Conduct Board Hearings

In some instances, cases are referred to the Conduct Hearing Board. This Board, made up of Hood students and advised by the Director of Residence Life and Judicial Affairs is in place to provide an opportunity for all parties involved in this case to be heard. The board will decide if any Hood policies were violated and, if so, will recommend sanctions (consequences) for the violation(s).

This guide provides a basic outline of the Conduct Board process, used when a case is assigned to the Board. If you have any questions, contact the Director of Residence Life and Judicial Affairs at (301) 696-3577.

Definitions:
- **Respondent:** The student who is accused of violating Hood policy.
- **Complainant(s):** The person or people who are making the accusations or reporting the alleged violation. In some cases the complainants may include a victim of the alleged violation.

Who is on the board?
The Board consists of a pool of 10 students (5 residents, 5 commuters) elected by the student body. For a hearing, members are selected from this pool, by the Advisor, to participate in the hearing. Each hearing includes:
- A student serving as chairperson, who votes only to break a tie.
- At least two (2) additional student board members, each of whom has a vote.
- A staff advisor, the Director of Residence Life and Judicial Affairs, who does not have a vote.

How does the Board make decisions?
- The Board reviews all available evidence at the time of the hearing, including, but not limited to, written reports and statements, testimony from those directly involved in the incident (the Respondent, the Complainant(s), and any witnesses), and any physical evidence admitted by the chairperson.
- After all evidence has been reviewed, the Board will discuss the case and vote on whether or not Hood policy was violated. A simple majority is required in this vote for a decision.
- If the Board finds a policy was violated, it will recommend sanctions for the student who violated policy. Again, the Board votes on the sanction recommendations and a simple majority determines what is recommended.

How is a hearing structured?
1. The Board 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 persons 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 Complainant(s) and Respondent is asked to wait outside.
4. Written reports from the Complainant(s) are then read aloud. Each Complainant has the opportunity to clarify and/or revise what is read and to make an additional verbal statement. The Board and the Respondent will have the opportunity to ask questions of the Complainant.
5. If the Respondent chooses to provide a written statement, it is then read aloud. The Respondent has the opportunity to clarify and/or revise what is read and to make an additional verbal statement. The Board and the Complainant will have the opportunity to ask questions of the Respondent.
6. The Board then calls witnesses, one at a time. First, witnesses for the Complainant are called, then witnesses for the Respondent. 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 Respondent and Complainant and by the Board.
7. After all testimony has been heard, the Board hears closing statements from the Complainant and Respondent.
8. The Respondent and Complainant are then asked to wait outside while the Board deliberates. The Board may re-call those who have already testified if further information is needed. Both the Complainant and Respondent are present for any additional questioning.
9. After the Board reaches its decision the Complainant and Respondent are re-admitted to the hearing room. The decision and any recommended sanctions are announced (sanctions are only recommended if the Board finds that a policy was actually violated).
10. Formal, written, notification of the decision follows within five (5) class days of the hearing. This notification includes the final sanctions (if applicable) as determined by the Office of Residence Life.