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PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE

2023-2024  
**BLUE BOOK**



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## **I. PHILOSOPHY**

Committed to the rigorous pursuit of liberal learning and the teachings of the Christian faith, the Presbyterian College community is dedicated to integrity in the pursuit of truth and honor in the building of community. As members of this community, we share a common commitment to maintaining the high standards of honesty and honorable conduct required for this pursuit.

Since 1915, our commitment has been realized in our agreement to live under the Honor Code of the College. As this Code is student maintained, our agreement contains two parts: first, that we personally adopt the standards of conduct as stated in the Honor Code; and second, that we deal responsibly with those of our peers who fail to do so. By holding one another accountable to this commitment, we ensure the integrity of our academic program and community.

Our acceptance of this commitment allows us to enjoy an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect among students, faculty, and administration. The academic and social advantages therein are many: as students, we are trusted to work independently; exams may be taken free of supervision; computer labs are available twenty-four hours a day; personal property is generally safe on campus; and one's word may be considered trustworthy, both on and off campus. It is our shared interest in preserving this atmosphere that motivates our commitment to the Honor Code.

However, privilege requires responsibility. We at Presbyterian College are responsible for knowing the purpose, design, and procedures of our Honor Code and are required to exhibit honorable conduct in all areas of life: social as well as academic, off campus as well as on. It is solely through the consistency of this commitment that we may both trust and be trusted, respect and be respected, regardless of place or circumstance. Therefore, each of us is expected to maintain the integrity of that commitment at all times.

When we join the Presbyterian College community, we sign the Roll of Honor and formally enroll under the pledge:

*"On my honor, I will abstain from all deceit. I will neither give nor receive unacknowledged aid in my academic work, nor will I permit such action by any member of this community. I will respect the persons and property of the community and will not condone discourteous or dishonest treatment of these by my peers. In my every act, I will seek to maintain a high standard of honesty and truthfulness for myself and for the College."*

## **II. THE HONOR CODE**

The Honor Code is comprised of the Academic Honor Code, described in the Blue Book and administered by the Honor Council, and the Code of Responsibility, described in the Garnet Book and maintained by the Student Life Conduct Board. The Honor Code is upheld by Presbyterian College students and faculty. Students' obligation to the Honor Code is not confined to the boundaries of the College campus, but extends to conduct in the larger community. All student conduct, whether on or off campus, shall be subject to the Honor Code.

## **III. THE ACADEMIC HONOR CODE**

Presbyterian College students pledge to abstain from all deceit and dishonorable conduct in their academic work, as in their lives outside of the classroom. Though many acts may at times be considered deceitful or dishonorable, students at Presbyterian College agree that lying, cheating, plagiarism, and failure to enforce the Academic Honor Code are by definition dishonorable and are, therefore, always in violation of the Honor Code.

### **A. Academic Honor Code Violations**

1. Lying is defined as any attempt to deceive, falsify, or misrepresent the truth in any academic matter.

2. Cheating is defined as the employment of or rendering of any unacknowledged aid in any academic work. Unacknowledged aid includes aid that is not allowed by the instructor.
3. Plagiarism is defined as the presentation in or as one's own work of the words, work product, or ideas of another person without appropriate citation or acknowledgement.
4. Failure to enforce the Academic Honor Code is defined as any act of omission that permits violations of the Academic Honor Code to occur or to go unreported.

All students enrolling at Presbyterian College are bound not only to abstain from the above, but also to report such acts committed by fellow students. When events of a questionable nature occur in matters of scholarship, it is the responsibility of each student to promptly communicate that information to the Academic Honor Council, which will determine whether or not a violation has occurred.

## **B. Academic Honor Code Penalties**

Subject to a decision by the Council, the penalties for a violation of the Academic Honor Code shall be as follows:

For a first violation:

1. Immediate suspension for the remainder of the current semester; and
2. For violations involving cheating, plagiarism, or lying to gain academic advantage in a course, a grade of "F" will be imposed in that course and in any other course in which the instructor of that course certifies the student was failing as of the date of violation, with withdrawals assigned in all other courses.

