



# Harvard College Honor Board

## Please Note

This document outlines one vision for the purpose, principles, and processes of the Honor Board. Any final decisions will be made in broad consultation with the academic community.

## Purpose

The Harvard College Honor Board is the institutional embodiment of Harvard College's commitment to the pursuit of truth--*Veritas*. The Honor Board affirms that individuals who are committed to an honor code also acknowledge the demands an honor code makes on the community to uphold it.

## Guiding Principles

The Honor Board is based on the following principles:

1. *Community governance.* Community governance requires faculty, students, and staff to share collective responsibility for upholding the Honor Code, and we believe that the members of the community are in the best position to determine and evaluate cases of academic integrity violations. Community governance also ensures that the Honor Board represents the breadth of the Harvard College community.
2. *Education.* We are committed to an educational approach to academic integrity and a Board that makes decisions through a holistic assessment of the student's life and experiences. The purpose of the Board is to allow each individual student to learn from her/his mistakes while also affirming community members' commitment to academic integrity.
3. *Re-generation.* We recognize that an institution's values can shift and institutions keep their values alive when each generation of the community reexamines, rediscovers, and renews these values. The principles and structure of the Honor Board will be regularly reviewed as directed by the Dean of Harvard College.

## Composition, Structure, Hearing Process, Advising, Sanctions, and Jurisdiction

### Composition

We propose the creation of a new Honor Board, at least half of which consists of Harvard College students.<sup>1</sup> The other members of the Board will consist of faculty, graduate

students who have served as teaching fellows, and administrators, including a strong representation of resident deans. This membership symbolizes the commitment of students as well as faculty and administrators to the community. The Dean of Harvard College (or his or her designee) will serve as Chair of the Honor Board.

Undergraduates will be nominated for the Honor Board by faculty, staff, or other students, and further selection will be made through interviews by the Dean of Harvard College or her/his designee. Although time consuming, this process will provide that students from across the entire spectrum of the Harvard community will be considered.

We hope that a new Honor Board will engage a greater range of faculty members. The ultimate responsibility for selection, appointment, and service on the Honor Board will be held by the Dean of Harvard College.

The Honor Board and the existing Administrative Board will complement each other and consult regularly, as determined by the Dean of the Harvard College.

### **Structure/ Process**

In order both to manage the workload for all members of the Board and to create an atmosphere that is approachable for students appearing before the Board, we propose that the Dean of Harvard College divide the Board into subgroups.<sup>ii</sup> Each subgroup will be responsible for a subset of cases/ responses and act with the full authority of the Honor Board. This administrative division will allow student and faculty members to devote their full energy while also providing a size and structure that will allow students to address the Honor Board directly.

Ordinarily, a single group of the Honor Board will hear a case, including meeting directly with the student who has been accused of a violation of the Honor Code or faculty rules. In extraordinary circumstances, the Dean of Harvard College will consult with the entire Honor Board on how best to proceed.

### **Advising**

The role that resident deans play in advising and counseling students who have been accused of academic dishonesty will not change. However, we recommend creating a new role for students as trained, peer-to-peer advisers for individual students who are accused of academic integrity violations. Along with the resident dean, the peer advisers will provide additional support for students and a continued connection to the community throughout the process. The peer advisers will be trained for this role and in the procedures of the Honor Board. When a student is informed that s/he has potentially violated the Honor Code s/he will have access to one of these peer advisers, should s/he choose. We also recommend that the Honor Board and the peer advisers help students reintegrate upon returning to campus after a required separation.

### **Sanctions**

As part of the creation of an Honor Board and in keeping with the educational mission of the Honor Code, we recommend a review of sanctions to assure that the fullest range of

educational responses is available to the Honor Board. This should include consideration of an option to return cases to individual faculty for in-class sanctions as approved by the Faculty in 2010.

Following such a review, we recommend that extensive discussions with members of the community be conducted before any revisions are adopted. We also recommend that the Honor Board make a regular policy of publishing both aggregate statistical reports and descriptions of cases (with identifying details removed). To affirm the educational value of the Honor Code and to ensure transparency while maintaining the dignity of students appearing before the board, we also recommend that the Honor Board provide annual updates reviewing the outcome of recent cases. Sharing of information of this kind is central to building and maintaining a community of trust. The community as a whole must, in turn, commit to protecting the privacy of students who have made mistakes and are earnestly trying to learn from these mistakes.

### **Jurisdiction**

The Honor Board will have primary responsibility for all cases involving violations of the Honor Code and the Faculty's rules on "Academic Dishonesty" as defined in the Harvard College Handbook for Students.<sup>iii</sup> In the event of questions of jurisdiction between the Honor Board and the Administrative Board of Harvard College, the Dean of Harvard College shall determine the appropriate jurisdiction.

### **Administration**

The Administrative Board of Harvard College currently has two staff members dedicated to Academic Integrity issues, an Assistant Dean and a Case Manager. The existing staff will cover the work of the Honor Board.

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<sup>i</sup> As recommended for discussion by the Harvard College Report of the Committee to Review the Administrative Board of Harvard College in 2009. (<http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic623420.files/ad-board-report.pdf>)

<sup>ii</sup> Also recommended by the 2009 report. In the report, the committee recommended to "Limit the number of people present for students' personal appearances" which often intimidated students and was counterproductive.

<sup>iii</sup> *The Harvard College Handbook for Students 2013-14*

[http://handbook.fas.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k95151&pageid=icb.page584280&pageContentId=icb.pagecontent1262116&state=maximize&view=view.do&viewParam\\_name=Academic%20Dishonesty](http://handbook.fas.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k95151&pageid=icb.page584280&pageContentId=icb.pagecontent1262116&state=maximize&view=view.do&viewParam_name=Academic%20Dishonesty)