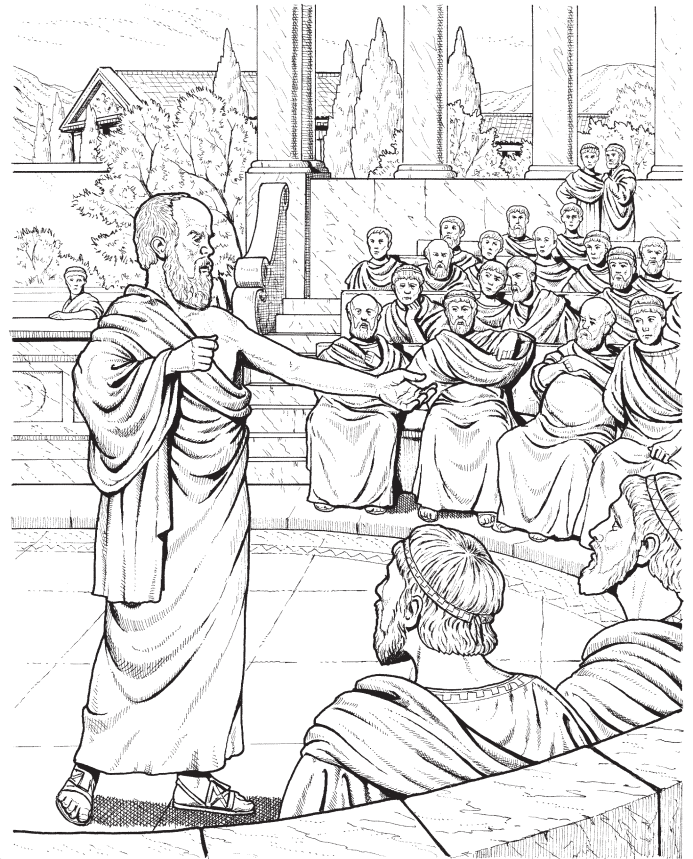


# LIVING WITH THE HONOR PRINCIPLE



"What is honor?"

REED

REED COLLEGE HONOR COUNCIL | 2011

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To obtain relevant community documents, please refer to the honor library in GCC 033A. In addition, most documents can be found online using the Andrew File System (AFS):

Links to detailed instructions are available at [www.reed.edu/cis/help/afs/index.html](http://www.reed.edu/cis/help/afs/index.html).

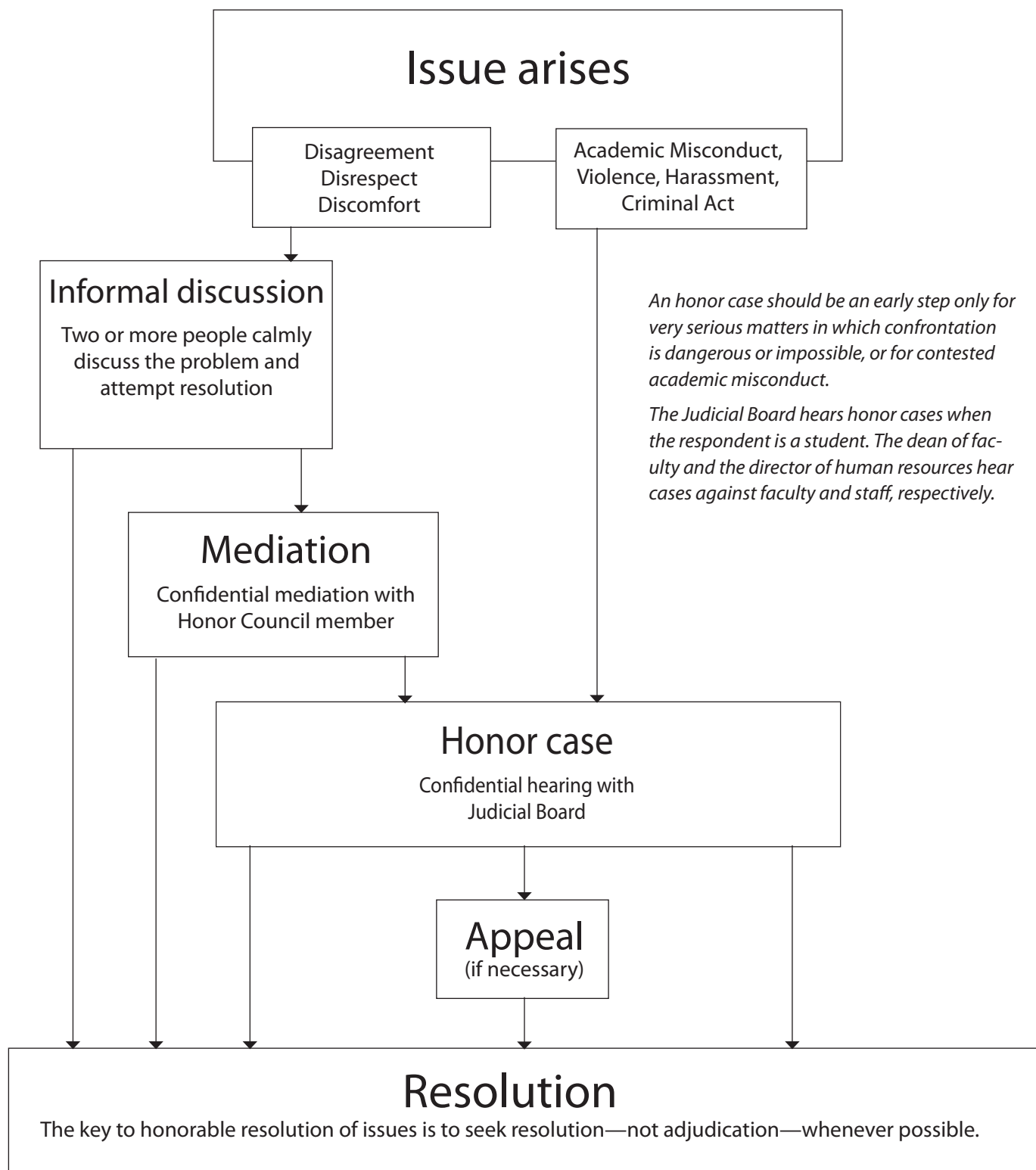
## Accessing AFS via the web:

Open a web browser (from Mac-Safari or -Firefox, from Windows-Firefox) and go to [files.reed.edu](http://files.reed.edu). Type in your Kerberos username and password (the same as used for Reed email or IRIS). After logging in, you are directed to your “Home” folder. You may then navigate all of the folders contained in the AFS system by clicking first on the “Reed Servers” link, and then on “griffin” and “community documents.”