The penalty for a second violation of the Honor Code is immediate and permanent expulsion from the College.

## **IV. THE HONOR COUNCIL**

### **A. Responsibilities**

The Honor Council is charged with investigating and hearing alleged academic violations of the Honor Code and determining whether violations have occurred. Upon determining such violations, the Council is empowered to impose appropriate sanctions, up to and including expulsion from the College. The Honor Council reserves the right to refer certain cases to the Office of Student Life and the Student Life Conduct Board.

The Honor Council is also responsible for assisting in the education of new students concerning the Honor Code and in the annual publication of The Blue Book.

### **B. Membership**

The Honor Council will have a total student membership of no fewer than 40 members with a minimum of four (4) members from each class. Each February, the Honor Council will solicit applications for Council membership. Students will typically begin membership in the fall of a given year, but new members may apply to fill vacancies for the spring term. The Honor Council Executive Committee shall have the final discretion in selection of members. Student members of the Honor Council normally serve until the end of their fourth year on campus and are expected to remain on campus through exams each semester for hearings.

The Chair of the Honor Council may ask for the resignation of any student member when there

is evidence that his or her behavior threatens the integrity of the Council. If the member in question refuses to resign, the entire student membership of the Council shall be called to consider the matter. Twelve (12) student members shall constitute a quorum, and a two-thirds (2/3) vote is required to remove a student from the Council. If any member of the Council is found responsible in an Honor Case, that member shall be dismissed from the Council and may never rejoin. If any member of the Council accepts responsibility for or is found responsible for a violation of the Student Conduct Code of Responsibility that includes any sanction more severe than an oral or written reprimand, the Dean of Students shall so inform the Chair of the Honor Council who shall consider whether to ask for the resignation of the member under the process above. If the member resigns or is removed by a 2/3 vote, the student may seek to rejoin the Council after 12 months have passed since the resignation or removal, providing that during those 12 months the student has had no further findings of responsibility for any violations of the Student Code of Responsibility. Any former member seeking to rejoin the council must be re-approved by the Honor Council. If a seat becomes vacant for any reason, a student from the appropriate class shall fill it.

The Honor Council shall also include a minimum of 25 faculty members, elected by the faculty. The Chair of the Honor Code Committee shall be a member of the Honor Council, serve as the Faculty Coordinator and Student Advisor of Honor Council hearings and oversee the election of two faculty honor council members to serve on the Executive Committee. The Dean of Academic Programs is a member, *ex officio*, of the Honor Council.

### **C. Leadership**

The Honor Code Committee shall consist of the Chair, who will serve as Faculty Coordinator/ Student Advisor of the Honor Council, the Dean of Academic Programs, the Dean of Students, the Student Chair of the Honor Council, three additional faculty members, and the Assistant Chair and two Secretaries of the Honor Council, all with appropriate experience with the Academic Honor Code. The Honor Code Committee shall develop training for Council members, design the orientation and education program for new students and faculty, and evaluate and revise the Blue Book. The revisions will be accepted upon the approval of the Student Government Executive Committee, the Faculty Senate, and the President of the College. The Committee shall also provide an annual report to the Faculty Senate. The Chair of the Honor Code Committee shall schedule two faculty members for every hearing, keep the official record of faculty participation to be submitted to the Council Chair and Dean of Academic Programs at the end of the academic year, chair the honor code committee, and serve as advisor to the Chair, Assistant Chair, and Honor Council faculty.

The Dean of Academic Programs shall oversee the smooth running of the Honor System, convene meetings of the Executive Committee when required, attend all Executive Committee meetings and hearings, rule on requests to change the date, time, or place of a hearing, and inform the accused of the penalties and of the process for appeal in the case of a finding of guilt. If the Dean is unable to attend a meeting of the Executive Committee or a hearing, the Dean may designate the Chair of the Honor Code Committee to serve.

