

## 1 History

### **The Honor Code was written for the students, by the students.**

Union College students asked for an honor code in 2006. The students wanted to invoke academic integrity and honor on an individual level for every student to abide by. Both students and faculty wanted an honor code to foster an academic environment of trust, equality, and high ethical standards.

## 2 What our Honor Code means

**An honor code is more than a written document.** It is a culture, a way of thinking, a trust that is formed between students and their peers, and between students and professors. The Code makes explicit Union College's commitment to integrity and to maintaining the standards in the Code. The Honor Code is an expression of pride in academic integrity at Union College.

**The core of the Honor Code is a promise to uphold the standards of academic integrity.** Every student upholds these standards individually by refraining from cheating. Under the Honor Code, students also uphold the standards of Union College by serving on the Honor Council and by maintaining a community that values academic integrity.

## 3 How the Honor Council works

**The Honor Council is made up of 12 students, 3 faculty members, and the Dean of Studies.** All of the members of the Council are in good standing and have applied for and interviewed for their positions. If there is an accusation of a violation of the Honor Code, there will normally be a hearing before a Hearing Board (see §4).

**The Honor Council upholds the Honor Code both by hearing accusations of violations and by educating the community on how to pursue one's academic endeavors with integrity.** Some of these aids include the Writing Center, other help centers such as the Calculus Crisis Center and Bio Back-up, and review sessions or advice from professors, Student Instructors, or Minerva Mentors.

More information is available at [honorcode.union.edu](http://honorcode.union.edu), and you may email questions to [honorcode@union.edu](mailto:honorcode@union.edu).

## 4 Honor Council hearings

### 4.1 Who attends

1. A full Honor Council Hearing Board: 5 members of the Council, at least three of whom are students; the Chair and secretary of the Honor Council and the Dean of Studies, who serve as non-voting members of the Hearing Board

2. The Accused Student, and, optionally, an advisor who is a member of the Union College community
3. The Accuser
4. Witnesses, if appropriate

### 4.2 What happens in the hearing

The Hearing Board hears testimony from the Accuser, the Accused, and any appropriate witnesses. The Hearing Board may question anyone providing testimony.

### 4.3 After the hearing

1. The Honor Council Hearing Board determines whether the Accused is responsible for a violation of the Code; if so, the Hearing Board determines a sanction.
2. The Chair and Dean notify the Accused and the faculty member of the outcome in writing. (All appeals will be heard by the Vice President for Academic Affairs.) The Honor Council provides anonymized summaries of their decisions to the campus community at regular intervals throughout the year, including the outcome and an explanation of the sanction if one was imposed.

## 5 Chair-Dean reviews

An accused student may request a Chair-Dean review and waive the right to a full hearing if the student accepts responsibility for violating the Honor Code, and if the student has not been found responsible for academic misconduct in the past.

### 5.1 Who attends

1. The Chair of the Honor Council and the Dean of Studies
2. The Accused Student, who has accepted responsibility for violating the Honor Code
3. The Accuser

### 5.2 What happens in the meeting

The Chair and Dean facilitate a meeting in which the Accused Student and Accuser discuss the offense.

### 5.3 After the meeting

1. The Chair and Dean determine a sanction.
2. The Chair and Dean notify the Accused and the faculty member of the sanction in writing. At the end of each term, the Chair and Dean provide to the Council anonymized summaries of Chair-Dean reviews, including the violation, sanction, and an explanation of the sanction.

## 6 For discussion: collaboration scenarios

### 6.1

Your good friend, who came to Union with a carefully worked out career path in mind, is taking a general education class with you. Your friend is struggling significantly and is in danger of failing the class, while you are getting an A. Your friend's future employer has strict requirements for applicants' grades in college, and a failing grade in this class could mean that he will not get the job of his dreams — a job for which he seems particularly well suited. He approaches you to explain that if he fails the next test, he will most likely fail the class and his career plans will be ruined. He asks if he can copy off you during the test. Now, the professor is far from vigilant in watching for cheating and so you know that you could let your friend copy from your test and neither of you will be caught.

#### Discussion

1. Why not let him copy? What harm could possibly happen because of it? You won't be caught and you'll be saving his career — so only good could come from it, right?
2. How will you feel about your role in the future if you help him cheat? if you don't help him cheat?
3. Sam is in the same class, was also struggling, and will be applying for fellowships that have strict GPA requirements. Sam attended extra help sessions, found a tutor on the recommendation of the department chair, and, in the end, earned a C. The C was just above the line of what he needed to stay eligible for the fellowships to which he will be applying. What would Sam think of your role in helping your roommate?

### 6.2

You and your roommate are in the same history class and have a paper related to the class discussion due in two days. You have already written your paper while your roommate has been directing his/her attention elsewhere. He/she approaches you and says that he/she is finding this assignment difficult and asks how you approached it.

#### Discussion

1. According to the honor code, can you discuss the assignment with your roommate?

2. After a short discussion, your roommate asks if he/she can look at your essay to get an idea of how to start. According to the honor code, are you allowed to let him/her look at your paper?
3. You decide to let your roommate see your paper and then he/she asks if he/she could bring it to the library just to look at now and then to help him/her get started on their paper. According to the honor code, are you allowed to let him/her borrow your paper for a while?
4. You tell your roommate that he/she can borrow the paper, but on the condition that he/she promises not to plagiarize your work. The following week you are both approached by the professor because the papers are identical. Are you, yourself, guilty of an honor code violation?
5. Discuss where you think the line is between helping your friends to learn and helping them to cheat.

### 6.3

Harry, Sally, Bob, and Alice are all in the same physics lab class and have a formal lab report due soon. The professor has made clear that, regarding lab reports, all students must turn in lab reports in their own words. Students are expected to work with partners to take and analyze the data, but the writing in lab reports must be done by the individual students. Harry and Sally, who are lab partners, get together and discuss the data and graphs. They talk back and forth about whether their data support the theory and how to demonstrate this. They discuss how to make the graph in a way that best demonstrates the main results of the lab. Before this discussion Harry didn't really understand the point of the lab at all, but Sally explained things much better than the professor did and, as a result, Harry comes away with a solid understanding. After the discussion, Harry and Sally go to separate rooms and write up their reports. They turn in the same data tables and the same graph. Their text of all their discussions, though, is clearly different.

Meanwhile, Alice writes up her lab report entirely by herself with no help from Bob. But, the day before the report is due, Bob approaches Alice and asks if he can see her lab report. Alice willingly e-mails her lab report to Bob, who uses it to turn in a nearly identical lab report, with little thought about the meaning of the lab.

#### Discussion

Of these four students, how many, and who, are guilty of violating the honor code?