## Accessing AFS with the native client (for Mac and Windows):

Note: You must have the native client installed before you can connect to AFS. For instruction, see the CIS help page at [www.reed.edu/cis/help/index.html](http://www.reed.edu/cis/help/index.html). Click on “get software.”

# Resolving an honor issue



## A note on definition

Perhaps the first major obstruction in the way of understanding the Honor Principle is its lack of formal definition. It would be easier if Reed had a list of conduct rules, but the spirit of the college makes legislating behavior difficult and unwelcome. Reedies take pride in their ability to self-govern and to determine what is right and appropriate.

Don't immediately search for a definition of the Honor Principle; you won't find one that's satisfactory. Try to find a characterization of what the Honor Principle means in theory and in application. The Honor Principle survives because we breathe life into it with discussion and action. Keep in mind that the Honor Principle depends on community norms as well as personal expectations. Your concept of the Honor Principle will change over the next few years, as it should.

## Introduction

Living with the Honor Principle is one of the challenging aspects of becoming part of the Reed community. But what *is* the Honor Principle? It has no official definition; you won't find it in the community constitution or tucked away in some obscure governance document. Nevertheless, all members of the community are bound by the Honor Principle.

The most common formulation of the Honor Principle states that any action that causes unnecessary pain or discomfort to any member of the Reed community, group within the community, or to the community as a whole, is a violation of the Honor Principle. While most people would agree with this formulation, this is an interpretation of the Honor Principle rather than a definition. The fact is that the Honor Principle has never been officially defined.

Instead, each member of the Reed community must work to develop an understanding of it, both as an individual and as a community member. You should keep this in mind as you read and think about the Honor Principle.

This handbook explores how the Honor Principle can be both useful and used, despite the fact that it is not explicitly defined. We hope to help you think about what the Honor Principle is and how it works. The Honor Principle is not an easy way to run community affairs: it would be much easier to impose numerous rules and regulations, the route chosen by many other colleges and universities.

Reed, however, remains committed to the notion that the expectation of honorable conduct is the best way to run its internal affairs. Each individual must recognize and accept the extraordinary responsibility placed on him or her by the Honor Principle in order for the community to function effectively for everyone.

## The essence of Reed honor

Despite changing norms of behavior between 1911 and the present, certain ideas seem to have remained essential to the meaning of the Honor Principle:

- The Honor Principle is universal, binding all members of the college community.
- The Honor Principle assumes that members of the community will be honest not only in their academic work, but in all their behavior; will respect others' rights and persons; will take responsibility for the effect of their behavior on the college as a whole; and will engage in conscientious self-reflection about their words and deeds.
- The Honor Principle itself is not a law or code of conduct and does not take the place of or eliminate the need for legislation; instead, it presupposes voluntary compliance with established rules, regulations, and policies.
- The Honor Principle mandates maximum reliance on individual judgment and conscience and minimal enforcement of rules and regulations.
- The Honor Principle implies that when individuals sincerely believe it necessary to violate a policy or break a rule, or to embarrass, discomfit, or in some way injure others or the community as a whole, they must acknowledge and explain their behavior, and be prepared to accept the judgment of the community's judicial processes.
- The Honor Principle depends on a collective concern for its survival: members of the community have to discuss and analyze the meaning of the Honor Principle and must internalize an obligation to ensure that potentially dishonorable behavior, their own or others', is scrutinized through acknowledgment and discussion, direct confrontation, or the mechanisms of the judicial process.

In the 1989–90 *Student Handbook*, Jiro Feingold casts this spirit in less formal language:

"What the Honor Principle means to me: Don't lie, cheat, or steal. Don't mock or humiliate someone in a public forum. Think about what you do, before you do it. If it will inconvenience someone, try to find a solution compatible to both of you. Try to make the community work."

*Be critical when observing the "community norms" at Reed. Observe, then ask questions! Often a loud minority of students can give the impression that they are within the norm.*

## Current resolution

In 2000, members of the community revisited our shared notion of the Honor Principle. After that campus-wide discussion, the student senate and the faculty approved the following resolution:

“The Preamble to the Community Constitution states that ‘We declare our commitment to responsible and honorable conduct in academic and community affairs, and we reaffirm one another’s rights to freedom of inquiry and expression in coursework, scholarship, and the day to day life of the Reed Community.’

“In keeping with this declaration, we understand that all members of the community endeavor to be honest in every aspect of academic and community life. In addition, the students, in order to take on primary responsibility for upholding academic honesty, make it a particular point of honor neither to cheat on examinations or other academic work, nor to tolerate such behavior in others.

“We also understand that a commitment to responsible and honorable conduct means that members of the community should behave in a way that does not cause unnecessary embarrassment, discomfort or injury to other individuals or to the community as a whole.

“Alleged honor violations, except for those pertaining to academic dishonesty, should be resolved by mediation or other judicial processes, whichever is appropriate; cases pertaining to academic dishonesty shall be adjudicated as per the Faculty code. When specific rules and policies have been duly enacted in the best interests of the community, community members are on their honor to respect those rules and policies, and to accept any mediated consequence or judicial sanction should the violation of a rule or policy result in unnecessary embarrassment, discomfort or injury to other individuals or to the community as a whole.

“This resolution suggests that a policy violation is an ‘honor violation’ if and only if the violation of a rule or policy results in unnecessary embarrassment, discomfort or injury to other individuals or to the community as a whole. We believe that this is both a practical and a principled solution to a persistent dilemma in the adjudication of policy violations.” (Community Affairs Committee memo to the faculty, May 10, 2000)

*The student senate and the faculty approved the above resolution regarding the Honor Principle. How does this characterization affect your interpretation of the community norms?*

## Old Reed characterizations

In 1919, the constitution of the student body asserted that student conduct should be governed “by the application of the Honor Principle, which is based on the assumption that students will be guided . . . by their own knowledge of right and wrong.”

In 1963, the community senate approved a clarifying statement (in 1968 this statement was amended by inserting the word “unnecessary” before “embarrassment”):

“Two kinds of behavior are . . . in violation of the Honor Principle: (1) Conduct which causes embarrassment, discomfort or injury to other individuals or to the community as a whole. (2) Conduct in violation of specific rules that have been developed over the years to meet special conditions in the community.”