The Chair of the Honor Council shall be an upperclassman with extensive experience in the workings of the Honor System. The Chair shall preside over all meetings of the Executive Committee, hearings, and meetings of the full Council. The Chair shall appoint assistants for the defense of students charged, organize all documents and evidence for the meeting, coordinate the selection of members before hearings, review the minutes of each hearing, and keep the official record of hearing and appeals outcomes to be submitted to the Dean of Academic Programs at the end of the academic year. The Chair of the Council must be of junior or senior standing with at least one year of Council experience. The Chair for each ensuing year is selected in the spring by majority vote of the current Honor Council student membership. The nominated student's name is then submitted in Student Government elections for confirmation by the student body. After the election of the incoming Chair, the Council must select an incoming Assistant Chair and two Student Secretaries by majority vote. Elected officers shall assume their responsibilities with the installation of new members each spring.

The Assistant Chair of the Honor Council shall aid in the execution of Council affairs. In the absence of the Chair, the Assistant Chair shall preside over any meeting of the Executive Committee, hearing, or full meeting of the Council. For any hearing over which the assistant chair presides, the Assistant Chair shall also assume responsibility for appointing assistants for the defense of students charged, coordinating the selection of members before hearings, and reviewing minutes. The

Assistant Chair must be of junior or senior standing with at least one year of Council experience.

The Executive Committee of the Honor Council shall consist of the Chair, the Assistant Chair, the two Student Secretaries of the Council, the two faculty members selected as outlined in Section B above, and the Dean of Academic Programs. The Executive Committee shall supervise the initial investigation of possible Academic Honor Code violations and is responsible for the activities of the Council. The Executive Committee is also responsible for hearing appeals of Council decisions based on procedural error or new evidence.

The Student Secretaries of the Honor Council shall be responsible for keeping minutes of hearings, for maintaining files of past hearings, for the official correspondence of the Council, and for the financial affairs of the Council. They shall also coordinate the solicitation and review of applications for membership each spring.

## **V. PROCEDURES**

In extraordinary circumstances the President or the Dean of Academic Programs of the College, at any time and in consultation with the Chair of the Honor Council, may find it to be in the best interest of the College to forego the usual Honor Council procedures. In such instances the President or the Dean of Academic Programs will determine a just means for handling such extraordinary circumstances.

### **A. Reporting a Violation**

When students, faculty members, or administrators suspect a student of having violated the Academic Honor Code, the matter must be brought to the attention of the Chair or Assistant Chair of the Honor Council and to the Dean of Academic Programs, as appropriate.

Contact information for the Chair and Assistant Chair of the Honor Council is provided on the College's website under Campus Life/Honor. Honor Council members are prepared to consult with students who have concerns but who are uncertain how to proceed.

### **B. Investigations**

#### **1. Participants**

The Executive Committee of the Honor Council shall conduct preliminary investigations into reported violations. At least five members of the Committee, including at least three student members and at least one faculty member, must be present, and the vote of four members is required, to convene an Honor Council hearing. In the event that any of its student members are unavailable, the remaining student member(s) may appoint another Honor Council member to fill the necessary role on an interim basis.

#### **2. Procedure**

- a. Any information received or discovered by a member of the Honor Council that would indicate a possible violation must be communicated immediately to the Chair, or in the absence of the Chair, to the Assistant Chair.
- b. Immediately upon reception of such information by the Executive Committee, an investigative team may be appointed from the Honor Council membership. This team, composed of one or two student Honor Council members, shall act as a neutral agent, gathering what information is available concerning the possible violation and reporting to the Executive Committee.
- c. Upon receiving the report of the investigative team, the Dean of Academic Programs will call a meeting of the Executive Committee. The purpose of this meeting shall be to determine whether an Honor Council hearing should be held. The accused and an appointed assistant will be given a copy of the investigative report following

the Executive Meeting.

- (i) Should the Executive Committee find the information sufficient to merit a hearing, a written statement shall be provided to the Dean of Academic Programs including the student's name and the charge to be made.
- (ii) Should the Executive Committee find the information insufficient to merit a hearing, that outcome shall be reported by the Dean of Academic Programs to the faculty member who submitted the case (if applicable), for grade and class handling purposes. Additionally, one copy of all information pertaining to the investigation shall be kept in the Honor Council files for up to one year, and disclosure of the matter shall be a right reserved solely to the student(s) in question. Files are also housed in the Provost's office for institutional use.

