



LaGrange College  
Honor Council  
New Member  
Handbook

# The LaGrange College Honor Code:

*As a member of the student body of LaGrange College, I confirm my commitment to the ideals of civility, service, and excellence. Recognizing the significance of personal integrity in establishing these ideals within our community, I pledge that I will not lie, cheat, steal, nor tolerate these unethical behaviors in others.*

# **Welcome to the Honor Council!**

Congratulations on your acceptance into the LaGrange College Honor Council!

You are now a member of LaGrange College's foremost defender of academic integrity. With this membership comes responsibility that may be new to you, and this handbook will hopefully help you better understand your expectations as a member of the Honor Council and your responsibilities and duties as a member too.

Please take the time to read over this short book carefully, and keep it handy for any cases you oversee in the future so we can all be sure to stay consistent and fair in our decisions!

# What is the Honor Council?

The Honor Council is a group of upstanding students who hear cases of suspected violations to the Honor Code of LaGrange College. All students are bound by this code to be honest and ethical with their school work here, but that does not mean every student is. When a professor suspects a student of cheating, they will report that student to the Honor Council, and if a violation is found to have occurred the Council will decide on a sanction. We exist to ensure a student perspective is maintained at all times when there may be a violation, and to guarantee no student receives unfair treatment for their given set of circumstances.

# What are my responsibilities as member of the Honor Council?

Members of the Honor Council have a set of responsibilities different to any organization on Campus.

- Confidentiality
  - First and foremost every member of the Honor Council is sworn to silence for every case that comes to them. Under no circumstances should you speak of the details of a closed or ongoing case to another person not on the Council, including the professor or student involved.
- Timeliness
  - The Honor Council can meet up to two hours every week, though we rarely meet that often. Every member on the council has the responsibility to be timely and respectful to all others meeting. These meetings are not optional, if you are unable to be at one you must inform the Honor Council President twenty-four hours or more before the meeting.

# What are my responsibilities as member of the Honor Council?

- Bias Aversion
  - When hearing cases, every council member is expected to avoid bias as much as possible, including excusing themselves from any cases involving people they personally know without exception.
- Consistency
  - The members of the Honor Council must be consistent in their sanctioning, meaning as best as possible they must give a similar sanction to similar cases. While there is room for discussion for unique cases, generally consistency is key. The decision of the Council is also the decision of all members, regardless of how you voted. Be consistent with the Council's decisions.
- Academic Integrity
  - As a member of the Honor Council, we are held to a higher standard. Not only must we always show academic integrity, but we must report any instance we witness of a student violating the Honor Code without exception.

# What is considered a violation of the Honor Code?

Violations of the Honor Code can come in many forms, the most common being direct or indirect cheating on school assignments such as essays, quizzes, and exams. But that is not where the Honor Code ends.

Professors can report anything they believe to be violations to the Council, and it is up to us to determine whether or not they are first, and a sanction if necessary. It is possible for the Honor Council to hear and determine a violation to the Honor Code despite the action not falling under any of the officially listed violations.

On the following page are all officially listed Honor Code Violation scenarios. They are also available within the LaGrange College Student Handbook.

# Official List of Violations

- Academic cheating, including but not limited to the unauthorized use of books or notes, copying, or collaboration on examinations or any graded coursework
- Unauthorized use of electronic devices and/or programs for or during examinations or any graded coursework
- Plagiarism—the misuse of another person's words or ideas, presenting them as one's own, regardless of intent
- Lying or presenting false information related to any academic matter
- Forgery or misuse of official college documents
- Theft of college property related to academic work
- Aiding another in any of the above
- Failure to report a violation of the Honor Code
- Failure to appear before the Honor Council as requested
- Failure to maintain confidentiality regarding a case
- Any dishonest conduct related to Cultural Enrichment requirements, including but not limited to, taking credit for attendance when one has not attended an event, either in whole or in part; or aiding another in attempting to take credit for attending an event one has not attended



# What happens when a potential violation is reported?

When a professor reports a potential violation to the Honor Council first the Honor Council President connects with the student and has a preliminary meeting with them alongside an Honor Council Faculty Advisor. At this meeting the student is given the option between two actions:

## Self Report:

- In a self report case, the student personally admits to violating the Honor Code and accepts the ramifications. They meet before the Honor Council on their own and explain their actions and how they violated the Honor Code. The Council then determines a sanction befitting that violation.

## Hearing:

- In a hearing case, the student refutes the accusation of violating the Honor Code. That student and the reporting professor then meet with the Honor Council and each describe the circumstances of the accusation. The Council then determines whether or not a violation has occurred and, if so, what sanction will be given to the student.

# What sanctions can the Honor Council give?

If the Honor Council determines a violation to the Honor Code has occurred, we are obligated to sanction the student involved with one of the following penalties.

- A maximum of half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) credit on the related assignment at the discretion of the professor
- A zero on the related assignment
- The final grade in the course lowered by one letter grade
- An F in the course
- Suspension from the College for one term, excluding summer, in a grade-related offense
- Suspension from the College for one term, excluding summer, and an F in the course in a grade-related offense
- Dismissal from the College and an F in the course in a grade-related offense
- Revocation of a degree

In addition to these sanctions, every student found in violation of the Honor Code is assigned a two page remediation paper and asked to have a follow up meeting with the Honor Council Remediation Officer and the reporting professor. The Honor Council is obligated to ensure a consistent and fair use of these sanctions based on the severity of the violation and the context of the case.

# Officers of the Honor Council

The Honor Council is more than just the Council itself, for those who want a more hands on role in securing Academic Integrity there are four officer positions in the Council:

President:

- The Honor Council President handles the preliminary casework for every Honor Council Case, presides over every Honor Council Meeting, and acts as the spokesperson for the Honor Council. They are not permitted to vote in any case, unless there is a tie among the Council.

Secretary:

- The Honor Council Secretary presides over any case where the President must excuse themselves or otherwise be absent. They also keep records of all Honor Council Meetings.

Appeals Officer:

- The Honor Council Appeals Officer serves as the voice of the Honor Council in any case that is appealed. They are not permitted to vote in any case except for those that have been appealed.

Remediation Officer:

- The Honor Council Remediation Officer handles all closing casework anytime a sanction is determined, including collecting required Remediation Papers and presiding over Remediation Meetings.

All positions are elected for a given school year before the end of the previous school year, typically during the Spring Semester. All elections are determined through simple majority, and any tie is settled through a game of Rock, Paper, Scissors.

# Can I be removed from the Honor Council?

The Honor Council is one of the most important organizations at LaGrange College. As such, the members are held to higher standards, and any members who fault from those standards too often may be removed from the Council and replaced. The primary reasons a member may be removed from the Council are:

- Too many absences from Honor Council Meetings.
  - Every member is granted three excused or unexcused absences before their removal is discussed. Three unexcused absences alone results in an immediate removal.
- Breach of confidentiality.
  - Any member who is found breaching the confidentiality of the Honor Council, in other words talking about cases outside of Honor Council meetings, is immediately removed from the Council. This member will also risk being brought before the Honor Council or Social Council for their violation of the Honor Code.
- Violating the Honor Code.
  - Any member who is accused of violating the Honor Code is temporarily removed from the Council while their case is heard. If a violation is found to occur, that member is immediately removed from the Honor Council in addition to any sanction the Council determines.
- Dereliction of Duty.
  - Any Officer found in dereliction of their duties can be removed by the Council by following the procedure detailed in the Honor Council Bylaws.

Even after their removal, a student is still bound by confidentiality for any case they were present for and can still be punished for breaching that confidentiality.