Opening Message

One of the College’s oldest traditions is its student-administered honor system which works to uphold our Honor Code’s prohibition on lying, cheating and stealing throughout our scholarly community. Under the guidance of the Honor Code, our community prides itself on the trust and respect that flourishes between individual students and between students and faculty.

The Honor Council implements a variety of campus initiatives to educate students and faculty on the importance of the Honor Code, and acts as a judiciary body to investigate and hear cases of possible Honor Code violations, ensuring due process and balancing our community values. In this report, we provide an overview of cases processed by the Council and the ongoing initiatives and programs developed to maintain the College’s community of trust.

Henry Crossman & Amelia Nell
Chair and Vice Chair, Undergraduate Honor Council
Case Outcomes

The Honor Council evaluates alleged cases of lying, cheating and stealing. Elected in January, the 2018-2019 Undergraduate Honor Council has or is reviewing 46 cases of alleged violations reported in the Spring 2018 semester. Alleged violations included 40 reports of cheating, 4 reports of lying, and 2 reports of stealing. Students were found responsible in 90% of completed cases.

Reported Violations

- Cheating: 87%
- Stealing: 9%
- Lying: 4%

Cheating violations constituted the majority of cases. Half of all cheating cases reported were classified as unauthorized assistance/collaboration. Plagiarism was the next most frequent reported violation. More specific information on case outcomes is publicly available on the Dean of Students Office website.

Cheating Violations

- Direction Violation: 30%
- Plagiarism: 30%
- Time Constraint: 5%
- Unauthorized Assistance: 5%
- Use of Unauthorized Materials: 50%
If a student is found responsible for committing a violation of the Honor Code, the Council imposes sanctions. In evaluating violations, Council members classify cheating into one of three “levels” and lying or stealing charges as major or minor violations. Though the Council has flexibility in determining appropriate sanctions for a violation, the classification level guides sanction decision-making and is a mechanism for ensuring consistent sanctioning across cases. Primary sanctions range from a warning to permanent dismissal, depending on the level of violation committed, previous disciplinary history, and intent, extent, and impact of the violation on the community. The Council may impose additional sanctions or recommendations with the goal of restoring the community of trust, creating opportunities for students to contribute positively to the W&M community and developing skills to prevent future violations.
Council Initiatives & Committee Work

Students are most likely to adhere to the Honor Code when they are given the knowledge and guidance needed to succeed on their own merit. Understanding this, the Council’s committees plan initiatives that promote the importance of the Code, support best strategies for honorable decision making and help foster an environment where students feel most supported.

Orientation

The Orientation Committee, with the help of the Office of First Year Experience, plans mandatory sessions to inform new students of our campus’s community values. This fall, the Committee will also be hosting a roundtable with international students to discuss helpful strategies for citing sources and navigating professors’ collaboration policies.

Outreach

The Outreach Committee uses publications, social media and campus-wide initiatives to educate students about the Code and advertise important supportive resources. The Committee also provides coffee and relaxation activities to help relieve student stress during final exams. The committee will be hosting an Ethics Week this October to engage students in discussions about honorable decision making. Marc Edwards, the whistleblower in the Flint water crisis, will serve as the week’s keynote speaker.

Faculty

The Faculty Liaison Committee educates faculty members about W&M’s honor policies. Please contact the Council if you would like the committee to present at your next department meeting. This fall, the Committee is also asking faculty to participate in a survey to gauge their experience with the Code and with the Council. The survey can be completed here: https://wmsas.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6zZ6k8tLZW3fB7T

Rules

The Rules Committee works internally to strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of the Council’s policies. The committee has been working to improve the Council’s election policies and also to create new guidance materials to ensure consistent sanctioning for Honor cases.

Council Oversight

Equity and due process for students going through the Honor Process is a top priority for the Council. While the Council has internal procedures to protect student rights and ensure fair proceedings, students can appeal Council decisions to an independent appeals committee. Policy and procedures of the Honor Council are governed by the Honor System Advisory Committee. Both the Conduct and Honor Appeals Committee and the Honor System Advisory Committee include W&M students, faculty, and staff.
The Honor Process

William & Mary’s multi-stage Honor Process ensures due process, protects student rights, and respectfully maintains the College’s climate of integrity and community of trust. The Honor Process consists of four steps:

Initial Meeting - Respondent is informed of his/her rights and duties according to the Student Code of Conduct.

Investigation - Investigation committee interviews the respondent and reporting party and consolidates all material evidence into a comprehensive report.

Sufficient Evidence Panel - Three Council members review the investigation report to determine if there is enough evidence to proceed to hearing. Formal charges are assigned.

Judgement & Sanction Hearings - All evidence and testimony is reviewed by a panel of six Council members. The panel determines if the student is responsible for the honor violation and assigns an appropriate sanction(s). Primary sanctions can range from a warning to permanent dismissal.

Optional Early Resolution

For less severe suspected honor violations, a faculty member may propose the option of an early resolution to the student. The faculty member proposes a grade penalty and then three members of the Council review the summary of the violation to assign an appropriate additional sanction if one is necessary. Faculty members must contact Community Values & Restorative Practices to determine if a case is eligible for early resolution.

Community Values & Restorative Practices

When assessing an Honor Code violation, the Council determines sanctions with consequences that reflect the seriousness of a violation but that also are educational and provide opportunities for the responsible student to restore relationships harmed by their actions.

The Council frequently assigns restorative sanctions in addition to a primary sanction. These include: required community service, academic enrichment workshops, recommended counseling, time management seminars, academic integrity seminars, reflection papers and letters of apology.

Contacting the Honor Council

Campus Center Room 007
Monday - Friday, 10 am — 3 pm
honorcouncil@email.wm.edu
www.facebook.com/wmundergraduatehonorcouncil

Honor Council Affiliates

Conduct and Honor Advisor Program (CHAP)
Provides respondents with a trained student advisor throughout the Honor Process.

Medical Review Committee (MRC)
A committee of health professionals that evaluates medical documentation and determines the role that a health condition played in student’s honor violation.

Community Values & Restorative Practices
Formerly known as the Office of Student Conduct, the staff provides guidance and expertise in Council proceedings.