Academic Honor Board Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is Honor Board?
The Academic Honor Board is the body that adjudicates infractions of the Academic Honor Code. These infractions include, but are not limited to, cases of academic dishonesty (plagiarism, failure to cite properly, cheating) and time violations on exams (overtimes).

The Honor Board is composed of eight voting members including sophomore, junior, senior, and Ada Comstock representatives, three faculty members, one from each academic division, and the Dean of the College. The chair, normally a senior, the secretary, normally a junior, and the class dean of the student before the Honor Board are non-voting members.

2. When does a student appear before the Honor Board?
A student appears before Honor Board if she has been reported to the Board by a member of the faculty, a fellow student, or, in the case of an overtime infraction for a self-scheduled exam, by the Registrar.
A meeting is called after either the Dean of the College or the Chair of the Academic Honor Board has been notified (in writing) of a violation and the Chair has had an opportunity to speak with the accused party.

3. What is the usual range of the sanctions?
There is no standard sanction. Normally the Honor Board issues a sanction that affects the grade of the assignment in question or the course grade. Students found in violation of the code will not be allowed to drop or change the grading option for the course in question. In the case of a very serious or repeated offense the Honor Board may recommend to the President of the College that the student be suspended or permanently separated from the college (expelled.)

4. Can the Academic Honor Board suspend or expel students?
The Honor Board may recommend expulsion or suspension to the President in the case of repeated or egregious infraction(s) of the Honor Code. This action is rare.

5. Who will be notified of the allegation of a violation of the Honor Code?
Apart from the members of the Honor Board, only the Class Dean will be notified. In cases where the accuser is a student and an accused student is found in violation, the professor in question will not be informed of the details and will be asked only to apply the sanction given by the Honor Board. The accuser is not informed of the outcome.

6. How confidential are Honor Board proceedings?
All proceedings of the Honor Board are confidential. All information brought before the Honor Board will remain strictly confidential. Neither Honor Board members nor those called before the Honor Board will discuss the case outside the meeting.
7. Will a violation be reported on my college transcript?
   Not normally. In egregious cases, the Honor Board may decide as part of the sanction to put a note
   on the student’s transcript. A record of the violation will be kept in the Dean of the College’s Office.
   When graduate schools or professional schools inquire about Honor Board cases, the records will be
   reported by the Dean of the College.

8. What happens at a meeting?
   The members of the Honor Board have copies of whatever materials are necessary to their
   understanding of the case. Those making the charge and those being charged will separately be
   afforded the opportunity to explain the situation and will have as much time as they need (accused
   and accuser do not confront each other). Members of the Honor Board are free to ask questions to
   clarify any points that they may not understand of anyone who appears before the Board. After
   testimony is heard from all concerned parties, the Honor Board deliberates on the case and typically
   makes a decision during the meeting. All affected parties are informed of the outcome within 24
   hours of the decision.

9. Do I have to be alone at a meeting?
   You may be accompanied by any member of the Smith College community to the meeting of the
   Honor Board. That person is there as your support and may not address the Board. Your class dean
   is also your advisor before and during the resolution of the charge.

10. Should I meet with my Class Dean before the meeting?
    Yes, you are required to meet with your Class Dean. Doing so will help you to further understand
    why you are being called before the Honor Board and the Honor Board’s procedures.

11. What is the role of the Class Dean at the meeting?
    Your Class Dean attends the meeting as your adviser. If you do not understand a question, you may
    ask them for clarification or consult with him/her during the meeting. The Class Dean for the
    appropriate year will accompany any 5-College student brought before the Honor Board.

12. Should I meet with the Chair of the Honor Board?
    Yes, if you are called you must meet with the Chair.

13. Will being brought to the Honor Board affect my financial aid?
    A student’s financial aid package is not be affected by Honor Board’s decisions.

14. Must I attend the meeting?
    Yes, students called before the Honor Board are required to appear at the time set by the Chair.
    Meetings with the Honor Board take precedence over all other activities.

15. Do I need to bring anything with me to the hearing?
    You should bring a written statement that explains the alleged infraction. You may read the
    statement while you are before the Honor Board and the statement will be kept with the file about
the case. You may want to bring notes or any other materials that you think will be useful in explaining the matter before the Honor Board.

16. *Is there an appeals process?*
   Yes. All Honor Board cases may be appealed in writing to the President of the College within 14 days of the date of the decision letter.

17. *Where is the Honor Code published?*
   The Honor Code can be found in the online student handbook by typing in Honor Code in the search function of the Smith Website or at this address: