

The Academic Honor Code: Sanctions And Further Impact

This document, summarizing legislation passed by the Skidmore faculty in October 1995 and revised by the faculty in March 2000, describes the record-keeping and reporting implications for students who have violated the Academic Honor Code. The decision of the faculty applies to all current and future Skidmore students. The sanctions described here are in addition to those presented in the *Student Handbook* and the *New Student Advising and Registration Guide*; they are also in addition to any sanctions imposed by the Student Conduct process and officers of the College. Members of the Skidmore community may seek clarification of any Academic Honor Code issue from the Associate Dean of Faculty with responsibility for student academic affairs.

This document differs from older print versions of the *New Student Advising and Registration Guide* in that it clarifies the following points: (1) students admitting to or found responsible for an academic integrity violation may be withdrawn from national and Skidmore honor societies at the discretion of the honor society, (2) the reporting and eligibility implications of an infraction cannot be set aside or modified by Student or Administrative Conduct Boards, except in the special case of first-year students where the level of offense determines the eligibility implications, (3) the Committee on Academic Standing considers academic integrity violations during its review of students who do not meet minimal standards for continuation, and (4) academic integrity is a factor influencing a student's eligibility to study away and to participate as a Peer Mentor in the First Year Experience.

STUDENT RECORDS IN GENERAL: every effort is made to keep records of Academic Honor Code violations confidential so that the student found responsible for an infraction can move on successfully with his or her academic, co-curricular, and personal life at Skidmore. An Honor Code conviction can become a temporary or permanent part of the student's official file (that is maintained in the Office of the Registrar) only through action taken by a judicial board or by the Dean of Students & Vice President for Student Affairs, the Dean of the Faculty & Vice President for Academic Affairs, the President of Skidmore, or their designees. The Student Conduct process of the College and its procedures are described in *The Student Handbook*. Important exceptions to the general principle of confidentiality are described below.

THE IMPACT OF INFRACTIONS ON ELIGIBILITY AND REPORTING:

1) Effects on honors and prizes: violations of the Academic Honor Code will, with few exceptions, make a student ineligible for the following prizes, distinctions, and honors:

- a) The Dean's List for the period of the sanction (which will generally mean the semester in which the infraction occurred, unless a longer period of "probation" or "warning" has been imposed)
- b) Honors at graduation (cum laude distinctions, departmental honors, etc.); academic prizes awarded at the Honors Convocation or at Commencement; Periclean Scholar Awards; some leadership awards; membership in the Periclean Honors Forum and in national academic honor societies; membership in Phi Beta Kappa (in the case of Phi Beta Kappa, the Skidmore chapter will determine eligibility after a report has been made by the Associate Dean of Faculty). Students already inducted in Skidmore or national honor societies at the time of the infraction may have their membership revoked at the discretion of the society or chapter.

Exceptions to the eligibility impacts described above are as follows:

The Associate Dean of the Faculty (ADOF) with responsibility for student academic affairs, at his or her discretion, will not report, for internal purposes, minor and moderate-level academic infractions committed by first-year students: in other words, in these cases, the eligibility and reporting consequences described in the paragraphs above will not affect the first-year student who has committed one minor or moderate offense. This policy is in keeping with Skidmore's educational mission and recognizes that some students may take longer than others to develop an academic and ethical understanding commensurate with the standards of higher education. Although this limited forgiveness policy will be in effect for first-year students, the ADOF will report on all "multiple or subsequent violations" (see the *Student Handbook*) and on all more serious offenses committed by first-year students. All academic Honor Code violations committed by sophomores, juniors, and seniors will be reported and will incur the Skidmore eligibility consequences described in the paragraphs above. (Note that Phi Beta Kappa requires the reporting of all infractions without exception, including minor offenses committed by first-year students.)

2) Effect on letters of reference and recommendation: when requested by appropriate external organizations, violations of the Skidmore Honor Code will be reported to law schools and to bar examiners, to other graduate schools as requested, on recommendations for transfer to another college, and to other organizations or agencies authorized to check a student's record of integrity. In the reporting process, the ADOF (or his or her designee) will provide an appropriate context so as not to unduly jeopardize the student's academic opportunities before and after graduation.

3) Effect on academic standing: the Committee on Academic Standing (CAS) considers academic integrity violations when reviewing the profiles of students who do not meet minimal standards for continuation at Skidmore. Academic integrity infractions may influence whether the CAS disqualifies a student from further study or grants a one-semester waiver so that the student can improve his or her academic record.

4) Effect on study away: the CAS, along with the Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges, considers a student's academic integrity record when determining eligibility to study away.

5) Other effects: academic integrity violations make a student ineligible to participate in the First Year Experience (FYE) program as a Peer Mentor.

PROCEDURES AND APPEALS:

1) In conformity with the faculty legislation of October 1995 and March 2000, and within the framework and spirit of the Honor Code, the ADOF will decide whether the further impacts described in this document will be enforced. The ADOF's decision will be communicated to the student. The ADOF's determination of further impact may be appealed within five working days of notification to the Dean of the Faculty & Vice President for Academic Affairs as noted in the *Student Handbook*. The student must make clear in writing the grounds for the appeal. The Dean of the Faculty & Vice President for Academic Affairs may not consider the guilt or innocence of the student or similarly broad integrity issues (this is the role of judicial boards), but only whether the ADOF's decision regarding the further impact of the Honor Code violation is in line with the policies adopted by the faculty. This process will offer the student and the academic community in general, protection against any arbitrary or misinformed judgment made by the ADOF.

2) If a student wants to challenge the Honor Code charge itself, the student must request a formal

hearing. Skidmore's Student Conduct process is described in *The Student Handbook*. Note that a hearing board may impose or recommend additional sanctions beyond those described in this document, "The Academic Honor Code: Sanctions and Further Impact." A hearing board may not, however, set aside any of the eligibility and reporting consequences described above unless the hearing board finds the student not responsible for an Honor Code infraction. (In the case of freshman-year infractions, a hearing board might modify the internal eligibility and reporting implications for a first-year student by determining that the infraction was of a "minor or moderate" nature, in keeping with the faculty legislation.)

3) Further appeal process for first-year students: students who have committed violations of the academic Honor Code during their first year of college (i.e., during the freshman year), at a time when they have not become fully integrated into the academic community, will have an additional opportunity to appeal the violation's impact on their eligibility for Skidmore prizes, honors, and memberships (except for membership in Phi Beta Kappa, which is determined solely by the Skidmore chapter of Phi Beta Kappa). Such students may appeal the early infraction directly to the Dean of the Faculty/Vice President for Academic Affairs and the ADOF, who will decide together whether to forgive the early violation of the Honor Code. This consideration will take into account the severity of the original offense and the student's subsequent academic and integrity record at Skidmore. The ADOF and the Dean of the Faculty/Vice President for Academic Affairs may decide to sustain the original decision and its impact, or to reduce or eliminate the impact on the student's eligibility for prizes and honors. The appeal cannot be initiated before the first semester of the student's junior year. The student himself or herself is responsible for initiating this further appeal, in writing, within the designated time frame. The appeal process does not pertain to letters of reference and recommendation, the effect on academic standing, the effect on eligibility to study away, or the effect on eligibility to participate as a Peer Mentor in the FYE as described in #2-5 above.

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