

COMMUNITY GRIEVANCE AND DISCIPLINE POLICY

Living Together in Community

Union Presbyterian Seminary, by its charter and by its purpose, prepares women and men for leadership and service in the church. In view of this central purpose, we enter into community with one another, under Jesus Christ's model of mutual respect and forbearance (Colossians 3:12-17). Thus, our life together in community is an important part of our preparation for ministry, as we seek to experience and embody values in our life together that will enable us to provide leadership for other communities of faith. Union Presbyterian Seminary seeks to be a Christ-centered place where we learn what it means to live together as a community of Jesus' disciples-with all the joys, challenges, tensions, and growth entailed. As we engage conflict/grievances, we do so with a view toward reconciliation, restoration, and building up the body of Christ. We value direct, face-to-face communication as we engage conflict.

In the maintenance of our communal life together, particular attention is given to four areas: Academic Honesty, Personal Behavior, Financial Accountability, and Evaluation.

A. Academic Honesty

As in all academic institutions, the effectiveness of the learning process is closely related to the honesty and timeliness of the work of both students and faculty.

1. FACULTY

a. Responsibility in Teaching and Research

Faculty bear significant responsibility for ensuring academic honesty, not only in student papers and examinations, but in their own teaching and research as well. All sources, ideas and quotations used in teaching or research are to be acknowledged publicly. Student papers and other student materials for evaluation are to be returned in a timely manner, according to the policy set forth in the Faculty Manual (Grades 3209.00). Students who question the fairness of a professor's grade may appeal by following the policy on Appeal of a Grade [Academic Catalog].

2. ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The search for truth is central to the vocation of Union Presbyterian Seminary and to its faculty members, students and staff. This search for truth is the calling of both individuals and of the community as a whole.

a. Students and Staff:

The freedom necessary in this search for truth is important to students and staff, and in particular, students engaged in doctoral research shall have the freedom to conduct their research in their respective disciplines and to communicate the findings of their research. Doctoral students, in their search for truth, are free to the maximum extent that is consistent with the mission, educational objectives, and needs of Union Presbyterian Seminary, to teach, carry out research and publish. They are assured of the support of the Board of Trustees in this freedom even if their views, held in good conscience, may be unpopular ones.

b. Faculty:

The faculty members of Union Presbyterian Seminary acknowledge the responsibilities attendant upon their academic freedom. They exercise their freedom in a manner

conformable to the vows which they take at their installation as members of the instructional staff of the institution (see By-Laws, Article IV), as well as to the vows they have taken if they have been ordained as officers of the church.

Within that context, the members of the faculty exercise their responsibilities as scholars and teachers without interference, and in a climate of mutual respect and free intellectual inquiry. In their search for truth, faculty members are free to the maximum extent that is consistent with the mission, educational objectives, and needs of Union Presbyterian Seminary, to teach, carry out research and publish. They are assured of the support of the Board of Trustees in this freedom even if their views, held in good conscience, may be unpopular ones. Within the classroom, faculty members must exercise their academic freedom responsibly so as not to infringe their obligations as instructional staff to teach prescribed course content in a timely and efficient manner. One faculty member's claim to academic freedom must not subvert the overall education and training interests of the institution, or the faculty's responsibility to prescribe curriculum content and allocate faculty resources.

Beyond the classroom and the community of Union Presbyterian Seminary the faculty member is entitled to make responsible expression of his or her opinions as a citizen without prior authorization by the institution. However, in such cases the faculty member should make clear that he or she does not speak for the institution. It is important that the faculty members of the Union Presbyterian Seminary community recognize that their words and actions reflect on the school and that institutional as well as personal interests should therefore be taken into account when entering into the public arena.

3. STUDENTS

a. *Timeliness*

Course requirements are to be submitted on time. When a deadline cannot be met, prior contact should be made with the professor. For work to be completed after the end of a term, students must request extensions from the appropriate dean of faculty or director of graduate studies.

b. *Plagiarism* (See Plagiarism Policy.)

