

# Student Governance

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## Honor System

*The concept of honor — One shall not lie, cheat, or steal.*

For more than a hundred years the Honor System has been one of Sewanee's most cherished institutions. The Honor Code is an attempt to formulate that system. But no code can adequately define honor. Honor is an ideal and an obligation. It exists in the human spirit and it lives in the relations between human beings.

## The Honor Code

Resolutions which have been adopted by the student body from time to time to further an understanding of the Honor System include the following:

First, that any adequate conception of Honor demands that an honorable person shall not lie or cheat or steal.

Second, that membership in the student body carries with it a peculiar responsibility for the punctilious observance of those standards of conduct which govern an honorable person in every walk of life.

Third, that, since the integrity of the degrees granted by the University must depend in large degree upon the Honor Code, all students in every class must regard themselves as particularly bound by their honor not to cheat in any form, and as likewise bound in honor not to fail to report any cheating that comes to their knowledge.

Fourth, that plagiarism is a form of cheating because the plagiarist copies or imitates the language and thoughts of others and passes the result off as an original work. Plagiarism includes the failure to identify a direct quotation by the use of quotation marks or another accepted convention which delimits and identifies the quotation clearly, paraphrasing the work of another without an acknowledgement of the source, or using the ideas of another, even though expressed in different words, without giving proper credit.

Fifth, the same paper may not be submitted in more than one course without the prior permission of the instructors in those courses.

Sixth, because the preservation of equal access to scholarly materials is essential in any academic community, it is a violation of the Honor Code to fail to check out a book taken from the library, or to remove from the building without proper authorization non-circulating materials such as reference books, periodicals, or reserved books.

## The Pledge

Upon entrance to the University every student agrees to abide by this Honor System and is asked to sign a form signifying acceptance of this Honor Code. Each examination, quiz, or other paper which is to be graded carries the written pledge: "I hereby certify that I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this paper. (Signature)." The abbreviation "Pledged" followed by the student's signature has the same meaning and may be acceptable on papers other than final examinations.

## The Honor Council

An important part of Sewanee's Honor System is its maintenance and administration by the students. For this purpose students elect an Honor Council consisting of four seniors, three juniors, two sophomores, and one freshman. All members are elected by their respective classes. Following the election of new members in the spring, current and newly elected members of the Honor Council shall elect a Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary. The council may invite a student from the School of Theology to participate, without vote, in its proceedings.

The election and organization of this council, its jurisdiction, its rules of procedure, and other relevant matters are subject to oversight by the Order of Gownsmen and the Student Assembly, which may recommend changes from time to time. Before becoming effective any changes are submitted to a referendum vote by the entire student body and must receive approval of two-thirds of those voting, and of the Vice-Chancellor. The jurisdiction of the Honor Code is not restricted to the Domain of the University. Cases may arise, however, because of distance or other circumstances, for which a fair hearing is impractical. The council shall release case-related statistics, mindful of the students' right of confidentiality, to be made available to the student body.

Although it is each student's responsibility to know the content of the code, the Chair of the Honor Council undertakes each year to familiarize new students with its meaning and significance and to remind the faculty and staff of their responsibility to support the code.

## Rules of Conduct for Hearings Before the Honor Council, Appeals, and Penalties

The Rules of Procedure were adopted and approved on May, 1984, and subsequently amended and may be found at: [sewanee.edu/student-life/live/the-honor-system/related/rules-for-the-honor-council.php](http://sewanee.edu/student-life/live/the-honor-system/related/rules-for-the-honor-council.php) . Rules for the operation of the Honor Code during

summer school may be found at: [sewanee.edu/student-life/live/the-honor-system/related/rules-for-the-honor-council-during-the-summer.php](http://sewanee.edu/student-life/live/the-honor-system/related/rules-for-the-honor-council-during-the-summer.php) .

## **The Order of Gownsmen**

Among Sewanee's many customs, none perhaps is more distinctive than the wearing of the gown by students and faculty. Gowns were originally authorized to be worn by all students in 1871, and the Order of Gownsmen (OG) was established in 1873 at the instigation of Chaplain William Porcher DuBose. The students who are members of the OG have worn the gown as a badge of academic distinction ever since. The OG was the original and only form of the student government until the 1960s, when the Delegate Assembly was created. Even at that time, all parts of the student government, including the Delegate Assembly, the Honor Council, the Pan-Hellenic Council, the Student Vestry, and the Discipline Committee, were all directly responsible to the Order. In the 1970s and the 1980s, this was changed; however, the Order remains the oldest and premier branch of the student government.

Today, the Order works parallel with the Student Government to voice student opinion. It is also uniquely charged with the maintenance and promotion of the spirit, traditions, and ideals of the University. In addition, the OG runs the Election Committee, which is composed of all Proctors and is chaired by the President of the Order. Undergraduates earn membership in the OG as seniors (students with 96 or more hours) if their academic average for the previous two semesters at Sewanee or at a foreign study program sanctioned by the University is 3.00; as juniors (students with 64-95 hours) if their academic average for the previous two semesters is 3.20; as sophomores (students with 24-63 hours) if their academic average for the previous two semesters is 3.40.

In accordance with faculty legislation, gownsmen must be inducted into the Order to be considered a member; students who cannot be present for the induction ceremony because they are abroad are inducted *in absentia*. Students who have not earned the GPA to be a member of the Order, but who have passed their comprehensive examination, are automatically inducted into the Order as de facto members once they have passed their comprehensive examinations.

In accordance with the provisions of the Student Government Constitution, the OG serves as a force for channeling student opinion to promote positive change. Besides the OG's substantial legislative authority through its appointment power to student and faculty committees, the OG's Executive Committee and task forces are unique methods for investigating the problems and concerns of the University Community. The degree to which the OG is involved in University life is determined by the President and body itself. The OG adopted its own constitution in 2007, which gives further structure to its organization and responsibilities.

## **Student Government**

The present Student Government Constitution was approved by student referendum in the spring of 2010. The Constitution establishes the student government as the sole governing assembly of the student body. The recently approved Student Government Constitution may be viewed online if you have further questions about the structure of Student Government at Sewanee.