In 1973, the faculty adopted a still more explicit statement:

“The members of the Reed College community believe that they should take upon themselves a responsibility for maintaining standards of conduct which ensure an atmosphere of honesty and mutual trust in their academic and social lives. Such standards of conduct rest upon a principle of honor rather than a constitutional system of right and law. This principle entails the unquestioned integrity of the individual in all areas of his intellectual activity, and a shared responsibility for enabling the college as a whole to achieve its highest aims as a community of scholarship and learning. The Honor Principle also demands the respectful concern of each person for the other, and the exercise of conscientious judgment in all actions toward individuals and their property. Let it be understood that such integrity, concern, and judgment are not simply matters of an individual’s intentions, but rather entail qualities of conduct which are clearly reflected in one’s actions. Although the college does not call upon its members to sign a pledge of honor, it does recognize the necessity for tacit agreement by all its members to support the Honor Principle by governing their own conduct in accordance with its spirit, by respecting regulations which the community has established, and by acting in a responsible manner toward honor violations which come to their attention. Members of the community should recognize their obligations to notify the Judicial Board of actions involving a breach of the Honor Principle, even though such actions may be their own.”

The current characterization of the Honor Principle follows in the footsteps of these earlier attempts to establish contemporary “working” community guidelines, though by no means does it define the Honor Principle itself.

*The full text of “The Honor Spirit” from the 1915 Reed College Annual can be found on page 14 of this booklet.*

# Academic honesty

Reed's Honor Principle has its roots in matters of academic honesty. Reed's first student body accepted responsibility for monitoring academic conduct, making it a "point of honor" to refrain from cheating on exams. The Honor Principle now casts a wider net, but academic conduct remains a central concern. Since Reed is constituted as a community of scholars, it can function effectively only if rules governing academic conduct are respected.

Every year the Judicial Board and the Faculty Administration Committee review a number of cases regarding academic misconduct. Students often say that they did not realize that their actions constituted academic misconduct. In the interests of preventing such misunderstandings in the future, please review the academic honesty policy found in the *Guidebook to Reed* (<http://www.reed.edu/academic/gbook/>). According to this policy, the "fundamental ethical principle governing scholarship is that one should never claim or represent as one's own work that which is not one's own."

Here are some examples of academic misconduct:

- helping another student or receiving help during examinations
- copying another student's lab report or collaborating on a write-up without the instructor's permission
- submitting the same paper or portions of the same paper for credit in two courses without the permission of the instructors in both courses
- falsifying experimental results or observation
- failing to cite sources properly in the text and in the bibliography

This list is not exhaustive, and the academic conduct policy clearly states that the responsibility for understanding what constitutes academic misconduct rests on the shoulders of each individual member of the community. Different disciplines may have slightly different conventions of citation, and individual instructors may wish to establish specific guidelines for particular assignments. Please be sure to ask the instructor if the conventions of the discipline or of a particular course are not made absolutely clear to you. The procedures for dealing with cases of academic misconduct can be found in the Faculty Code, chapter VI, B ([http://www.reed.edu/dean\\_of\\_faculty/handbook/](http://www.reed.edu/dean_of_faculty/handbook/)).

## Easy ways to avoid academic MISCONDUCT

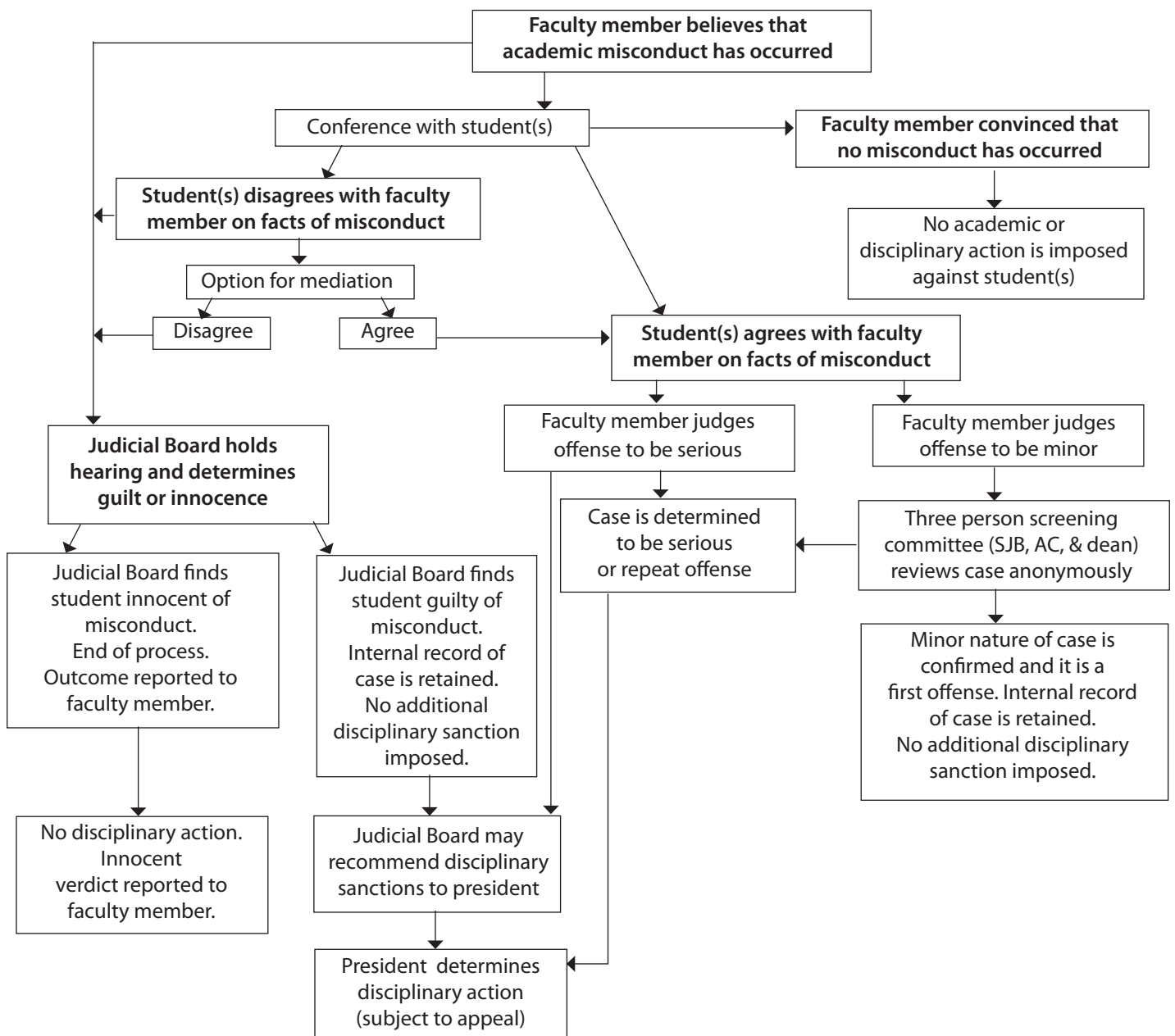
- Never make up data.
- If you work on problem sets with others, be sure to cite these others as having helped.
- Always cite all of your sources, both in the text and in the bibliography.
- Extensive paraphrasing even with citation is poor scholarship and should be avoided. Without citation it may constitute academic misconduct.
- Never submit the same paper or portions of the same paper in more than one course without the permission of the professors.
- Consult your texts, notes, or other sources only when the professor specifically says you may.
- If you are ever unsure of the proper practice for a particular assignment, consult your professor.

