Student Conduct at Oberlin

JUDICIAL SYSTEM

THE PURPOSE OF THE Oberlin College Judicial System is to create an environment that is conducive to excellence within and outside of the classroom, that educates students about the relationship between their personal freedom and their responsibilities to their community, that promotes the orderly functioning of the community, that holds all members of the community accountable for their behavior, and that promotes habits of effective and engaged citizenship.

Students are expected to be responsible for their actions and to conduct themselves in accordance with the rules and regulations of the college. Violation of the Oberlin College Code of Conduct shall be grounds for disciplinary action. To become familiar with the college’s rules and regulations consult http://new.oberlin.edu/students/policies. A more detailed explanation of the Judicial System is available online at http://new.oberlin.edu/students/policies/judicial.

PROCESS OVERVIEW:

- Complaint filed
  - Residential Education (minor violations) AND/OR Judicial Coordinator conference
    - Warning/other sanction
    - No charges
  - Sexual Misconduct Process
    - Charges filed
      - Judicial hearing
        - Violation finding—sanction(s) given
          - Possible review (appeal)
        - Mediation
          - Not responsible
      - No charges
DEFINITION OF TERMS

Judicial Coordinator: person designated by the Dean of Students to be responsible for the administration of the overall Judicial System and the rules and regulations thereof

Judicial Board: group of individuals appointed by the Student Senate and authorized by the college to determine whether or not a student has violated the rules and regulations and to impose sanctions

Community Board: group of individuals authorized by the college to hear defined categories of cases and to review cases heard by the Judicial Board

Mediation: a facilitated discussion sought as an alternative to formal judicial action when the charges are minor. Students may be referred to the Oberlin College Dialogue Center through the Office of the Ombudsperson

Sanction: disciplinary measures assigned to students after being found responsible for violating college policy

Hearing Officers: individuals within the Office of Residential Education who are authorized by the Dean of Students to investigate reports and conduct administrative hearings with limited sanctioning authority

SANCTIONS

A record of all educational interventions and sanctions, including verbal warnings, becomes a part of a student’s permanent disciplinary record that is stored in the Office of the Dean of Students for a minimum of seven years. Whenever possible, sanctions for violations of the Code of Conduct will be educational in nature. Violations affecting the health and safety of members of the Oberlin College community are deemed to be the most serious and may result in more serious consequences.

This non-exhaustive list of sanctions should serve to alert students to the range of possible sanctions or requirements.

Warning
Fines
Limitations on participation
Counseling
Campus/community work and educational workshops
Residence hall room change
Restitution
Denial of residence on campus
Probation or deferred probation
Suspension or deferred suspension
Withholding of degree
Dismissal from the college (expulsion)
**STUDENT RIGHTS**

No part of the Rules and Regulations are intended to abrogate the civil rights of students, either as members of the college or as members of the greater college community.

Civil Rights: Oberlin students are members of the college and the greater public communities. The college supports students in the exercise of their civil rights and the free exchange of ideas. Students have the right to be free from harassment and harm for reasons of their gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, religion, national origin, ethnic identification, age, political affiliation, ideology, or physical or mental disability. Students have the right to enjoy a reasonable degree of privacy, within the constraints imposed by living together in close quarters.

Due Process: Students at Oberlin College will be treated equally and fairly under the terms of the Judicial System.

Freedom from Unwarranted Search: Oberlin respects students’ right to privacy. The college and its officials abide by set procedures pursuant to entering or searching college property leased by or assigned to students with the understanding that this procedure in no way limits bona fide law enforcement for warranted searches.

Responsibility and the Law: Oberlin students shall accept full responsibility for their own actions under federal, state, and local laws. They shall recognize the rule of law and expect no special immunity on account of their student status. Students shall abide by college regulations and the decisions of the college’s judicial bodies. When students incur penalties prescribed by civil authorities, they may also be subject to further discipline by the college Judicial System. When students of the college are charged with a violation of law, the college has no obligation to assist them.

FERPA: The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student educational records. Our office is required to maintain strict confidentiality of information pertaining to student discipline files, but we generally encourage students to discuss their discipline cases with parents/guardians. If a student under 21 years of age has violated alcohol or drug policy and the student is at risk of suspension, expulsion or eviction, the college may notify the student’s parents, of those facts. Students can authorize parents/guardians access to their information by filing a FERPA waiver form.

**ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION OPTIONS**

Individuals who need help resolving a conflict, want to raise a concern, or just explore their options may seek help from the Office of the Ombudsperson. The office offers a number of services through the Oberlin College Dialogue Center, including mediation and facilitation, as well as educational forums and workshops. A judicial coordinator may refer students involved in judicial matters to the Oberlin College Dialogue Center (OCDC) through the Office of the Ombudsperson when both parties agree to mediation as the appropriate means for addressing their dispute, and when the violation is sufficiently minor that it would not likely result in suspension or dismissal, as suggested by precedent.

**RELATED DISCIPLINARY SYSTEMS**

**HONOR SYSTEM**

The purpose of the Honor System is to maintain a high standard of academic integrity in all curricular work, to respect students’ ability to adhere to this standard, and to encourage further development of this ability through the efforts of faculty, administration, and students.

The Honor Code provides the foundation for the intellectual freedom that is encouraged and shared by all members of the academic community and embodies the belief that true academic freedom and discourse can only exist within a framework of honesty, integrity, and responsibility. Each individual should respect all fellow
members of the Oberlin community and vigorously support the protected nature of intellectual property. It is expected that the core values inherent to the Honor Code will be adopted, upheld, and adhered to by all members of the Oberlin College community.

**SEXUAL OFFENSE POLICY**

Oberlin College seeks to provide and maintain the best possible learning and working environment. For this reason, the college will not tolerate sexual offense in the work or academic setting. The college has adopted a policy that offers definitions and guidelines to help its members understand what behaviors constitute sexual offense on the campus and according to state, local, and federal law. The administration of the Sexual Offense Policy is a primary responsibility of the Office of Equity Concerns. As is the case with the Judicial System and the Honor System, the efficacy of the policy depends upon the members of the community to embrace the concepts outlined in the policy. The college’s ability to promote an educational and work environment that is intolerant of sexual misconduct depends upon the commitment of individuals (whether victims or witnesses) to report behaviors that appear by definition to constitute sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual battery, or rape. The full policy can be reviewed at new.oberlin.edu/students/policies/.

A student who experiences or witnesses a suspected incidence of sexual misconduct should report it directly to the Equity Concerns administrator or choose to speak with any trusted member of the college’s faculty or staff who have a duty to report the matter. The college will provide appropriate support to parties involved in the internal college process. Members of the community who are found responsible for a sexual offense through the internal college process are subject to appropriate college adjudication processes and disciplinary action.

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