STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR

As members of the Columbia University community, all students are expected to uphold the highest standards of respect, integrity, and civility. These core values are key components to the Columbia University experience and reflect the expectations of Columbia University students. Students are therefore expected to conduct themselves in an honest, civil, and respectful manner in all aspects of their lives. Students who violate standards of behavior related to academic or behavioral conduct interfere with their ability, and the ability of others, to take advantage of the full compliment of University life, and will thus be subject to Dean’s Discipline.

The continuance of each student upon the rolls of the University, the receipt of academic credits, graduation, and the conferring of any degree or the granting of any certificate are strictly subject to the disciplinary powers of the University. Although ultimate authority on matters of student discipline is vested in the Trustees of the University, the Dean of the College and his staff are given responsibility for establishing certain standards of behavior for College students beyond the regulations included in the Statutes of the University and for defining procedures by which discipline will be administered.

DEAN’S DISCIPLINE OVERVIEW

Dean’s Discipline is the process utilized by Columbia College, Columbia Engineering, and the School of General Studies to investigate and respond to allegations of behavioral or academic misconduct. The Dean’s Discipline process will be initiated when there is an allegation that a student has violated Columbia College, Columbia Engineering, School of General Studies or University policies regardless of whether the violation occurred on or off campus.

The Dean’s Discipline process is not legalistic or meant to be adversarial, therefore, the technical rules of evidence applicable to civil and criminal court cases do not apply. Instead, the primary focus of the process is to educate students about the impact of their behavior on their lives and the lives of those around them. In addition, it is an opportunity for the student to engage in a meaningful conversation regarding his/her role as a member of the Columbia community.

This document is divided into six parts: violations, procedures, sanctions, appeals, special circumstances and privacy, and provides an overview of how a complaint is investigated and how a student’s potential responsibility is determined. This document also includes information regarding the potential outcomes and sanctions a student may face if he or she is found responsible for a violation of policy.

I. VIOLATIONS

For a full description of College and University policies, which may result in Dean's Discipline, please refer to the Bulletin for Columbia College and Columbia Engineering, Academic Policies at the School of General Studies, the Essential Policies for the Columbia Community; Housing’s Guide to Living; and The Columbia University Equal Educational Opportunity and Student Nondiscrimination Policies and Procedures on Discrimination and Harassment. You may obtain these documents online at:

The Dean’s Discipline process is used for behavioral and academic violations of University policy. The Dean’s Discipline process may also be utilized for violations that occur off campus (please see below).

Behavioral Violations
Behavioral violations of University policy include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Knowingly or recklessly endangering the health or safety of others (see Bulletin/Academic Policies)
- Participating in any activity involving arson, firecrackers, explosives, or firearms
- Throwing or dropping items out of university buildings (see Housing’s Guide to Living)
- Threatening, harassing or abusing others (see Bulletin/Academic Policies)
- Manufacturing, possessing, using, or distributing illegal drugs (see the Essential Policies for the Columbia Community)
- Violating the University’s alcohol policy (see the Essential Policies for the Columbia Community)
- Intentionally or recklessly destroying, damaging, or stealing property (see Bulletin/Academic Policies)
- Failing to respond to legitimate requests from University officials (see Bulletin/Academic Policies)
- Violating rules of the Residence Halls, which also applies to Greek and Special Interest Housing (see Housing’s Guide to Living)
- Violating “Rules of University Conduct” (see Bulletin/Academic Policies)
- Violating any state, federal or local laws (see the Essential Policies for the Columbia Community)

Academic Violations
As indicated in the Bulletin for Columbia College and Columbia Engineering, as well as in Academic Policies for the School of General Studies, academic dishonesty violates the principle of intellectual integrity that is the foundation of our institutions. To violate that principle is one of the most serious offenses that a student can commit. Examples of academic dishonesty are listed in the Bulletin of Columbia College, Columbia Engineering, and the Academic Policies of the School of General Studies, and include:

- Plagiarism (the use of words, phrases, or ideas belonging to another, without properly citing or acknowledging the source)
- Self plagiarism (submitting work for one course that already has been used for another course)
- Cheating on examinations or tests
- Collaborating on assignments without the instructors permission
- Receiving unauthorized assistance on an assignment
- Copying computer programs
- Forgery
- Facilitating academic dishonesty (selling of notes, exams, papers, etc.)
- Lying to a faculty member, dean, adviser or university officer
- Obtaining advanced knowledge of exams or other assignments without permission

Off Campus Behavior
Columbia University reserves the right to review student misconduct that occurs off campus, as such behavior reflects upon the integrity of the University. Students are reminded that they serve as representatives of Columbia University and should demonstrate respect for policies and laws, as they would on their own campus. Students may be subject to Dean’s Discipline for any activity that occurs off campus that “impinges on the rights of other students, neighbors, and community members.” Such violations may include but are not limited to noise, hosting events that are disruptive to the community, littering and/or improper removal of trash, not maintaining premises, consumption, and the distribution or sale of alcohol. Students may also be subject to Dean’s Discipline for violations occurring on other college and university campuses or in other off campus locations.
II. PROCEDURES

Filing of Allegations/Hearing Notification and Scheduling
When a complaint is received, the Office of Judicial Affairs and Community Standards will determine whether Dean’s Discipline is an appropriate response or if the complaint should be referred elsewhere. If a Dean’s Discipline Hearing is to occur, a student is informed in writing of the complaint made against him/her and the next steps in the process. The student is also informed of his/her ability to review the file information prior to the hearing. Dates and times for disciplinary hearings are scheduled in consultation with students to avoid conflict with classes.

