

ARTICLE XV STUDENTS

SECTION 15.0. PREAMBLE.

Academic institutions exist for the transmission of knowledge, the pursuit of truth, the development of students, and the general well-being of society. Student participation, responsibility, academic freedom, and due process are essential to the operation of the academic enterprise. As members of the academic community, students should be encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for truth.

Freedom to learn and to explore major social, political, and economic issues are necessary adjuncts to student academic freedom, as is freedom from discrimination, as set forth in the university's non-discrimination policy.

Freedom to learn and freedom to teach are inseparable facets of academic freedom. The concomitant of this freedom is responsibility. If members of the academic community are to develop positively in their freedom; if these rights are to be secure, then students should exercise their freedom with responsibility.

SECTION 15.1. CONDUCT STANDARD DEFINED.

Each student enrolled or in attendance in any college, school or unit under the control of the board and every student organization, association, publication, club or chapter shall obey (1) the laws of the city, state and nation; (2) the bylaws and resolutions of the board, including the rules and regulations for the maintenance of public order pursuant to article 129-a of the education law ("Henderson rules"); and (3) the governance plan, policies, regulations, and orders of the college. Such laws, bylaws, resolutions, policies, rules, regulations and orders shall, of course, be limited by the right of students to the freedoms of speech, press, assembly and petition as construed by the courts.

SECTION 15.2. STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS.

a. Any group of students may form an organization, association, club or chapter by filing with the duly elected student government organization of the college or school at which they are enrolled or in attendance and with an officer to be designated by the chief student affairs officer of the college or school at which they are enrolled or in attendance (1) the name and purposes of the organization, association, club or chapter, (2) the names and addresses of its president and secretary or other officers corresponding in function to president and secretary.

The board recognizes that students have rights to free expression and association. At the same time, the board strongly believes that respect for all members of the university's diverse community is an essential attribute of a great university.

b. Extra-curricular activities at each college or school shall be regulated by the duly elected student government organization to insure the effective conduct of such college or school as an institution of higher learning and for the prevention of activities which are hereafter proscribed or which violate the standards of conduct of the character set forth in bylaw 15.1. Such powers shall include:

1. The power to charter or otherwise authorize teams (excluding intercollegiate athletics), publications, organizations, associations, clubs or chapters, and, when appropriate in the exercise of such regulatory power, the power to refuse, suspend or revoke any charter or other authorization for cause after hearing on notice.

2. The power to delegate responsibility for the effective implementation of its regulatory functions hereunder to any officer or committee which it may appoint.

c. 1. Any person or organization affiliated with the college may file a complaint with the chief student affairs officer if there is reason to believe that a student organization has violated any of the standards of conduct set forth in section 15.1 above. The chief student affairs officer shall promptly investigate any complaint and report the results of that investigation along with a recommendation for appropriate action to the student government which shall take action as it deems appropriate.

2. The complainant or any student organization adversely affected by the action of the student government pursuant to subparagraph c (1) above may appeal to the president. The president may take such action as he or she deems appropriate, and such action shall be final.

d. Each college shall establish a student elections review committee in consultation with the various student governments. The student elections review committee shall approve the election procedures and certify the results of elections for student governments, and student body referenda. Decisions of the student elections review committee may be appealed to the college president, whose decision shall be final. An appeal from the decision of the student elections review committee must be made in writing to the President within ten calendar days of the decision. The President shall consult with the student elections review committee and render a decision as expeditiously as possible which may affirm, reverse, or modify the decision of the student elections review committee.

e. Student government elections shall be scheduled and conducted, and newly elected student governments shall take office, in accordance with policies of the board, and implementing regulations.

SECTION 15.3. STUDENT DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES.

Complaint Procedures:

a. Any charge, accusation, or allegation which is to be presented against a student, and, which if proved, may subject a student to disciplinary action, must be submitted in writing in complete detail to the office of the chief student affairs officer promptly by the individual, organization or department making the charge.

b. The chief student affairs officer of the college or his or her designee will conduct a preliminary investigation in order to determine whether disciplinary charges should be preferred. The chief student affairs officer or his or her designee will advise the student of the allegation against him or her, consult with other parties who may be involved or who have information regarding the incident, and review other relevant evidence. Following this preliminary investigation, which shall be concluded within thirty (30) calendar days of the filing of the complaint, the chief student affairs officer or designee shall take one of the following actions:

(i) Dismiss the matter if there is no basis for the allegation(s) or the allegation(s) does not warrant disciplinary actions. The individuals involved shall be notified that the complaint has been dismissed;

(ii) Refer the matter to mediation; or

(iii) Prefer formal disciplinary charges.

c. In the event that a student withdraws from the college after a charge, accusation or allegation against the student has been made, and the college prefers formal disciplinary charges, the withdrawn student is required to participate in the disciplinary hearing or otherwise to resolve the pending charges and will be barred from attending any other unit of the university until a decision on the charges is made or the charges are otherwise resolved. If the withdrawn student fails to so participate in the disciplinary process without good cause, the college may proceed with the disciplinary hearing in absentia and any decision and sanction will be binding.

