a timely fashion to hear the case. Neither the accused nor the accuser has a right to external representation or Legal Counsel. The following procedures will guide the process:

- The Chair of the Honor Board, or her designee, will forward a complete listing of the charges, a copy of the student rights and procedure information, and the time and location of the hearing to the accused student at least 48 hours prior to the time of the hearing.
- The accused student has a right to call material witnesses as long as they have been approved by the Honor Board Chair at least 24 hours prior to the hearing. A list of witnesses should be exchanged 24 hours prior to the hearing. The hearing board should consist of seven Honor Council members: two faculty representatives and five student representatives; and will be chaired by the Honor Board Chair, (Vice Chair or Secretary in the case of a conflict of interest.)
- If the accused student fails to appear and has not notified the chair, the case may be heard in her absence.
- All testimony given and evidence presented are bound by the Honor Tradition. The hearing proceedings, but not deliberation, will be recorded.
- Appropriate witnesses (e.g. person making the accusation) are strongly encouraged to be present at the hearing. The accused student is strongly encouraged to be present during the entire proceeding. Witnesses will be called by the Chair as needed, and at the appropriate time, during the hearing. Board members and the accused student will have the opportunity to ask questions of each witness.
- The procedure will conclude with the accused student being given the opportunity to make a final statement to the hearing board.
- Two character witnesses may be called during the sanctioning aspect of the hearing

The Honor Board will have 48 hours from the conclusion of the hearing to make a determination of responsible or not responsible and, if found responsible, determine the appropriate sanction to be imposed.

- The Honor Board Chair or her designee will communicate the outcome of the hearing by letter, electronic communication and/or in person to the accused.
- The individual responsible for the accusation will be informed of the Honor Council's decision.
- Students found responsible for violations of the honor code will have documentation placed in her student file in the Student Life Office. In addition, violations of an academic nature will also be recorded in the student's electronic record, but not on the student's transcript.
- All information related to the student, the evidence, the testimony and the outcomes are to be kept confidential by all involved in the case.

If the accused student withdraws or takes a leave-of-absence from the College while a charge is being reviewed, the student's record will continue to reflect the charge until the case and/or sanction are resolved.

## **Sanctions**

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As an educational institution, Converse College has the responsibility and the opportunity not simply to punish violators of the Honor Tradition but also to equip them with effective coping skills and patterns of behavior. With this in mind, the Honor Board imposes sanctions that are relevant to the particular situation and that will promote growth for the individual involved. At times, however, the severity of the offense, or repeat offenses, requires punitive action.

Possible sanctions for all violations include but are not limited to: official warning, educational tasks, restitution and/or fines, failure on assignment(s) and/or failure of the course, suspension for a period of time, or expulsion from the College: often, sanctions include combinations of these.

Faculty hold ultimate authority over final course grades. However, in the case of honor violations, the faculty grant authority to the Honor Board or Appeals Board to review evidence, determine responsibility, and develop sanctions. In the case of formerly enrolled students, if the Vice President for Academic Affairs determines there is clear evidence of fraud or deception, a student's grade may be changed.

Each Converse student is expected to respect and uphold the Honor Tradition of the College and thus abides by and completes any sanctions imposed upon her. Failure to comply with and complete sanctions may result in additional action by the Honor Board, Appeals Board or the Vice President for Student Life/Dean of Students.

## **Appeal Process**

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### **Request for an Appeal**

A student may appeal the verdict and/or sanction determined by the Honor Board. A formal typed appeal must be submitted to the Vice President for Student Life/Dean of Students within five days of receiving the Honor Board decision. In the appeal letter, the student must state whether she is appealing the verdict and/or the sanction and must provide substantive reasons and/or evidence to support the appeal. If the sanction is suspension or expulsion, the appeal must be submitted to the Vice President for Student Life/Dean of Students within 24 hours of receiving the Honor Board decision.

### **Appeals Board Members**

The Appeals Board is composed of the Vice President for Student Life/Dean of Students (Chair), two members of the faculty appointed by the President of the College, one student from each class year appointed by the President, and the Academic Dean or Associate Dean from either the School of Humanities and Sciences, the School of Education and Graduate Studies or the School of the Arts as determined by the students' course of study.