Hearing Preparation
If a student is notified that he/she has been referred to the Dean’s Discipline process a written statement responding to the charges must be prepared by the student for academic integrity cases. A written statement may be prepared by the student for behavioral cases. This statement should outline his/her perspective on the allegations and the incident as a whole. Students are encouraged to utilize the several resources available to learn more about the process.

Columbia College and Columbia Engineering students may speak with a Dean’s Discipline Process Resource Person. These individuals are trained to assist students with many aspects of the Dean’s Discipline process. They can answer questions about the Dean’s Discipline process, the hearing, and are able to provide guidance in regard to general preparation for the hearing. The primary responsibility to prepare for the hearing, however, belongs to the student.

The student may also speak with his/her Advising Dean, Counselor, or contact the Office of Judicial Affairs and Community Standards and request to meet with a staff member to discuss general information about the Dean’s Discipline process prior to the hearing.

Students are also encouraged to speak with staff members from Counseling and Psychological Services should they begin to feel overwhelmed while going through the process. The University Ombuds Office, family, and friends may also serve as helpful points of contact.

The Disciplinary Hearing Process
For students of Columbia College and Columbia Engineering, two members of the staff of the Dean of Students Affairs will administer the hearing. For students of the School of General Studies, one staff member from both the Office of Judicial Affairs and Community Standards and the School of General Studies will administer the hearing. With the exception of the student’s adviser, the student may not be accompanied by any other person to the hearing (including a family member, friend, or attorney). Electronic recordings or transmissions of the hearing proceedings are not permitted. One of the hearing administrators will take notes during the hearing and produce a summary of those notes soon after the conclusion of the hearing.

During the hearing, the student is presented with the information pertaining to the allegation that he/she has violated Columbia College, Columbia Engineering, School of General Studies or University Policy/Policies. The student will be made aware of the name(s) of the person(s) making the complaint against him/her and/or any witnesses to the incident. The hearing officers will consider requests for anonymity made by a complainant or witness and, in compelling circumstances, may determine to withhold the name of such person. Circumstances in which this request may be granted include a reasonably based fear of retribution, harassment or other inappropriate response to the disclosure of such individual’s name.

The student will then submit his/her statement and present information on his/her behalf. Questions may be posed to better clarify or understand the charges as well as the student’s perspective on the context, incident, and/or circumstances. In cases of plagiarism, students are often asked about his/her understanding of plagiarism,
researching, note taking, and source citation. The student may direct questions to the hearing officers at any time. Students are invited to make a final statement.

At the conclusion of the hearing and the overall investigation, a determination regarding whether the student is responsible for the violation(s) based on all of the information available. The standard of proof used to make this determination is the “preponderance of the evidence” standard. This standard allows for a finding of responsibility if at the conclusion of the investigation the information shows it is more likely than not that a violation of Columbia policy/policies occurred. If the student is found responsible, the degree of seriousness of the offense and the student’s previous disciplinary record, if any, will determine the severity of the sanction to be issued. A student will be notified in writing about the outcome of the hearing within ten business days.

A student who has attended a Dean’s Discipline hearing is permitted to review the hearing officers’ notes. To do so, the student should email the Administrative Coordinator for the Office of Judicial Affairs at cc-oja@columbia.edu and request a meeting to review the notes. After reviewing the notes, the student may request that changes be made to them if he or she believes there is an inaccuracy or misrepresentation contained within them. The hearing administrator has the discretion to reject any requested changes, in which event a student may attach his or her own written statement as an addendum to the hearing notes. While a student may not make a copy of the hearing notes, a student may take written notes from them.

Joint Proceedings
When the complaint also involves student(s) in Columbia University schools outside of Columbia College, Columbia Engineering, and the School of General Studies, efforts will be made to have the proceedings jointly adjudicated with all schools representatives involved. If joint adjudication is not possible, every attempt will be made to have the proceedings occur simultaneously and to notify each schools’ officials of the results.

III. SANCTIONS

The following sanctions may result for both academic and behavioral misconduct:

- **Disciplinary Warning**: The student is warned that any additional violations of Columbia policies may result in more serious disciplinary action. A disciplinary warning is a minimum sanction assigned to a student found responsible for violating University policy.
- **Conditional Disciplinary Probation**: The student’s behavior is inappropriate for the community and further violation of University policies during the probationary period will likely result in more serious disciplinary action.
- **Disciplinary Probation**: The student’s behavior is inappropriate for the community and further violation of University policies during the probation will likely result in more serious disciplinary action. When appropriate, the student’s parent(s)/guardian(s) may be notified.

