INFORMATION REGARDING AJC HEARINGS

Honor Code cases may be referred to the Academic Judicial Council (hereinafter “AJC” or “Council”). This Council, made up of Hood students, Hood faculty, and advised by the Director of Residence Life and Judicial Affairs is in place to provide an opportunity for all parties involved in a case to be heard. The Council decides if the Honor Code was violated and, if so, will recommend sanctions (consequences) for the violation(s).

This guide provides a brief outline of the AJC process. If you have any questions, contact the AJC Advisor, (hereinafter sometimes referred to as “Advisor”) at (301) 696-3577.

In this document, “Accused” refers to the student accused of the violation; “Faculty of Record” refers to the faculty or instructional staff member(s) who are making or presenting the accusations or reporting the alleged violations; “Advocate” refers to the advocate chosen by the student, if desired (see the additional information regarding Advocates later in this document); “Witness/es” refers to the person or persons with direct knowledge of the incident that are brought forward by the Accused and/or the Faculty of Record, or summoned by the Council (“character” witnesses are not permitted).

Who is on the Council?
Each hearing consists of:
- A student Chairperson, who votes only to break a tie.
- At least three (3) of the ten student members, each of whom has a vote if in attendance.
- At least one (1) of the two faculty delegates, each of whom has a vote if in attendance.
- A staff Advisor (the Director of Residence Life and Judicial Affairs) who does not have a vote.

How does the Council make decisions?
- The Council reviews all available evidence at the time of the hearing, including, but not limited to, written reports and statements, copies of the work in question, course syllabi, other documents which are relevant, testimony from those with direct knowledge of the alleged violation (the Accused, the Faculty of Record, and any Witnesses), and any physical evidence or relevant testimony admitted by the Chairperson and/or Advisor.
- After all evidence has been reviewed, the Council discusses the case and votes on whether or not the Honor Code was violated based on a preponderance of the evidence. A simple majority is required in this vote for a decision to be made.
- If the Council finds one or more violations, it will recommend sanctions for the student who violated policy. Again, the Council votes on the sanction recommendations and a simple majority determines what is recommended.

How will the hearing be structured?
1. The Council begins by privately reviewing all written information received about the case so they are familiar with the subject matter.
2. After this step is complete, all parties present for the hearing (including Witnesses) are called into the hearing room, given procedural information, and take an oath to tell the truth.
3. At this point everyone except the Accused, the Advocate, and the Faculty of Record is asked to wait outside the room.
4. Any written report(s) from the Faculty of Record are then read aloud. The Faculty of Record has the opportunity to clarify and/or revise what was read and to make an additional verbal statement. The Council and the Accused will have the opportunity to ask questions of the Faculty of Record.
5. If the Accused chooses to provide a written statement, it is then read aloud. The Accused has the opportunity to clarify and/or revise what was read and to make an additional verbal statement. The Council and the Faculty of Record will have the opportunity to ask questions of the Accused.
6. The Council then calls Witnesses, one at a time. First, Witnesses for the Faculty of Record will be called, then Witnesses for the Accused. Each Witness may provide a written statement (which is read aloud), is permitted to clarify or revise their written statement after it is read, and may provide an additional verbal statement. Witnesses are questioned by both the Accused and Faculty of Record. Witnesses may also be questioned by the Council.
7. After all testimony has been heard, the Council hears closing statements from the Faculty of Record, and Accused. If the Accused has brought an Advocate, s/he may make a brief statement on behalf of the Accused at this time (this is the only portion of the hearing during which the Advocate may address the Council).
8. All parties are then asked to wait outside while the Council deliberates. The Council may re-call those who have already testified if further information is needed. The Faculty of Record, Accused, and Advocate are present for any additional questioning.
9. After the Council reaches its decision, the Faculty of Record, Accused, and Advocate are re-admitted to the hearing room. The decision and any recommended sanctions are announced (sanctions are only recommended if the Council finds that a violation occurred).
10. Formal, written notification of the decision follows within three (3) academic days of the hearing. This notification includes the final sanctions (if applicable) as determined by the Advisor.