## Avoiding problems

The simplest way to resolve an honor issue is to engage in discussion before the issue even develops. Consider the effect of your actions on others. In most instances, we don't act to put others in uncomfortable situations, but that can be an unanticipated outcome. Most friction can be avoided by relatively small concessions to others' feelings.

- Where your behavior will only affect a small group of people (for example, the people in your dorm) try to identify individuals who could be inconvenienced or offended by your actions and talk to them. If you want to play loud music on your stereo, *try to reach a compromise first*, rather than waiting to see if a confrontation will result from playing it when you feel like it.
- If your actions might have an effect on the larger community, try to behave discreetly. Everyone bends some rules. The important thing is to bend them in such a way that you affect as few people as possible. Consider whether or not your behavior could possibly cause anyone discomfort you might not feel. Be mindful of every member of the community, not just yourself and your friends.
- Recognize that the Honor Principle assumes that all members of the community are in control of their behavior and willing to take responsibility for their actions. If you appear to be drunk or rowdy, someone else might not feel that you would respond appropriately when confronted. Remember that you're still obliged to be respectful of other people's rights at all times and in all mental states.

# Academic Misconduct Procedure



## IMPORTANT POINTS:

- Any member of the Reed community who observes or has knowledge of a violation of the Academic Misconduct Policy may seek advice about the appropriate options from the chair of the Honor Council, report the violation to the instructor, or initiate an honor case with the student Judicial Board.
- In all cases, it is the responsibility of the faculty member to determine the grade for the assignment and/or course in which the alleged violation took place. In the interests of equity, the instructor is encouraged to consult with the chair of the Administration Committee and seek information about the academic penalties imposed by instructors in similar situations.

# Problem solving

Interpersonal problems occur at Reed. They happen at all schools, but here we don't have lots of rules and enforcement mechanisms to control people's behavior; we have the Honor Principle. In a system based on self-governance, you are the enforcement mechanism: it is your responsibility, as a member of the Reed community, both to think about how your actions affect others and to hold other people accountable for their actions. So, when someone has pissed you off, made you uncomfortable, or infringed on your rights in some way, what should you do?

## STEP ONE: INFORMAL DISCUSSION

Reedies are not mind-readers. Unless you tell someone what you are feeling, no one will know. The cause of your discomfort is unlikely to change behavior spontaneously.

Talking does not include screaming "Turn that f'ing music down before I kick your ass" at the top of your lungs. It does, however, involve being face to face, calm, and civilized. Let them know their behavior bothers you, and you'd appreciate it if they'd stop or take it where it won't inconvenience anyone. Expletives and volume are not always necessary to underscore how annoyed you are, and threats are usually counterproductive.

Review what you're asking for. How reasonable are you being? If someone asked you the same thing, how would you respond? Chances are you'll get better results asking for volume control after 11 p.m. Living with other people involves compromise, which means finding solutions to problems that everyone can live with, not just one person or the other.

Most of the time an informal discussion is where the problem is solved. In some cases it may be necessary to do this a couple of times, but most Reedies don't purposely try to annoy their neighbors and just need a friendly reminder that their behavior affects everyone living around them.

## STEP TWO: SEEK ADVICE

Sometimes, for whatever reason, talking with the other person isn't practical or it just doesn't work. That's when you bring in assistance: your house adviser, a dormie, a friend, a resident director, a counselor, someone from the Honor Council. This person may be able to approach the person you are having trouble with to facilitate some sort of compromise solution, either as a go-between or in a face-to-face meeting, and serve as a mediator. Mediation is a more structured way to talk about the problem(s) and agree on some ways to solve it.

## MEDIATION: FORMAL AND INFORMAL

Anyone who attempts to help two people settle their dif-

ferences needs to be trusted by everyone involved as neutral. If you send your best friend to talk to the guy upstairs about his cat, the pet owner may well be a little suspicious. Often times house advisers—maybe not even your own, but one from another dorm—are particularly good in these sorts of situations, as they've had some mediation training. If you can't find a house adviser who can be neutral, the resident directors or the Honor Council will be able to help in a formal or informal way.

Mediation will vary a great deal from situation to situation, but there are some common elements: all involved get an opportunity to tell their side of the story and explain what they want, and then the mediator helps them figure out what they need to do to resolve the problem. Mediation is not designed to be punitive, but rather to help people think about how their actions affect others and to come up with considerate ways to live with each other. Mediation is entirely voluntary and can be broken off by any disputant at any time. In some disputes, mediation simply consists of all parties having a chance to state their views and discuss their disagreements in a structured, confidential, and non-judgmental forum.

One reason the Honor Council exists is to provide neutral mediators. The Honor Council includes students, staff, and faculty members who can assist with this step toward resolving the honor issue. Sometimes you may desire a mediator whom neither of you knows to facilitate discussion; sometimes you may just want a bit more formality. In any case, the Honor Council can help.

Certain ground rules must be agreed to for all mediation sponsored by the Honor Council: mediation is confidential, unless all parties agree otherwise; mediation is not a "hearing" and does not result in a judgment or finding, though it may result in a written agreement. If mediation fails, either party retains the right to institute formal proceedings according to the processes described in Article IV of the community constitution (<http://sin.reed.edu/wiki/senate/communityconstitution>).

## LAST RESORT: ADJUDICATION

According to the community constitution, if informal procedures fail, every member of the faculty, staff, and student body has the right to bring a formal complaint against a member of the Reed community and have that complaint considered by an appropriate hearing board. Formal complaints against students must be filed with the chair of the student Judicial Board. Formal complaints against members of the faculty must be filed with the dean of the faculty in accordance with procedures set forth in the Rules of Procedure of the Faculty. (The Rules of Procedure of the Faculty can be found in the Honor Library in the Honor Council office.) Formal complaints against staff members must be filed with the director of human

resources or with the staff member's direct supervisor in accordance with procedures set forth in the staff handbook.

In summary, if a member of the community feels wronged in some way, the Honor Council offers a potential vehicle for addressing the problem. All members of the Honor Council are available to discuss and advise on a strictly confidential basis how a person may proceed both informally and formally with a grievance. The Honor Council has the potential to be an important enfranchising tool for all members of the Reed community, and all community members are urged to avail themselves of its services. If you are in doubt about what to do when you feel impinged upon, talk to someone.

For more information on mediation or the Honor Council, refer to the guidebook. There are also copies of relevant community documents on the AFS (see page 1).