### **C. Charges**

Should the Executive Committee find the information sufficient to merit a hearing before the Honor Council, the accused student shall be provided written notice of the date, place, and time of the hearing, along with a description of the violation in question and the report of the investigative team. Unless otherwise agreed upon by the accused student(s), hearings shall be convened no sooner than seventy-two (72) hours and no later than ten (10) business days following the delivery of this written notice. The Honor Council Executive Committee, in consultation with the Honor Council and the accused student(s), may grant exceptions. Requests to change the date, time, or place of the hearing shall be ruled upon by the Dean of Academic Programs.

### **D. Student Rights**

Before proceedings take place, the Chair of the Council must be certain that any student charged understands that charged students have the following rights:

1. To be assisted in the defense by an appointed student member of the Honor Council;
2. To be further assisted in the defense by a student of the charged student's choosing;
3. To call and to question witnesses; or, in extraordinary circumstances where the Executive Committee deems it necessary to shield a witness, to have witnesses questioned by way of a third party; and
4. To testify on his or her own behalf and to refuse to answer questions.

### **E. Hearings**

#### **1. Participants**

- a. In Academic Honor Code hearings, the Chair or Assistant Chair of the Council shall preside, with one Student Secretary serving to record minutes. Members of the Executive Committee shall be ineligible to sit as voting members of the Council.
- b. For any hearing, the presiding officer shall arrange for seven (7) student members of the Honor Council to be in attendance. In addition, the Chair shall notify the coordinating faculty representative, who shall provide two (2) faculty representatives for the hearing. Any member of the Council who is a witness to the possible violation or who has demonstrable bias against or toward the person charged shall be ineligible to sit on the hearing for that case.
- c. The Dean of Academic Programs or Chair of the Honor Code Committee shall be present for all hearings and shall be available for consultation during hearings but shall have no vote.



- d. The investigative team, which began investigating the case during the initial inquiries of the Executive Committee, shall serve during the hearing to present the facts of the case as determined during that investigation. This person or team shall introduce and summarize the circumstances of the case and may present documents, statements, and witnesses before the Council.
- e. The student charged may be accompanied by the appointed assistant and one other student that the charged student may have selected to help in the defense. These assistants may speak for the student charged and may present documents, statements, and witnesses before the Council.
- f. No later than twenty four hours prior to the hearing, a list of expected witnesses shall be provided to the presiding officer by each party. Witnesses shall be excluded from the hearing until called and shall be instructed by the presiding officer not to discuss the case among themselves or with anyone but (1) the person designated to present the information surrounding the offense or (2) the student's representatives.
- g. Once called during the hearing, each witness shall be sworn in and reminded by the presiding officer of his or her pledge to uphold the Honor Code of the College. Following this reminder, the calling party, the opposing party, and finally the Council itself may question the witness. When the Council is satisfied and no further questions are forthcoming, the witness shall be dismissed from the hearing room.
- h. The presiding officer is responsible for maintaining order in the hearing. In the interest of time, the presiding officer may limit the number of witnesses called by either party and may rule that certain information or testimony is irrelevant to the case at hand. The presiding officer shall also rule on requests for recess. Decisions made by the presiding officer may be overturned by majority vote of the Council.
- i. Hearings shall be closed to the public, unless the student charged makes a written request for an open hearing twenty-four (24) hours prior to the set date and time. In the event of an open hearing, the presiding officer shall have authority to impose reasonable rules for the number of non-participants in attendance and for their selection. The presiding officer may also remove from the hearing any person whose behavior proves distracting or inappropriate.