Mediation Conference:

d. The mediation conference shall be conducted by a qualified staff or faculty member designated by the chief student affairs officer. The following procedures shall be in effect at this conference:

1. An effort will be made to resolve the matter by mutual agreement.
2. If an agreement is reached, the faculty or staff member conducting the conference shall report his/her recommendation to the chief student affairs officer for approval and, if approved, the complainant shall be notified, and a written memorandum shall be created memorializing the resolution and any consequences for non-compliance.
3. If no agreement is reached, or if the student fails to appear, the faculty or staff member conducting the conference shall refer the matter back to the chief student affairs officer who may prefer disciplinary charges.
4. The faculty or staff member conducting the mediation conference is precluded from testifying in a college hearing regarding information received during the mediation conference.

Notice of Hearing and Charges:

e. Notice of the charge(s) and of the time and place of the hearing shall be personally delivered or sent by the chief student affairs officer of the college to the student at the address appearing on the records of the college, by certified or overnight mail and by regular mail and e-mail to students who have a college e-mail address. The chief student affairs officer is also encouraged to send the notice of charges to any other e-mail address that he or she may have for the student. The hearing shall be scheduled within a reasonable time following the filing of the charges or the mediation conference. Notice of at least five business days shall be given to the student in advance of the hearing unless the student consents to an earlier hearing.

f. The notice shall contain the following:

1. A complete and itemized statement of the charge(s) being brought against the student including the rule, bylaw or regulation he/she is charged with violating, and the possible penalties for such violation.
2. A statement that the student has the following rights:
 - (i) to present his/her side of the story;
 - (ii) to present witnesses and evidence on his/her behalf;
 - (iii) to cross-examine witnesses presenting evidence against the student;
 - (iv) to remain silent without assumption of guilt; and
 - (v) to be represented by legal counsel or an advisor at the student's expense.
3. A warning that anything the student says may be used against him/her at a non-college hearing.

Faculty-Student Disciplinary Committee Procedures:

g. The following procedures shall apply at the hearing before the faculty-student disciplinary committee:

1. The chairperson shall preside at the hearing. The chairperson shall inform the student of the charges, the hearing procedures and his or her rights.
2. After informing the student of the charges, the hearing procedures, and his or her rights, the chairperson shall ask the student charged to respond. If the student admits the conduct charged, the student shall be given an opportunity to explain his/her actions before the committee and the college shall be given an opportunity to respond. If the student denies the conduct charged, the college shall present its case. At the conclusion of the college's case, the student may move to dismiss the charges. If the motion is denied by the committee the student shall be given an opportunity to present his or her defense.
3. Prior to accepting testimony at the hearing, the chairperson shall rule on any motions questioning the impartiality of any committee member or the adequacy of the notice of the charge(s). Subsequent thereto, the chairperson may only rule on the sufficiency of the evidence and may exclude irrelevant, immaterial or unduly repetitive evidence. However, if either party wishes to question the impartiality of a committee member on the basis of evidence which was not previously available at the inception of the hearing, the chairperson may rule on such a motion. The chairperson shall exclude all persons who are to appear as witnesses, except the accused student.
4. The college shall make a record of each fact-finding hearing by some means such as a stenographic transcript, a tape recording or the equivalent. A student who has been disciplined is entitled upon request to a copy of such a record without cost.
5. The student is entitled to a closed hearing but has the right to request an open public hearing. However, the chairperson has the right to hold a closed hearing when an open public hearing would adversely affect and be disruptive of the committee's normal operations.
6. The college bears the burden of proving the charge(s) by a preponderance of the evidence.
7. The role of the faculty-student disciplinary committee is to listen to the testimony, ask questions of the witnesses, review the testimony and evidence presented at the hearing and the papers filed by the parties and render a determination as to guilt or innocence. In the event the student is found to have committed the conduct charged, the committee shall then determine the penalty to be imposed.
8. At the end of the presentations by both sides, the student may introduce additional records, such as character references. The college may introduce a copy of the student's previous disciplinary record, where applicable, provided the student was shown a copy of the record prior to the commencement of the hearing. The disciplinary record shall be submitted to the committee in a sealed envelope and shall not be opened until after the committee has made its findings of fact. In the event the student has been determined to have committed the conduct alleged in the charge or charges the records and documents introduced by the student and the college shall be opened and used by the committee for dispositional purposes, i.e., to determine an appropriate penalty if the charges are sustained.
9. The committee shall deliberate in closed session. The committee shall issue a written decision, which shall be based solely on the testimony and evidence presented at the hearing and the papers filed by the parties.
10. The student shall be sent a copy of the faculty-student disciplinary committee's decision within five days of the conclusion of the hearing, by regular mail and e-mail for students who have a college e-mail address. The chief student affairs officer is also encouraged to send the decision to any other e-mail address that he or she may have for the student. The decision shall be final subject to the student's right of appeal.
11. Where a student is represented by legal counsel the president of the college or his or her designee may request that a lawyer from the general counsel's office appear at the hearing to present the college's case.