## Filing a complaint

1) Be sure that you look at the flow chart on the inside cover of this document and make certain that you've exhausted the other possibilities for resolution (informal conversation, mediation, etc.) before you make an official complaint. If you are unsure of how to do this, email "honor council" to ask for advice (hc-students@lists.reed.edu).

2) Compose your complaint (see below) and email it to "Jboard," slide it under the J-Board office door, GCC 101, or make other arrangements with a member of the board (j-board@lists.reed.edu).

3) Remember, once you submit a complaint, everything contained therein becomes CONFIDENTIAL—you may not discuss your complaint with anyone, regardless of whether or not they were involved.

### YOUR COMPLAINT MUST INCLUDE:

(Section 3, paragraph D of the Student Judicial Board Code)

(1) the grounds on which you believe that a violation has occurred in any of the following: an apparent student violation of the Honor Principle, community rules or College policies, rules, regulations or contracts;

(2) a brief description of the actions that you believe constitute a violation as specified above;

(3) a list of the names of the persons believed to have committed a violation as specified above, if the names of such violators are known to you;

(4) a list of witnesses with information pertinent to the case; and

(5) a statement of why informal resolution OR mediation was unsuccessful or did not occur.

If your complaint is missing any of these five points, the J-Board reserves the right not to accept the complaint officially until all required elements have been included.

The J-Board reserves the right to recommend mediation to parties to a case as specified in Article IV Sec. 1 of the Community Constitution.

# Judicial Board

If mediation does not resolve the conflict, the issue can be brought to the student Judicial Board (J-Board). Cases for which mediation is not appropriate—cases involving physical threat, violence, or criminal activity—may be handled best directly by the J-Board. The J-Board is composed of nine students appointed by the senate and hears complaints of student violations of the Honor Principle.

The J-Board members may be written to individually or through the group email: [j-board@lists.reed.edu](mailto:j-board@lists.reed.edu).

To initiate an honor case, a written complaint must be submitted in writing to the chair of the J-Board; there is no case until a statement has been submitted in writing. The J-Board code (available on the AFS) and the guidebook specify the information required for a complete complaint (also see page 7). After the complaint has been filed, the J-Board reviews it and may conclude that the case isn't appropriate for them, particularly if they think mediation is a better option or if it falls under some other jurisdiction. It is wise to consult with someone on the Honor Council or J-Board before wasting time and effort to bring a case that does not belong in front of them.

According to the J-Board code, once the J-Board has accepted the case, they have "the responsibility to investigate and determine the facts . . . and to recommend action appropriate to the circumstances of the case and the ethos of this educational institution." The J-Board sets the time and place for the hearing, informs the parties, and arranges any other details. Unless all parties involved agree to an open hearing, all aspects of the case are confidential.

At the hearing, the complainant and the respondent may each have one member of the community present with them. The only restriction is that this person may not be legal counsel. The J-Board Code specifically prohibits the presence or participation of legal counsel during the hearing. Each side of the case may present testimony and witnesses in person or through written statements to the J-Board. Everyone involved in an honor case is required to sign an affidavit confirming the truth of their statements as well as a statement that they won't publicly comment on the proceedings. Lying and/or breaching confidentiality undermines the work of the J-Board, and will likely result in more judicial proceedings.

Once all of the evidence is heard and the hearing is completed, the J-Board goes into closed session to determine whether the Honor Principle or college policy has been broken and, if so, recommends sanctions to the president of the college. The decision and sanctions may be appealed to the appeals board, which consists of three students (one the president of the student body and another a student senator who is not a member of the J-Board), two members of the faculty (one of whom is a member of the Honor Council), and the vice

president and dean of student services, who is an ex-officio, nonvoting member. Grounds for appeal and the time frame in which one can be requested are limited. The appeals board rarely re-hears cases, but relies primarily on the written records from the initial hearing. A final appeal may be made to the president of the college. For further information, consult the J-Board Code.

It is important to note that, in contrast to the American legal tradition, the J-Board is not required to rule according to precedent. Each case is considered on its own merits, giving the Reed community and you as a member of it, the responsibility and obligation for formulating a concept of honorable living.

## J-BOARD MEMBERS (2011)

At time of printing, J-Board members aren't confirmed for next year and will be appointed in the spring.

Mediate before you adjudicate! The Honor Principle demands personal responsibility for actions and the willingness to resolve conflicts rather than have them adjudicated. The J-Board will refer complaints back to mediation if they are not urgent.

If you decide to file an honor case, check the guidelines in the guidebook or the Judicial Board Code, available on the AFS (see page 1).

## A compilation of J-Board statistics (2005–08)

These statistics do not include cases where no HP violations were found. These are total violations, not cases; some cases include multiple violations. Also, the “3 people” in parentheses next to sexual assault indicates there were three students convicted of sexual assault.

- 7 cases of academic misconduct
- 4 cases of sexual assault (3 people)
- 4 cases of community endangerment
- 4 cases of lying to college officials (including J-Board members)
- 3 violations of D&A policy
- 3 cases of slander
- 2 cases of sexual harassment
- 2 violations of the housing contract
- 1 case of embezzlement of student body funds
- 1 case of verbal assault
- 1 case of theft
- 1 violation of pet policy
- 1 case of assault against a CSO
- 1 case of vandalism
- 1 case of undue embarrassment
- 1 case of knowingly passing an STD

### SUMMER/WINTER BOARD STATISTICS (ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE)

- 1 incident of tampering with Reed’s reactor
- 1 incident of lying to a hearing board
- 1 case of assault
- 1 incident of setting fire to school property
- 3 cases of academic misconduct

## Honor Council

The Honor Council is a committee of students, faculty and staff dedicated to promoting the Honor Principle in the Reed community. Members are organized into subcommittees around the goals of education, mediation, and advocacy for community rights.

The Education Subcommittee’s mission is to raise awareness of the Honor Principle and to educate the community regarding the honor process. The Education Subcommittee plans events to bring Reed students, faculty and staff together for discussion of specific honor issues. Examples include graffiti on campus, honor issues in the dorms, academic dishonesty, and the interaction of college policy and the honor principle.

The Mediation Subcommittee exists to provide neutral mediators. Certain ground rules must be agreed upon for all mediation sponsored by the Honor Council: mediation is confidential, unless all parties agree otherwise; mediation is not a “hearing” and does not result in a judgment or finding, though it may result in a written agreement. If mediation fails, either party retains the right to institute formal proceedings according to the processes described in Article IV of the community constitution (<http://sin.reed.edu/wiki/senate/communityconstitution>).

The Community Rights Subcommittee (CRS) advocates for the Reed Community in honor-related issues when no individual would serve as a better representative. Members of the community may contact the CRS regarding honor violations that affect or target the community as a whole.

