Information for Support Persons

Our college judicial system focuses on taking an educational approach to disciplinary action. Through our disciplinary process, students are afforded the opportunity to meet with a judicial officer to come to an agreement on sanctions (called “summary action”), or are offered the option to appear before a judicial hearing board. Below is more information about both of these processes, and the role of an support person in the judicial hearing.

Summary Action: This is an agreement that the student and judicial officer come to together, where the incident is discussed and appropriate sanctions are assigned. The student signs, agreeing to these sanctions, and waives their right to attend a hearing board. Further, there is no appeal for this process as it is always the student’s right to appear before a hearing board in lieu of taking summary action. While a student is welcome to bring an support person to a summary action meeting, it is generally not necessary.

Judicial Hearing Board: On campus, we have two hearing boards. The first is the Residence Hall Hearing Board, which generally hears lower-level cases (such as first-level drugs/alcohol, hall sports, or room conflicts). The second is the Student Faculty Hearing Board, which generally hears upper-level cases (generally speaking those in which the student would be considered for suspension, including physical violence, 2nd/3rd level alcohol/drug offenses, theft, etc.). Students are encouraged to bring an support person to the hearing board to assist them in preparing their case and understanding the campus process.

What is the role of an support person?

A good support person is one who helps the student understand the campus judicial system (in collaboration with the judicial officer or Dean of Students), helps the student prepare his/her case, and is available to assist the student in the hearing with understanding the rules/processes. A support person is not required to believe the student is “innocent”, nor is the support person intended to “advocate” for the student. It is the student’s responsibility to prepare his/her case. Additionally, the support person is not permitted to meet one-on-one with the Dean of Students or judicial officer to discuss the case without the student present. If the student has questions about his/her case, the Dean of Students/judicial officer is always glad to meet with the student and the support person is welcome to attend that meeting if the student chooses to invite him/her.

In the hearing, the student must present his/her own case without assistance from the support person. The support person is not permitted to speak in the hearing or ask questions. If the support person and student (advisee) need to speak, the student can ask the Chair for a brief recess to confer with his/her support person outside of the hearing room. It is up to the Chair to determine if this is appropriate during the hearing. If an support person speaks or is otherwise disruptive during the hearing, the Chair will ask the support person to leave and the support person will not be permitted to return to the hearing.

If you have any questions about your role as a support person or assistance with understanding the campus judicial system, please don’t hesitate to contact the Office of the Dean of Students at any time at 386-7120.