## **2. Procedure**

### **Finding Phase**

- a. To begin each hearing, the presiding officer shall read the specification of the charge aloud and shall verify that the student charged received notification at least seventy-two (72) hours in advance of the hearing. The student charged shall then be asked the following question: "Did you or did you not violate the Honor Code?"
- b. If the student acknowledges violating the Honor Code, the presiding officer shall present relevant documents to the council and move immediately to the procedures for the penalty phase of the hearing.
- c. If the student declares innocence in the violation of the Honor Code, the presiding officer shall first recognize the investigative team to make an opening statement and then the student or student's representatives to make an opening statement. After the opening statements, the presiding officer shall recognize the investigative team to present relevant documents and to call witnesses with knowledge of the matter.
- d. Following the presentation of witnesses by the investigative team, the presiding



officer shall recognize the student charged. The student or the student's representatives may then present relevant documents and call witnesses to support the student's declaration.

- e. Following the presentation of witnesses by the student charged, the presiding officer shall call for summary statements from each side, beginning with the statement of the student charged. At the conclusion of these statements, all parties shall be asked to withdraw from the room so that deliberations of the Council may begin. Deliberations shall be closed to all but voting members of the Council with the exception of the presiding officer and the recording secretary.
- f. The presiding officer shall instruct the Council that its decision must be based solely upon the information received during the hearing. The standard for determining a student's responsibility for violation of the honor code will be 'a preponderance of evidence.' In other words, the determination shall be made on the basis of whether it is more likely than not that the charged student violated the honor code. Discussion may then take place. If the Council feels that more information is required, deliberations may be temporarily adjourned, and the hearing reconvened for questioning of parties or witnesses. At the end of discussion, the presiding officer shall call for a vote by secret ballot. The votes of six (6) members of the Council shall be required in order to find that the student has violated the Honor Code.
- g. Following deliberations, all parties are called back into the hearing room, and the presiding officer announces the finding.
  - (i) If it is found that the student has not violated the Honor Code, the case shall be closed, and all records of the hearing destroyed. This outcome shall be reported to the faculty member who submitted the case (if applicable) by the Dean of Academic Programs, for grade and class handling purposes.
  - (ii) If the student is found responsible for having violated the Honor Code, the hearing shall continue into the penalty phase.
  - (iii) At this point, the Officer of the College will provide information as to any previous honor violations. If this is the student's second offense, the standard penalty will apply and the student will be immediately and permanently expelled from the college. The student may lodge an appeal as delineated in Section VI.

### **Penalty Phase**

- a. If it is declared by the student charged, or found by the Council through deliberation, that he or she has violated the Honor Code, then the presiding officer shall present relevant documents concerning the violation to the council and the opportunity shall be offered to make statements, present information, and call witnesses in mitigation before the Council. Character witnesses may also be called at this time. The defense should present explicit information showing understanding of the offense and a plan to ensure that the offense will not be repeated.
- b. Following statements, evidence, and witnesses presented by the student, the investigative team shall be called upon to present further information to address misleading statements made in mitigation. If character has been offered as cause for mitigation, the officer of the College may be called upon at this time to provide relevant disciplinary or academic records. After offering the student the opportunity to respond to this information, the presiding officer shall clear the room of all but voting members of the Council, and deliberations shall begin.

- c. The purpose of deliberations during the penalty phase shall be to determine whether to impose the penalty described in Section III.B. or to impose a reduced penalty. Circumstances or hardship affecting the accused that may result from the penalty shall not be a valid basis for a reduced penalty. In exceptional circumstances, the Honor Council may impose a reduced penalty when, in its judgment, the offender understands, accepts, and can live faithfully under the Honor Code as demonstrated in the offender's statement of understanding of the offense and plan to ensure that the offense will not be repeated. The presiding officer shall remind the Council of the penalty described in Section III.B. Discussion may then take place. At the end of discussion, the presiding officer shall call for a vote by secret ballot. Eight (8) votes are required to impose a reduced penalty. If the offense is directly related to a course, the reduced penalty shall be an "F" in the class in which the offense occurred, and a referral to the Dean of Academic Programs, who will work with the Academic Success Office to follow up on the student's plan to avoid repetition of the offense. In situations when the offense is not tied to a specific course, the panel will set the deviated penalty by simple majority. If a student does not satisfactorily complete the requirements of the deviated penalty on schedule, the penalty will automatically revert to the standard penalty as described in Section III.B and the student will be so informed by the Provost's office in conjunction with the Chair of the Honor Council
- d. Following deliberations, all parties will be called back into the hearing room, and the presiding officer will announce the penalty. The student will be advised that the student may appeal the Council's decision to the Executive Committee in the case of procedural error or new evidence; the hearing will then be adjourned. In the absence of an appeal, the accused will be informed by the Dean of Academic Programs when and how the penalty is to be carried out. The student will be reminded that the penalty for a second violation of the Honor Code is immediate and permanent expulsion from the College.