### Honor Council members (fall 2011)

Meredith Heiss  
(Education Subcommittee voting member)

Mary Lindeblad-Fry  
(Mediation Subcommittee voting member)

Brian Moore  
(Community Rights Subcommittee voting member & chair)

There are nine student members of Honor Council; those listed above are the voting members and returnees are from last semester. The other six will be appointed in the spring.

Feel free to contact Honor Council by emailing us at [hc-students@lists.reed.edu](mailto:hc-students@lists.reed.edu) or contacting any of the members individually. Office hours will be posted outside the Honor Council office, GCC 033A.

## Campus resources

It's always a good idea to start by talking to a house adviser or a resident director. RDs can be particularly helpful in honor issues regarding dorm disputes in which you, for whatever reason, would rather not go through your house adviser.

•CSOs:

community safety  
503/771-1112; community-safety@reed.edu

•Residence life:

Amy Schuckman, interim assistant dean  
503/517-7834; schuckma@reed.edu

•Health & counseling services:

Kate Smith, director, health & counseling services  
503/517-7462; smithk@reed.edu

•Multicultural Resource Center:

Bruce Smith, assistant dean of student services  
for inclusion, engagement, and success  
503/777-7527; smith@reed.edu

•Honor Council: write to members individually, or to  
hc-students@lists.reed.edu

•J-Board: write to members individually, or to  
j-board@lists.reed.edu

## ESSAYS ON THE HONOR PRINCIPLE

### On academic integrity

*Arthur Glasfeld, professor of chemistry*

One of the wonderful things about Reed is that the Honor Principle is so clearly understood and accepted where academic conduct is concerned. Students and faculty share the expectation that scholarly interactions will take place in an atmosphere of trust. Happily, this faith in our fellow Reedies is well-placed. However, even in this environment, problems occur, but they can usually be avoided by some simple pre-emptive discussion.

From a purely mechanical perspective, conversation regarding the requirements in a given class is essential. It is the responsibility of faculty to lay out the standards of scholarship that will take place on each assignment in a given semester. This includes defining acceptable levels of collaboration on assignments, acceptable sources for a given piece of work, and appropriate mechanisms for attribution of others' work. These are different from course to course and from field to field. Misunderstandings on these issues are so unwelcome that all of us should take every opportunity to talk about them. The more obvious our expectations and understanding, the less likely any confusion is to arise. If there is ever ambiguity in what constitutes appropriate academic conduct, ask! It is a simple question, and one that will be welcome because it shows a concern for academic honesty.

The second failure in communication leading to problems is more difficult because it involves personal pride rather than mechanical issues in scholarship. Academics at Reed can be stressful and frustrating. The demands of a semester can warp a person's perspective to the point where it appears that an upcoming assignment or exam is all-important—so important that the "urgent" need for its successful completion eclipses all other concerns. The solution to this problem is easy—get help when things begin to escape your control. We're all human, even the dinosaurs around here, and there is plenty of understanding to go around. It's a false pride in intellectual independence that causes folks to balk at the idea of asking for help. On more than one occasion this immodesty has cost Reedies a more important source of pride by compromising their personal integrity. By talking about your worries and stresses openly, you can place them in a better perspective, and your ethical judgment will remain unchallenged.

Unfortunately, Reed is in the "real" and imperfect world, and all the warnings in the world won't prevent all academic misconduct. So, here's one last guiding principle—honesty always wins. If the worst has happened, and you find yourself on the wrong side of the Honor Principle, the simple truth will always bring you back. Unprompted confession is horribly

difficult, and for that reason it is regarded highly by others. Sadly, though, there is often a hesitation to confess even when confronted with evidence. That compounds a lie with a lie, and each subsequent lie buries sympathy and forgiveness that much deeper. Again, communication is the key. There is no problem related to academic honesty that doesn't get worse by failing to talk openly about it.

The Honor Principle has created a remarkably positive atmosphere in Reed's academic life, and the conversations needed to maintain it are so simple that we should all participate.

## Honor as action

*Chris Moses '02*

A great deal of discussion surrounding the Honor Principle takes shape in positioning personal freedom—usually characterized by some extreme example of individual indulgence—against the notion of community norms, typically given as a generic and uncontroversial way of life. An example might be: you should not see yourself as being able to play your stereo loudly at three in the morning because it helps you study and perform at your best. It is an unarguable point that the majority of the community reserves that time for the enjoyment of quiet and peaceful rest.

This type of description highlights two basic points that most agree are very important facts of life under the Honor Principle. First: that one must make an effort to understand the expectations for fairness (equal treatment), ethical behavior (academic and professional honesty), and personal comfort (physical and emotional safety) existing within the Reed Community, and take heed to respect them such that you are also enjoying their benefit. Second: that no individual liberty or right exists to the extent that its exercise causes unnecessary harm or discomfort to another individual, group, or to the community as a whole. The first is a generally positive assurance of rights for everyone (being able to both sleep and study) and the second a more specific proscription of rights for the individual (loud music at three in the morning does more to prevent, rather than promote, studying and sleeping).

This sort of description does a good deal of work in explaining the Honor Principle, and in fact offers a fairly accurate description of how it functions in community documents and through the officiation of the Judicial Board. My reason for offering it, however, is not to canonize it further, but rather to point out a problem I have with its inability to offer a viable definition for what the Honor Principle actually is; for its failure to provide a way for discussing and debating life at Reed College that does not resort to ephemeral ideas and Noble Truths that do not have any value other than fuelling circular debate and self-congratulating rhetoric. My method for doing so is

in no way original, but I think it a worthwhile exercise for this particular discussion.

The problem with the above characterization of the Honor Principle is that its goal is to serve as a mode of judgment in pragmatic circumstances – ones unique to specific times and places—while maintaining that these judgments somehow conform to an independent standard, to a principle of honor. I think this limits us because we are always trying to come up with some idea that will not only describe, but order and clarify, all that conduct which has both supported and violated the Honor Principle, past, present, and future, and we fail, if only because such tasks are reserved for the gods.

What I would suggest as an alternative is a more concrete, yet far more reaching, definition for discussion: that the Honor Principle is quite simply the way of life you have chosen to adopt by becoming a member of the Reed Community; that it is forever changing with individuals' development, circumstance, and people's arrivals and departures from the community; and that it is not so much an expectation, but an obligation, for how you bring yourself to action. As a "way of life" the Honor Principle is a commitment to the fact that intellectual growth, education, and creative self-realization occurs best in a community committed to the values of trust, honesty, and rigorous commitment to school-work; that these values are beliefs and represent choices that necessarily exclude other values and thus can be used to both promote and curtail behavior (plurality against uniformity; debate against censorship and Truth; self-sacrifice against self-indulgence); and that they exist in "principle" only to the extent that they inform the way we simultaneously live our lives as a community.

