

# CONDUCT PROCESS

Alverno College values individual rights within a community setting. To ensure that this learning environment is maintained for everyone in the community, the Student Conduct Process has been developed to uphold the standards of our community. Students are expected to be effective citizens and to exhibit behavior that promotes a positive learning environment. Individuals exhibiting unacceptable behavior on or off campus shall be subject to the student conduct process.

The Assistant Dean of Students coordinates the overall student conduct process, as designated by the Dean of Students. This includes overseeing the evaluation of both the process and procedures, as well as training any staff members involved in the process.

A student's official file is maintained by the Academic Advising Office. A student's conduct history is maintained by the Dean of Students Office. When serious violations of college policy occur, the Academic Advisor may be included in the documentation to include in the student's official file.

## MEDIATION

In some instances, the conflict may be more interpersonal in nature. In these situations, mediation may be utilized to resolve the conflict informally. The goal is to implement a process that involves all parties with the intent of resolving the dispute and preventing it from occurring again. Examples of responses could include, but are not limited to:

- A facilitated conversation between involved parties
- Restorative circles – Several members of the Alverno College staff are trained as facilitators for restorative circles. Those individuals could be brought in to work with those affected by the incident.

If the participants in mediation fail to follow through on the agreed upon outcome, the situation may be referred to the conduct process.

## STUDENT RIGHTS IN THE CONDUCT PROCESS

Students who have allegedly violated the Student Code of Conduct are entitled to the following procedural protections. The student:

- Will be heard and treated with respect.
- Will be considered not responsible unless found responsible.
- May request a different Conduct Coordinator if there is a perceived conflict of interest.
- May invite a support person to assist with the process (i.e. parent, spouse, guardian, friend, faculty/staff member). This person can advise the student, accompany the student to the meetings, and assist the student in preparation of any appeal (if applicable). Attorneys may not engage in our conduct process. If the student desires a support person for the process, but does not have someone to serve in that role, a support person will be assigned to the student.
- May review investigator notes to ensure all relevant witnesses have been interviewed and information gathered.
- May appeal.

## CONDUCT COORDINATOR

When an incident occurs, a report is generated. Students, CAs, Res Life staff, Campus Safety, other college staff, or anyone in the Alverno Community may submit an incident report. The Assistant Dean of Students and/or Director of Residence Life reviews the incident report and refers it to the appropriate administrator, who is then considered the Conduct Coordinator. Generally, the following coordinator structure is followed:

- For Resident Students – The Residence Hall Director or Assistant Director
- For Resident Students who have demonstrated repeat behavior concerns - The Director of Residence Life or the Assistant Dean of Students
- For Commuter Students - The Assistant Dean of Students
- For Registered Student Groups – The Director of Student Activities and Leadership

\*The Dean of Students may also serve as the Conduct Coordinator in instances where there may be a perceived conflict of interest.

## Responsibilities of the Conduct Coordinator

- To protect the relevant rights of students
- To interpret and enforce campus policies
- To consider all information carefully before coming to a conclusion
- To assess the student's understanding of the behavior and its impact on the community
- To assess the seriousness of the behavior
- To determine the level of responsibility
- To determine appropriate sanctions when violations of the student conduct code occur.

## INVESTIGATION & DECISION MAKING

Alverno College utilizes an investigator model to adjudicate allegations of code of conduct violations. This means that one or more trained investigators conducts the investigation and drafts a report. The conduct coordinator then reviews the report and issues a finding.

## RIGHT TO AN APPEAL

All students involved in the student conduct process have a right to appeal a conduct process decision by writing the appropriate appellate administrator within 3 business days of notification. The following is a list of appellate administrators based on the assigned Conduct Coordinator:

- Conduct Coordinator: Assistant Director of Residence Life; Appellate Administrator: Director of Residence Life
- Conduct Coordinator: Director of Residence Life; Appellate Administrator: Assistant Dean of Students
- Conduct Coordinator: Assistant Dean of Students; Appellate Administrator: Dean of Students

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- Conduct Coordinator: Director of Student Activities and Leadership;  
Appellate Administrator: Assistant Dean of Students

The appeal statement from the student should include sufficient detail to permit the evaluation of the merit of the grounds for appeal. The student is granted only one appeal. Students may appeal in writing if:

1. A procedure or substantive error occurred that significantly impacted the outcome of the administrative meeting.
2. To consider new evidence unavailable during the original investigation that could substantially impact the original finding or sanction. A summary of this new evidence and its potential impact must be included.
3. The sanction(s) imposed are substantially disproportionate to the severity of the violation.

The Appellate Administrator may review the letter and evidence individually or may appoint an Appeal Panel to review the request. The Appellate Administrator may do one of the following:

1. Affirm the finding and the sanction originally determined,
2. Affirm the finding and change the sanction,
3. Decide that the finding was not appropriate for the behavior and dismiss the case.

Students shall receive written notice of the results of their appeal no later than 3 business days after filing the appeal. The decision of the Appellate Administrator is final.

### SUMMARY OF CONDUCT PROCESS

1. Incident occurs and a report is generated.
2. Depending on the severity of the allegations, a preliminary investigation may take place to gather information.
3. If necessary, initial remedial actions may be imposed at this time.
4. Conduct Coordinator is assigned and requests a meeting to discuss the process with the respondent(s).
5. In this meeting:
  - a. If the responding student takes responsibility and the behavior is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct,
    - i. The Conduct Coordinator imposes a sanction and sets a due date for the sanction.
    - ii. The Conduct Coordinator sends the respondent a written summary of the meeting and findings.
  - b. If the responding student does not take responsibility or more information needs to be obtained, further investigation will take place.
    - i. An investigation could involve several meetings with involved parties.
    - ii. Investigator meets with the responding student to summarize the situation and findings.

- iii. Student may submit a written response within 5 business days.

- iv. Investigator discusses information gathered with the conduct coordinator.

- v. Conduct Coordinator meets with the student to deliver finding.

1. Student is then either found responsible, not responsible, or not enough evidence to make a determination.
2. Student receives the outcome in writing within 2 business days.

Additional notes regarding the process:

1. If several students are involved in an incident, the individuals are heard alone, not as a group.
2. If the complainant makes an accusation, which, after investigation, is determined to have been filed with bad faith or the intent to cause harm, the person filing the complaint can be subject to discipline.
3. If a student does not appear for a requested meeting, a decision may be made without the student's input based on the evidence available.