The outcome of the hearing shall be reported to the faculty member who submitted the case (if applicable) by the Dean of Academic Programs, for grade and class handling purposes.

In the event of a suspension or expulsion, college fees including tuition and board may be partially refunded, the amount to be based upon the proportion of days remaining in the term from the day the suspension or expulsion was initially imposed as a penalty. There will be no refund after the ninth week of the term of enrollment. The student exhausts the appeals process when the President upholds the Academic Honor Council decision. The effective date of refund, if applicable, is the date of the final decision. The student may attend classes during the appeals process provided that he or she meets the cost of the College's fees including tuition and board. In the event of a suspension, a student readmitted to Presbyterian College will receive no transfer credit for coursework taken during the period of suspension.

### **3. Ad Hoc Hearings**

In rare cases, the Honor Council may need to modify the process of a hearing. At such times, the President of the College or the Dean of Academic Programs, in consultation with the Chair of the Honor Council, may appoint an Ad Hoc Judicial Committee, consisting of available students, faculty, and administrators. Such a committee, when employed, shall reflect as much as possible both the proportions and membership of the Honor Council and shall bear the same authority and responsibilities.

## **VI. PROCEDURE FOR APPEALS**

### **A. Petition for Appeal**

The Executive Committee shall accept for consideration two types of appeal: (1) those claiming a procedural error that may have affected the outcome of the case; (2) those presenting new evidence relevant to the case. A petition for appeal must be submitted in writing to the Dean of Academic Programs, or the Chair of the Honor Council within forty-eight (48) hours of the decision of the Honor Council. The petition must state the nature of the appeal (procedural error or new evidence) and must explain its grounds. When the petition is accepted for consideration, the Chair of the Honor Council will attempt to convene the Executive Committee within forty-eight (48) hours of its acceptance.

### **B. Hearing of Appeals by the Executive Committee**

The meeting of the Executive Committee to consider an appeal petition shall be closed to the public. The Executive Committee shall use the transcript of the original hearing to determine if the appeal petition has merit on the grounds of procedural error or new evidence. The Committee may request the testimony of representatives from the investigative team and the defense team if necessary; in the case of an appeal on the grounds of new evidence, the Committee may also call upon other witnesses, including new witnesses if needed.

When members of the Executive Committee agree that all relevant information has been obtained, deliberations shall begin. Following discussion, a vote shall be called. Five (5) votes, including at least three (3) student votes, shall be required to uphold an appeal and to remand the case to the Honor Council.

### **C. Final Appeals**

#### **Procedural Appeals and Appeals on the Grounds of New Evidence**

##### **Scenario A: Executive Committee Denies the Appeal**

If the Executive Committee denies an appeal, the accused may make a formal appeal to the President of the College. The President has the authority to: (1) allow the outcome to stand, (2) remand the case to the Honor Council, or (3) set aside the verdict.

If the Executive Committee denies the appeal but the President remands the case, the subsequent decision of the Honor Council may be appealed only to the President who then has the option to (1) allow the outcome to stand or (2) set aside the verdict.

##### **Scenario B: Executive Committee Remands the Case**

If the Executive Committee remands the case to the Honor Council, the subsequent decision of the Honor Council may be appealed only to the President who then has the option to (1) allow the outcome to stand or (2) set aside the verdict.

#### **General Principles of Appeal**

When remanding a case or setting aside a verdict, the President would make the grounds for that decision known to the Executive Committee of the Honor Council. The decision of the President or of the Academic Honor Council in the case of a remand, is final and shall not be reconsidered in the absence of compelling new evidence.