By making the Honor Principle the way we act as Reedies, day in and day out, rather than a standard that we sometimes compare ourselves and others to (either at moments of contention or of pride), I think we properly assume the tremendous responsibility needed to maintain Reed as the excellent school that it is. Further, we understand the consequences—positive, negative, and ambivalent—that our beliefs and actions always and already entail. Only with vigilant practice can we make the language of Honor truly principled.

## Diversity and the Honor Principle

*Eliza Hofkosh-Hulbert '09*

When discussing ways to understand and uphold the Honor Principle (HP), we often ask each other questions about hypothetical situations: Is it an Honor Principle violation to play loud music when my dormies might be studying? Is it Honorable to bring my ferret to class? Asking this kind of question is a good way to engage with the HP, which can otherwise seem either too amorphous or too simple to really wrangle with in our daily lives. But questions like these can also seem decep-

tively easy to answer with just a nod to the HP's "reliance on individual judgment and conscience" (see "the essence of Reed honor" on page 2). How do we create a healthy, self-regulating community if everyone's individual understandings of Honorable behavior are constantly bumping up against each other? Don't we all need to agree upon a standard of Honorable behavior if our ideal, HP-governed community is to function? In other words, if the HP is about not unnecessarily hurting or embarrassing each other, don't we all need to agree on what behavior is hurtful and embarrassing? But we don't.

This problem becomes especially important when we remember the diversity of experiences that Reedies come from, since those experiences have left us with sometimes very different understandings about what constitutes Honorable and Dishonorable action. Growing up in a particular class position, racial or ethnic group, gender, or educational situation (to name a few examples) can irrevocably shape our views of the world, which means of course that they influence both how we relate to people and how we go about trying to be Honorable. As Reed The Institution works to diversify its stereotypically white and class-privileged student body, our community is increasingly made up of people who bring very different backgrounds to the table. What's more, our different backgrounds may or may not manifest themselves visibly to our dormies, classmates, and professors. This means that we can't make assumptions about the kinds of experiences people have had, and leaves us with very little to work with in terms of imagining an all-encompassing Community Norm of Honorable behavior.

One of my housemates told me this evening that she likes to think about Reed "as a community that takes care of each other and supports each other, and the honor principle as supporting that rather than just as policing individual behavior." As she says, I think it's important to remember that the HP is not just some vague moral barometer that allows us to think about individuals' behavior in a variety of ways. Instead, as I understand it, the HP's scope and potential interpretations are broad both because it's meant to maintain a diverse and changing community, and also because it exists within a framework where a diversity of interpretation is both expected and welcomed. But what does that really mean, in a collective made up of so many individuals, identity groups, and sub-cultures? How do we really make it work, if we can't always agree on what Honorable means?

My answer to this question is, in a word: communication. It means thinking outside of your own shoes, being open to differing opinions and to critical discussion. This is relatively easy for me to do when I can imagine Reed as made up of people who are more or less like me, who experience the world in the same ways that I do. While we may all be alike in some meta-spiritual sense, though, folks in my community come from places I don't understand and think differently than I do. There are whole groups of my peers with whom I fundamentally

disagree on lots of important and emotionally charged issues, either because of our different backgrounds or because we have different personalities on a more individual level. It can be hard to remember that these differences exist, what with all the talk we throw around about Community Norms and Reed Culture, as if they are static and all-encompassing. Even the idea of A Reedie as some iconoclastic personality type sometimes inhibits my ability to keep in mind that some of the classmates, staff-people, and professors I interact with might be approaching the world with perspectives different from my own. But even when I can remember that this diversity of perspectives is our reality, how can I account for the needs and feelings of everyone, all the time? If I tried to do that, one might expect me to become cripplingly paranoid about accidentally offending someone and totally unable to function.

I don't think the Honor Principle is about being perfectly aware of everyone's differing needs at all times; that would be impossible, since there will always be people I don't know and therefore can't fully understand, regardless of how similar (or different) their backgrounds and personalities might be to my own. This is where the communication comes in, and where the HP provides for—even makes possible—a healthily self-regulating community that is also diverse in a multitude of ways. Because the HP is so open-ended, it requires that we are constantly in dialogue with each other, constantly re-negotiating what being Honorable means to each of us. That doesn't mean we ever have to agree. In fact, it's pretty much guaranteed that we won't, at least not when it comes to the Hot Button Issue of the Moment, whatever it happens to be. I find this both maddening and totally liberating, in that it means we are never really done answering the big questions I posed in the beginning of this essay (like, What the hell does Honorable really mean?), and so we're never really done learning how to make our community work.

It sometimes takes a lot of effort, but I love that the HP's emphasis on communication allows me to make mistakes, maybe to accidentally offend people who see the world differently than I do, and then to listen and explain and hopefully come to a greater understanding of where they're coming from. Once I have achieved that understanding, I try to hold myself accountable to trying on their perspective when I think about my place in the Reed community.

## Policy and the Honor Principle

*Sid Rothstein '09*

The Honor Principle is great, but it makes things rather complicated here at Reed because we have policies too. We have significantly fewer than other colleges (four or five depending on how you count: Sexual Harassment Policy, Academic Honesty Policy, Drug and Alcohol Policy, Dog Policy,

Kid Policy), but we have enough to make things complicated. Here's the problem: how can more than one system of norms consistently guide our behavior? Almost by definition, either the Honor Principle trumps policy, or policy trumps the Honor Principle; and, if this is true, why would we go through the trouble of having two sets of norms when we could have just one? Below I share my view of the relationship between policy and the Honor Principle, and explain why we have both.

We have policies for at least two reasons, one external and the other internal. The federal government is a good place to look for policies, so it might as well take some of the blame for ours. In order to receive necessary federal funding, colleges are required to have a written Drug and Alcohol Policy as well as a Sexual Harassment Policy. So one reason we have policies is that they help secure the funding that keeps the lights on.

Other policies arose organically, indicating our community's failure to self-govern in certain areas. The Dog Policy, for example, is an admission that, as a community, we failed to develop community norms regarding the role of dogs on campus (The Kid Policy is similar – look it up.) A written policy reflects our community's failure to reach consensus, and the subsequent need to rely on a non-negotiable rule in order maintain a livable (but not ideal) environment.

Policy is what you follow without, or despite, thinking: I choose to leave my dog on a leash because I'll "get in trouble" if I don't. The Honor Principle is what you follow because you think: I choose to unleash my dog because I know I can trust him. How can you follow both policy and the Honor Principle? If I trust my dog, and I follow policy, he remains leashed, but if I follow the Honor Principle, there's a good chance I will unleash him and violate the Dog Policy. Does this mean that if you want to think, you must violate policy? Well, not always.

