



Joliet Junior College Office of the Dean of Students

A Brief Guide for Student Advocates

"The goal in the disciplinary process is to discover the truth, and then to provide education and remediation for the student found in violation of the code." Nancy S. Footer, 1996.

Preparation

- ◆ Remember that your main responsibilities are (1) to help the student understand the conduct system and figure out what he or she wants; (2) to help the Conduct Panel understand the situation from the point of view of the student you are assisting; and (3) to help the Conduct Panel determine the truth.
- ◆ Review the ethical guidelines for advocates.
- ◆ Meet with the Dean of Students or the Coordinator of Judicial Affairs/Student Conduct to review the case.
- ◆ Get the facts about the case and the student you are choosing to assist. Review the applicable sections of the Code of Conduct.
- ◆ Consider getting assistance from an advocate advisor or a more experienced advocate.
- ◆ Understand that you may have very short notice (72 hours or less) to prepare.

Working with the Student

- ◆ Get in touch soon.
- ◆ Establish a Relationship:
 - Maintain confidentiality.
 - Explain the system and your role.
 - Discuss alternatives to the hearing process. Discuss possible sanctions that could result.
 - Explain your ethics and standards: you won't lie; you won't misrepresent the facts; you're not out to "win," but to discover the facts, and assist with accepting personal responsibility.
 - Encourage and assist the student with strategies to discover the facts and evidence, identify witnesses, and develop a "response." You may choose to interview the student's witnesses; if not, at least understand what they are supposed to talk about.
 - Be a peer counselor and a mentor if you can. Remember that education and growth are our objectives. This student may not be as emotionally or

intellectually mature as you are and may be under stress. Model appropriate behavior. Your interaction with the student can have a positive impact.

- ◆ Meet in neutral locations. Manage your privacy and availability.
- ◆ Report to the Dean of Students if the student is uncooperative or difficult to work with. You have a right to refuse to assist a student for ethical or practical reasons.
- ◆ If contacted by an attorney, refer him or her to the Dean of Students and notify the Dean of Students. Advocates are not permitted to talk with or assist students' attorneys.

At the Hearing

- ◆ Follow the Hearing Script in your Manual.
- ◆ Help the student represent their point of view, not your own.
- ◆ Listen, listen, listen.
- ◆ Avoid “legalese”: terms such as “client,” “prosecutor,” “crime,” and “sentencing” don’t fit in the campus conduct process.
- ◆ Mistakes happen – if you say the ‘wrong’ thing or are ‘out of order,’ apologize and move on. If you’re unsure about a point or a procedure, stop and ask the Dean of Students or the Hearing Officer.
- ◆ Be polite, dignified, and well-prepared. No grandstanding!
- ◆ Do not badger or try to trick witnesses. Do not address witnesses directly. Direct the questions to Chair of the Conduct Board.
- ◆ Have the student address the opening and closing remarks to the panel. Never argue with the panel or the Hearing Officer.
- ◆ Ask for a recess if you need to review or discuss something with the student.
- ◆ Remember, *THIS IS NOT ABOUT YOU!*

After the Hearing

- ◆ Discuss the decision with the student. You may assist the student in preparing an appeal, if the student wishes.
- ◆ Debrief the hearing with the Dean of Students or the Coordinator of Judicial Affairs/Student Conduct.
- ◆ Maintain confidentiality. Destroy your notes and records or turn them over to the Coordinator of Judicial Affairs/Student Conduct.

"The best student discipline program is the preventative type that creates a campus environment of caring and compassion, and one that deters hateful and destructive behavior by virtue of commitment to the community." Michael Dannells, 1997.

Taken in whole or part from:

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