

PARENTS GUIDE TO THE STUDENT CONDUCT PROCESS

Those of us responsible for the student disciplinary process at Washington State University take our responsibilities seriously. We are here to ensure a fair and unbiased process for all students. We recognize that college years are a time when students are developing their own identity, adjusting to new freedom, and making choices that may affect the rest of their lives. Our goal is to help students develop good critical thinking and leadership skills. We encourage you to support and reinforce these goals by challenging your student to be a responsible member of our community.

Q. I received a letter notifying me that my son/daughter is facing university disciplinary action. How can I find out what is happening?

A good place to start is with a conversation with your son/daughter. The Office of Student Conduct's (OSC) policy is to communicate directly with students on all disciplinary matters, except when the student is underage and alcohol and/or drugs are involved. Even in these instances it is important that we communicate directly with the student while providing general information about the incident to parents. Students are expected to represent themselves at all times.

Q. My son/daughter has told me he/she is involved in the conduct process. What can I do?

The Student Conduct process does not provide for the involvement of parents. As a member of the WSU community each student is expected to manage his/her own disciplinary matters with the university. Parents can provide important moral support and assist their student in understanding the process and the expectations of the university.

Q. Can I attend my son/daughter's scheduled hearing?

Hearings are designed to assist students in understanding how their behavior has been unhealthy, disruptive, or simply short of university's expectations. Taking responsibility for behavior and resulting consequences is an important part of the learning process. We discourage parental involvement in hearings.

Q. Should I hire or consult with an attorney?

Decisions about whether or not to consult legal counsel are personal ones. However, please understand that attorneys are prohibited from participating in the student conduct process, even in the case where criminal charges are pending. An attorney may simply advise the student but may not represent the student in a student conduct hearing.

Q. My son/daughter is also in trouble with the courts. Can the campus proceeding be delayed until the conclusion of the criminal process?

The Office of Student Conduct is obliged to move forward with all disciplinary matters as soon as it has collected the necessary information. Timely response to misconduct is necessary for optimum student learning and for the safety and well-being of our community. The university is not required to defer to the timeline of the criminal courts. Please remember, the university is not attempting to determine if the student committed a crime...only whether or not the Standards of Conduct for Students have been violated. We recognize that cases involving criminal and/or civil charges can be exceptionally difficult for students. However, the university is committed to a timely process that considers the welfare of the community as a whole, not just one or two people.

Q. How can the university hold my student accountable for an incident that occurred off campus?

The university reserves the right to assert jurisdiction for incidents that occur off campus when such behavior is detrimental to the university's mission. Under the terms of enrollment, students acknowledge the university's right to take action for behavior both on and off campus. We expect our students to contribute positively to our community.

Q. I am concerned about sending my son/daughter away to school. Is WSU a safe community?

WSU is a community of about 18,000 students and faces the same issues any community of comparable size. The Office of Student Conduct maintains close and collaborative relationship with both the campus police and the Pullman Police Department. Crime statistics for WSU and Pullman can be found on their respective web sites.

The University has numerous safeguards in place for student's safety. There are escort services, women's transit service, blue light telephones for 911 calls, well-lit sidewalks, campus police as well as Pullman Police Departments. Individual safety depends on each of us taking personal responsibility for decisions and actions and looking out for one another.