Policy obviates the need for thinking because it does all the thinking for you. At Reed, I look at policies as predictions about the Honor Principle. The Dog Policy is a bet that my unleashed dog will unnecessarily discomfit someone, thereby making me responsible for violating the Honor Principle. Policy presents a particular interpretation of probability, and following policy frees you from the responsibility of determining for yourself what the odds are that your action will unnecessarily discomfit someone.

The Honor Principle, conversely, gives you a more real freedom by requiring that you think constantly. Rather than keeping my dog leashed because someone tells me a bad thing might happen, the Honor Principle forces me to judge for myself whether that bad thing really will happen (and to discuss my judgment with others.) This means that in some cases, I can unleash my dog; in others I have to keep my dog leashed, just as I would under policy. The Honor Principle's freedom is the freedom to decide, but your independent decision is meaningless unless there really are situations where the Honor

Principle allows you to do things forbidden by policy. Without question, those situations exist: a policy violation is not necessarily an Honor Principle violation.

So, back to the original question: how can you live in a community where two opposing norms supposedly guide your behavior? For me, it's easy. I ignore policy, mainly because the Honor Principle allows me to. While I actively ignore policy, upon reflection, it's rare that I actually violate any specific policies. Often, making choices consistent with the Honor Principle will result in actions consistent with policy. At Reed, with so few policies, the odds are that policies do accurately predict Honor Principle violations - but don't take my word for it.

For an excellent article on the Honor Principle and policy, see "The Reed Law, or Why the Honor Principle is Better than Oral Sex" from the 1978 *Student Handbook*. All policies are available on the AFS server in griffin community documents at <http://files.reed.edu>.

## "The Honor Spirit"

*From the Reed College Annual, Volume 1, 1915, p. 69–70.*

*[Simplified spelling was in use at Reed until the 1920s.]*

One of the words that has appeared prominently in discussion of the "mores" of student life at Reed College is "honor." The idea of honor has a sharp challenge to the mind, will and heart of the college student. Most freshmen are not yet past the period of experience in which moral notions are fixed; they are still eager for the exercise of choice in ethical questions. Honor has, moreover, a flavor of aristocracy which makes its appeal to those who are conscious of superiority in learning. By force of these facts and from the experience of other colleges, influential members of the student body and the faculty have taken pains to develop here an enthusiastic "Honor Spirit."

The Honor Spirit began to take a part in the life and thought of the college before the end of the first semester. President Foster, in anticipation of the first final examinations, put the question of student conduct therein up to the members of the first class. They voted to relieve the faculty of the burden of enforcing honesty in these tests, and agreed to make it a "point of honor" not to cheat in examinations.

With the development of student government, and the granting of authority in matters of student conduct to the Student Council, honor came to be formulated as a principle of action in all school work. Honesty in the preparation and recitation of lessons was recognized as being of as great importance as honesty in examinations.

This attitude of the students towards the demands of college administration met with response on the part of President Foster and the faculty. At various times during the first year, and occasionally since that time the confidence and opinion of

students in matters of administrative policy have been asked for. Especially through the Student Council and senior class questions of equipment, instruction, finance, and the relations of the college to the community have been made matters for student consideration and responsibility.

From these basic applications of the Honor Spirit in the relations of the students to the administration and instruction of the college its meaning has been extended to make it include the whole life of the college community. At various times, in chapel and in student-body meetings, students and faculty members have made definitions and formulations of it. In school work the Honor Spirit requires earnestness, frankness and considerations for the rights of others in the use of library, laboratories and the like. In general conduct it includes especially respect for property rights of persons both in and outside the college, economy and care in the use of college property, the prompt payment of debts, and a regard for the reputation of the college abroad. In athletics the Honor Spirit means fair play and sportsmanship in the best sense of the word. In student government it imposes the duty of conscientious service on the part of office-holders, and a sense of interest in the welfare of the group on the part of individuals.

We can hardly doubt the value and wisdom of the adoption and development of honor as a principle in college life. Common-sense seems to indicate that if students and faculty are using the endowment and equipment of a college for the ends of scholarship, they will get on better by working together than they will by opposition. Tradition and experience tend to confirm the notion that the ends of good-fellowship in a group of people with common interests and purposes are best served by frankness, forbearance, and sympathy. Though primarily, perhaps, a matter of social significance, honor is not antagonistic to the interests of individuality. Honesty to self is, indeed, the first principle of honor; and the expression of the self-respect which this honesty engenders is the best way of impressing one's individuality upon society.

The important results of the Honor Spirit at Reed are found not so much in tangible results as in subtle atmospheric qualities. The substitutions of cooperation for distrust and suspicion on the part of students and faculty in the business of study are not inimical to the advance of scholarship. In this as in the general social relationships those who have had opportunities of comparison say that in Reed College the breadth of the traditional gulf between faculty and students has been definitely lessened.

The Honor Spirit has, of course, not yet attained perfection as a force in social control. There are some dissatisfactions, some misunderstandings, some difficulties of organized student life that honor has not obviated. The youth of the college, and lack of traditions make the matter of educating new students for full citizenship difficult. Time may remedy this. Everything possible has not been accomplished in four years.

The imperfections of translating the Honor Spirit into actions and motives are the best guarantee of its continued influence. That its applications be comprehensive of much, and that its meanings be written more deeply on the minds and hearts of all who may become connected with Reed is the hope of all who know what it has already done.

Those individuals (and societies) that seek to find and follow absolute laws with closed minds cut off awareness of themselves, others, and their world generally. They cannot grow. Those who seek to openly follow principles that require awareness, thought, and feelings are in a position to grow most fully into themselves. As Socrates truly said, the unexamined life is not worth living.

— Charles Svitavsky  
*Emeritus professor of English and humanities*

Part of what makes adapting to living with the Honor Principle difficult for incoming students is that it defies everything modern culture teaches us. In America, individualism is often mistaken for uninformed defiance of community. Individuals can exist within a community, and that is what Reed needs. Reed is indeed a community of scholars and individuals with academic goals. If 1400 of the world's supposedly brightest people can't learn to live with each other maturely and respectfully, what hope can there be for the rest of the world? I challenge every student, professor, administrator, and staff member to embrace the quest for community and humanity.

—Patrick Stockstill '03

The Honor Principle urges us all to reflect carefully on our words and deeds rather than flinging them in a haphazard and potentially damaging way. At this juncture we are faced by two possibilities. The community as a whole can act to pressure guilty parties into ending their destruction, or we can remain coolly impassive and force the administration to lumber forth and clean up our mess. Social responsibility is the necessary companion of social freedom; it's time for the student body to demonstrate that the college's faith in the Honor Principle has not been misplaced."

—Derek Lyons '00 and Sylvia Thompson '00,  
*printed in a spring 1996 issue of the Quest*