At UPSem, plagiarism is defined as the use of someone else's ideas or words without attribution in a graded event. A student who is unsure about this standard should speak directly with the professor(s) at the beginning of the course. To learn more about this policy and the process to be followed when a grading professor is concerned that plagiarism may have occurred, please see the appropriate section in the Policies and Procedures Booklet.

c. *Honesty in Testing*

Students are required to undergo examinations and other forms of academic evaluation. Any use of materials and/or methods other than those permitted by the professor(s) grading the course or event will constitute academic dishonesty. The academic consequences, grades and otherwise, for academic dishonesty will be determined by the grading professor(s), who may consult with their departments and/or deans. If plagiarism is found, the institution's Plagiarism Policy will be followed. Students have the right to appeal all decisions to the Academic Dean in Richmond or to the Dean of Union Presbyterian Seminary at Charlotte. A record of all confirmed cases of academic dishonesty will be maintained by the Academic

Dean in Richmond for Richmond and ECP courses, and by the Academic Dean in Charlotte for Charlotte courses.

d. *Honesty in Research*

(See Plagiarism Policy.)

B. Evaluation

It is in the nature of an academic institution that evaluation and assessment take place on a regular basis. This is done out of Union Presbyterian Seminary's commitment to the larger church, which looks to the institution for dependable evaluation of students seeking ordination to the ministry of Word and Sacrament or employment as professional church educators. Evaluation is also done out of regard for the standards of competence that must be maintained in order for Union Presbyterian Seminary to remain accredited and function at a high level of scholarship and stewardship. Regular evaluation and assessment, therefore, take place with regard to all members of the community: students, staff and faculty.

1. STUDENTS

Regular evaluation of students' academic performance takes place in the form of course grades, which become part of the student's permanent record. Supervised ministry or field-based learning reports and other formal faculty evaluations may become part of a student's permanent files. Before any student is granted a degree, a final faculty vote is taken on the student's acceptability for graduation [By-Laws IV, 3].

2. STAFF

Regular evaluations of employees by supervisors are carried out in accordance with established personnel procedures. (Employee Handbook: Annual Performance Evaluations)

3. FACULTY

Regular procedures are established for evaluation of faculty members prior to any promotion. A more extensive evaluation takes place when a faculty member is considered for tenure. Individual biennial or triennial conferences take place for each faculty member, in conversation with the president and the appropriate academic dean, at which time the work of the faculty member is reviewed, and plans for future teaching, research and service are considered [Faculty Manual 4403.00].

C. Personal Behavior

Life at Union Presbyterian Seminary is lived in the context of a community that is both academic and Christian. Depth of conviction and an emphasis on moral conduct are integral to the life shared here. Relationships are to be honored. Personal behavior is taken with great seriousness in a variety of relationships. In cases of personal misconduct, Union Presbyterian Seminary adheres to a policy that strives to adjudicate problems in ways that are just and fair for the community.

Personal misconduct, in this policy, is defined in relation to non-academic behavior at the Seminary. Allegations and incidents of academic misconduct, such as plagiarism, have distinct policies that may be found in the *Policies and Procedures Booklet*.

This policy, therefore, focuses on matters of *personal integrity*. Students, staff, and faculty at the Seminary are expected to conduct themselves in ways that are aligned with the Seminary's norms and

standards as they are outlined in the *Policies and Procedures Booklet*. These norms and standards support the Seminary's efforts to nurture, maintain, and strengthen an environment founded on honesty, integrity, civility, and respect.

As such, students, staff, and faculty must refrain from disruptive behavior that disregards the needs and rights of others to pursue study, work, family life, and friendships in the community.

Some examples of behavior that reflect a breach of our Seminary's norms and standards and constitute personal misconduct are:

- Discriminating against others on the basis of race, national origin, ethnicity, sex,
- religion, color, creed, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, or age.
- Harassing, intimidating, or bullying another person
- Causing physical injury to, or threatening another person
- Disrupting the peaceful or orderly conduct of lectures, meetings, and worship services led or sponsored by those with whom one may disagree
- Disrupting the peaceful or orderly living spaces for those living in campus housing
- Stealing or vandalizing property
- Plagiarizing the materials of other persons in non-academic settings, such as in leading worship on campus
- Possessing firearms, explosives, or other dangerous weapons on campus property
- Engaging in any form of criminal conduct
- Bringing complaints against a community member that are spurious, or that are intended primarily to harass or maliciously defame another person

Additional examples that pertain to personal behavior may be found in other policies of Union Presbyterian Seminary.