### **Appeals Hearing**

The Vice President for Student Life/Dean of Students (or Vice President for Academic Affairs in case of a conflict of interest) will notify the Board members of a hearing, will coordinate the timing of the hearing and notify the student who requested the appeal, and will serve as Chair of the hearing.

Members are expected to remove themselves from the proceedings if a conflict of interest occurs. If one member of the Board cannot participate, the Board will proceed. If two members of the Board cannot participate, the case will be rescheduled.

The proceedings of the hearing will be recorded but deliberations will not.

The Chair of the Honor Board and one other Honor Board member will present needed information from the case to the members of the Appeals Board. The student who requested the appeal is encouraged to be present to hear all evidence presented.

Following the presentation of the Honor Board members, the student who requested the appeal will have the opportunity to present her case to the Appeals Board members.

The decision of the Board will be based on simple majority vote. The Appeals Board has the authority, when reviewing a case, to either uphold, overturn, or increase sanctions. The decision of the Appeals Board will be the final decision regarding honor violations.

It will be the responsibility of the Chair of the Appeals Board to notify the student, the Honor Board and the student's advisor, and other pertinent person's (e.g. faculty member, Registrar) of the Board's decision.

### **Special Circumstance/Hearing**

The Appeals Board is authorized to hear all cases involving Honor violations during the week prior to exams, exam week in the case of a graduating senior, and during times when members of the Honor Board are not on campus.

### **Rights of the Accused**

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Students accused of a violation of the Converse College Honor System are assured of the following:

- The College may act as the accuser.
- Neither the accused nor the accuser has a right to external representation or Legal Counsel.

The accused student, whether requesting sanction hearing or board hearing, has the right to:

- have specific charges outlined and explained
- address the charges and confront the accuser

- be treated in a civil and respectful manner
- seek advice and assistance from any member of the Converse Faculty or Staff  
(However, the accused must present her case by herself.)

If the case is resolved by a hearing, the following rights are also implied:

- The right to have specific charges outlined in a letter that will be delivered at least 48 hours in advance of scheduled hearing procedures
- The right to hear all evidence presented during the hearing and to question witnesses
- The right to call material witnesses deemed necessary and as approved by the Honor Board Chair at least 24 hours prior to the hearing
- The right to call up to two character witnesses during the sanctioning process

Following the outcome of a hearing the following rights are implied:

- The right to know the outcome of the hearing
- The right to follow up documentation, and if found responsible, all sanctions for the charges
- The right to request a meeting with the Honor Board Chair and Advisor to the Honor Board to understand the outcome of the hearing
- The right to an appeal through the Vice President for Student Life/Dean of Students who will call together members of the College Appeals Board (see appeal process).

### **Responsibilities of the Accused**

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As a member of the Converse Community, accused students have the following responsibilities:

- The responsibility to tell the truth
- The responsibility to read and understand the charges presented
- The responsibility to read and understand College policies and hearing procedures
- The responsibility to notify the Chair of any conflicts 24 hours prior to the hearing time
- The responsibility to participate in the case hearing
- The responsibility to complete sanctions by the stated deadline
- The responsibility to act in a civil and respectful manner

### **ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION**

#### **Administrative Action**

The chair of each Judicial Board (Honor Board, Civitas Council), and the Advisor to these Boards, has in her discretion the authority to defer a student case for administrative action by the Assistant Dean of Students. The Assistant Dean of Students may convene members of the Honor Board, Civitas Council, and/or Appeals Board to adjudicate the case. Reasons for deferring a student case may include but are not limited to, a conflict of interest with the Board, extenuating and/or sensitive circumstances surrounding the case, scheduling conflicts which prevent a timely trial, college exams and/or official college breaks.

#### **Serious Disciplinary Cases**

The Administration of the College is authorized by the Board of Trustees to sanction and/or dismiss any student who persistently violates the regulations of the college, or whose influence, whether by word or deed, is, in their opinion, injurious to the best interest of the student body or the institution. No diploma or certificate will be awarded to any student who is guilty, before the date of graduation, of any serious breach of college regulations or good conduct.