NB: Students who receive this sanction may not be eligible to participate in intercollegiate activities, to hold office or committee chairpersonship in campus organizations, or to pledge a Greek letter organization. If a student is a member of an athletic team, athletic administration may be contacted about the hearing outcome and sanction, depending on the severity of the situation. Additional consequences from Athletics may include suspension or dismissal from a team.

- **Disciplinary Loss of Housing**: The student is not permitted to live in the residential community at Columbia for an indicated period of time or for the entire duration of his/her undergraduate career. This sanction also results in the automatic assignment of disciplinary probation. When appropriate, the student’s parent(s)/guardian(s) may be notified. If a student is able to return to housing after an indicated time-period, he or she will be on the non-guarantee list for the entire undergraduate career.
- **Disciplinary Suspension**: The student is removed from the University. Academic privileges and extracurricular activities are also suspended during this time. When appropriate, the student’s parent(s)/guardian(s) may be notified.
- **Expulsion**: The permanent termination of student status from the University. When appropriate, the student’s parent(s)/guardian(s) may be notified.
• Additional Sanctions that may also be imposed: restitution or restitution services, compensatory services, rehabilitation and/or educational activities, re-assignment of a room, removal from the lottery process, or exclusion from community activities such as Commencement or entry into the residence halls or ability to gain access to specific campus buildings or campus in general.

The following additional sanction may result for academic misconduct:

• A notation on the respondent’s permanent academic record specifying the sanctions and indicating the sanction is a result of academic misconduct

IV. APPEALS
A student found responsible for violating Columbia College, Columbia Engineering, the School of General Studies or University policy has to right to request an appeal of the decision and the resulting sanctions within ten calendar days (or as indicated in the hearing outcome letter) after the student receives notice of the hearing outcome. The appeals must be filed electronically using the link specified in the outcome letter. There are three grounds upon which an appeal of the decision may be made:

1. The student has new information, unavailable at the time of the hearing;
2. The student has concerns with the process that may change or affect the outcome of the decision;
3. The student feels that the sanction issued is too severe.

After carefully considering the appeal, the Dean or Dean’s designee of the student’s school will determine if a change in the outcome of the original decision is warranted. The Dean may also change the sanction making it either less or more severe. Regardless of the outcome of the appeal, the Dean or Dean’s designee will notify the student of the final decision in writing. Appeals will not be reviewed or considered beyond the Dean of the school.

V. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Interim Actions
In certain circumstances, during the investigative process, Student Affairs staff may place restrictions on a student prior to the conclusion of the hearing. Restrictions that may be placed on students include, but are not limited to, restricting access to the residence halls or other buildings on campus or suspending a student from participation in classes or the campus community. Student Affairs staff will only take these interim actions if it is determined that the student’s behavior may make his or her presence on campus a danger to the normal operations of the institution, the safety of himself or herself or others, or to the property of the University or others.

Outside Proceedings
If an investigation is occurring outside of the university community (as in the case with criminal investigations) the university may postpone the Dean’s Discipline process until the conclusion of outside proceedings. However, interim measures may be taken immediately as indicated above. It should be noted that the results of the outside investigation are rarely considered within the context of the institutional investigation unless that investigation reveals behavior that is particularly egregious and damaging to the well-being of the university community. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the Office Judicial Affairs and Community Standards when the outside proceedings have been completed.

VI. PRIVACY

In accordance with University policy and federal law, a student's record, including information about Dean's Discipline proceedings, is confidential; however, there are certain exceptions to this general rule. For example, it is the policy of Columbia College and Columbia Engineering to inform parents, when appropriate, of the disciplinary status of students who have been placed on probation, removed from housing, suspended from the University or expelled from the University. However, if you are not dependent of your parents for Federal Income Tax purposes and you do not wish your parents to receive this information, you can write to the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs requesting that no information about your progress at Columbia be shared with your parents. We will then write to your parents to inform them of your request. Another important exception, provided for in the Family
Educational Rights and Privacy Act, allows Columbia to disclose the outcome of disciplinary proceedings for which the charge was a crime of violence to the accused or accuser. To read more about the exceptions that apply to the disclosure of student records information, please visit http://facets.columbia.edu/policy-access-student-records-ferpa.

It is important to note that the Dean’s Discipline process is not utilized in cases where a student has alleged to have engaged in sexual misconduct. The hearing for all cases regarding sexual misconduct is conducted by the Office of the Disciplinary Procedure for Sexual Assault http://www.columbia.edu/cu/dpsa/index.html.

If you have questions that are not answered above, please contact the Office of Judicial Affairs and Community Standards at cc-oja@columbia.edu.