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Important information for students, faculty, staff, or others who have been called to appear as witnesses before the Washington College Honor Board

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Appearing as a witness at a Washington College Honor Board hearing is an important and vital aspect of the College's commitment to upholding the Honor Code. While sometimes the role of witness can be uncomfortable and/or difficult it is a role that is integral to the Board's ability to determine a student's responsibility for violations of College policy.

The purpose of the Washington College Honor Board is to adjudicate cases of alleged violations of the Washington College Honor Code and determine whether or not students brought before the board are responsible for violating the Honor Code or specific College policy. These violations may be academic or social violations of the Honor Code. Students attending Honor Board hearings as witnesses often have many questions and concerns about the process. The information below is meant to address those questions and concerns and help students be prepared for the hearing. Questions that are not answered below can be directed Sarah Feyerherm, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs (sfeyerherm2 or ext. 7752).

• Structure of the Honor Board

The Honor Board is composed of both students and faculty members. Students are named to the Honor Board by the SGA Review Board through a an application and interview process. Nine students are selected and they rotate throughout the year as one of the three voting members at any given hearing. Five faculty members are appointed to the Honor Board with just two voting at any given hearing. The Honor Board is presided over by the student chairperson who is a non-voting member of the board. Other non-voting members of the Board include: A representative from the Provost's Office (currently Prof. Corey Olsen) and the Dean of Students designee (currently Assoc. VP Sarah Feyerherm) who act as advisors to the Board.

• Honor Board Hearing Procedures

The Honor Board hearing generally follows the following agenda (although minor changes may be made in this agenda depending upon the nature of the case):

1.	Call to Order	*Honor Board Chair*
2.	Introduction of Honor Board Members	*Honor Board Members*
3.	Alleged Violations Stated	*Honor Board Chair*
4.	Opening Statement	*Student Respondent*
5.	Questioning of Complainant and Respondent	*Honor Board Members*
6.	Case Witnesses for both Complainant and Respondent (one at a time)	*Witnesses*

7. Questioning of Case Witnesses	*Honor Board Members; Student Respondent*
8. Dismissal of Case Witnesses	*Honor Board Chair*
9. Additional questioning of Respondent	*Honor Board Members*
10. Respondent Closing Statement	*Student Respondent*
11. Dismissal of Respondent	*Honor Board Chair*
12. Deliberation (Responsible or Not Responsible)	*Honor Board Members*
13. Decision (Responsible or Not Responsible)	*Honor Board Panelists*
14. Report on prior violations or incidents	*Assoc. VP for Student Affairs and/or Assoc. Provost or designee*
15. Deliberation of Sanction	*Honor Board Members*
16. Decision on Sanction	*Honor Board Panelists*
17. Dismissal of Honor Board Members	*Honor Board Chair*

Witnesses normally wait in a location near the hearing room and are called into the hearing by the Honor Board chair or an administrator when it is time for them to present their statement. Steps are sometimes taken to ensure that witnesses do not have contact with accused students outside of the hearing room (although they do not have to be separated if both parties agree). Except in unusual cases, witnesses are asked to give their statements with the accused student in the hearing room. This allows the accused student to ask questions of the witness (after the Board asks its questions) if that student so desires. If witnesses have concerns about having contact with the accused student at any time during the hearing, they should let Dean Sarah Feyerherm (sfeyerherm2/ext. 7752) know this ahead of time so arrangements can be discussed.

Witnesses will be informed about the location for the hearing prior to the hearing.

• Appropriate Dress

Persons who appear at Honor Board hearings (both respondents and witnesses) should keep in mind that their appearance can send a message about how seriously they are taking the hearing and their respect for the process. There is no specific dress code for students appearing before the Honor Board but it is recommended that students avoid overly casual clothes and consider their credibility when deciding what to wear.

• Types of Witnesses

There are two types of witnesses that can be present at Honor Board hearings, **case witnesses** and **character witnesses**. Case witnesses are those who have factual knowledge about the alleged violation. Character witnesses usually do not have any factual knowledge about the alleged offense but are able to speak to the character of the student brought before the board. Because character witnesses cannot be questioned by the board or the respondent, character witnesses normally provide a written statement to the board prior to the hearing and do not appear at the hearing. Their statements are provided to the panel either before or during the hearing. Case witnesses make their statement at the hearing, and will present their statement to the board. After the case witness's statement, the board and the respondent will have the opportunity to question that witness.

When the student brought before the board is notified that he/she will appear before the Honor Board, he/she must provide the Honor Board Chair the names of any witnesses he/she wishes to present at the hearing. Those names must be sent to the Honor Board Chair no later than four class days prior to the hearing. Witnesses can also be called by the administrators (representatives of the Dean of Students or Provost's Office) who are facilitating the hearing. These Honor Board administrators make the final decision about which witnesses will appear at the hearing.

• Witness Statements

When witnesses are called into a hearing, they are requested to present a statement in front of the entire board as well as the respondent. **Case witnesses** are asked to recount their version of the incident in question from start to finish. This can take anywhere from 30 seconds to several minutes, depending upon the nature of the incident. He/she will then be asked questions by the Honor Board to help clarify and gather as much information as possible. In many cases, witnesses will have already submitted a witness statement via Public Safety. The Honor Board members will normally have copies of those statements prior to the hearing. The accused student/respondent also has access to those statements to help him/her prepare for the hearing. Witnesses who do not have a copy of these statements but would like to obtain a copy to prepare for the hearing should contact either the Student Affairs Office (for social violation cases) or Prof. Aaron Lampman (for academic cases). It is vital for witnesses to appear at the hearing itself because it allows the board to better understand the facts of the case and come to the most appropriate decision about responsibility and possibly, sanctions.

Character witnesses should be other Washington College students, faculty, or staff members who know the respondent well. Character witnesses should prepare a brief (1-2 page) statement regarding the character of the accused

student, including any significant contributions the student has made to the campus community. Since the Honor Board does not ask questions of character witnesses they normally do not attend hearings but rather submit their statements prior to the hearing.

• More Information

More information about the student judicial process can be found online in the Student Handbook at http://studentlife.washcoll.edu/handbook/ or by contacting student chair, Ian Holstrom (iholstrom2@washcoll.edu) or Dean Sarah Feyerherm (sfeyerherm2@washcoll.edu) in the Student Affairs Office at ext. 7752