12. When a disciplinary hearing results in a penalty of dismissal or suspension for one term or more, the decision is a university-wide penalty and the student will be barred from admission to any other unit of the university while the penalty is being served.

13. Disciplinary penalties shall be placed on a student's transcript and shall remain there unless the committee's decision, the decision on any appeal under section 15.4 below, or a mediation agreement expressly indicates otherwise.

SECTION 15.4. APPEALS.

An appeal from the decision of the faculty-student disciplinary committee may be made to the president who may confirm or decrease the penalty but not increase it. His/her decision shall be final except in the case of dismissals or suspension for one term or more. An appeal from a decision of dismissal or suspension for one term or more may be made to the board committee on student affairs and special programs. Any appeal under this section shall be made in writing within fifteen days after the delivery of the decision appealed from. This requirement may be waived in a particular case for good cause by the president or board committees as the case may be. If the president is a party to the dispute, his/her functions with respect to an appeal shall be discharged by an official of the university to be appointed by the chancellor or his or her designee.

SECTION 15.5. COMMITTEE STRUCTURE.

a. Each faculty-student disciplinary committee shall consist of two faculty members and two student members and a chairperson, who shall be a faculty member. A quorum shall consist of the chair and any two members, one of whom must be a student. Hearings shall be scheduled promptly (including during the summers) at a convenient time and efforts shall be made to insure full student and faculty representation.

b. The president shall select in consultation with the head of the appropriate campus governance body or where the president is the head of the governance body, its executive committee, three (3) members of the instructional staff of that college to receive training and to serve in rotation as chair of the disciplinary committee. If none of the chairpersons appointed from the campus can serve, the president, at his/her discretion, may request that a chairperson be selected by lottery from the entire group of chairpersons appointed by other colleges. The chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the faculty-student disciplinary committee and decide and make all rulings for the committee. He/she shall not be a voting member of the committee but shall vote in the event of a tie.

c. The faculty members shall be selected by lot from a panel of six elected biennially by the appropriate faculty body from among the persons having faculty rank or faculty status. The student members shall be selected by lot from a panel of six elected annually in an election in which all students registered at the college shall be eligible to vote. In the event that the student or faculty panel or both are not elected, or if more panel members are needed, the president shall have the duty to select the panel or panels which have not been elected. No individuals on the panel shall serve on the panel for more than two consecutive years.

d. In the event that the chairperson cannot continue, the president shall appoint another chairperson. In the event that a student or faculty seat becomes vacant and it is necessary to fill the seat to continue the hearing, the seat shall be filled from the respective faculty or student panel by lottery.

e. Persons who are to be participants in the hearings as witnesses or have been involved in preferring the charges or who may participate in the appeals procedures or any other person having a direct interest in the outcome of the hearing shall be disqualified from serving on the committee.

SECTION 15.6. SUSPENSION OR DISMISSAL.

The board reserves full power to dismiss or suspend a student, or suspend a student organization for conduct which impedes, obstructs, or interferes with the orderly and continuous administration and operation of any college, school, or unit of the university in the use of its facilities or in the achievement of its purposes as an educational institution.

The chancellor or his/her designee or a president or his/her designee may in emergency or extraordinary circumstances, temporarily suspend a student, or temporarily suspend the privileges of a student organization or group for cause, pending an early hearing as provided in bylaw section 15.3. to take place within not more than ten (10) business days. Prior to the commencement of a temporary suspension of a student, the college shall give such student oral or written notice of the charges against him/her and, if he/she denies them, the college shall forthwith give such student an informal oral explanation of the evidence supporting the charges and the student may present informally his/her explanation or theory of the matter. When a student's presence poses a continuing danger to person or property or an ongoing threat of disrupting the academic process, notice and opportunity for denial and explanation may follow suspension, but shall be given as soon as feasible thereafter.

SECTION 15.7. THE UNIVERSITY STUDENT SENATE.

There shall be a university student senate responsible, subject to the board, for the formulation of university-wide student policy relating to the academic status, role, rights and freedoms of the student. The authority and duties of the university student senate shall not extend to areas of interest which fall exclusively within the domain of the student governments of the constituent units of the university. Consistent with the authority of the board of trustees in accordance with the education law and the bylaws of the board of trustees, the university student senate shall make its own bylaws providing for the election of its own officers, the establishment of its own rules and procedures, for its internal administration and for such other matters as is necessary for its existence. The university student senate shall have the full rights and responsibilities accorded student organizations as provided in these bylaws. The delegates and alternate delegates to the university student senate shall be elected by their respective constituencies, or by their student governments from the elected members of the respective student governments.

SECTION 15.8. COLLEGE GOVERNANCE PLANS.

The provisions in a duly adopted college governance plan shall not be inconsistent with the provisions contained in this article.

Adopted by the CUNY Board of Trustees
November 28, 2011