The Most Frequently Asked Questions by PARENTS about Student Conduct

1.) If my student gets into trouble, will I be notified? 
In efforts to help reduce the increasingly dangerous alcohol consumption incidents, parents are regularly notified when a student is found to be responsible for violating a University alcohol and/or drug policy. Yet, University of Central Oklahoma encourages students to speak with their parents on their own.

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) allows for Universities to contact the parents of students, if their student has been found “RESPONSIBLE” for violating any University alcohol or controlled substance policy or any local, state, or federal law and are under the age of twenty-one (21). Therefore, parents may be contacted if the aforementioned criterion is met. Additionally, parents may be contacted, without consent of the student, if their student’s health, safety, and/or welfare are in clear and present danger.

2.) If my student is accused of violating a University policy, what happens? 
Students may receive a phone call, email, face-to-face request and/or a letter from the Office of Student Conduct or another University Official (i.e. instructor, Housing and Dining staff member, etc.) requesting them to make an appointment to meet with the Director of Student Conduct or designee by a certain deadline. If in an email or letter, the communication will most likely describe any complaints that may have been filed against the student(s). This notification should be taken very seriously. Students should make an appointment at their earliest convenience and prior to the stated deadline. Ignoring this notification and/or failing to make an appointment may result in a hold being placed on their University account, a decision being made regarding their case without the benefit of their input, or other more severe disciplinary actions.

The Office of Student Conduct shall provide due process for students by providing notice and seeking to hear the various perspectives from each complaint. There are four (4) possible outcomes to an Informal Conduct Meeting, which are listed below:

- The complaint is dismissed after an investigation and accused student is found to be “not responsible.”
- Responsibility is accepted by accused and sanctions may or may not be applied without formal hearing.
- A formal Student Conduct Hearing is arranged where accused may be found responsible or not responsible for alleged behavior.
- The case is deemed to be inconclusive and the complaint is placed in the accused person’s file, as an established paper trail. The accused is advised that the case may be re-opened if further adverse information about the incident is received and/or acquired. (The accused may choose to appeal the contents of their file at a later date.)

3.) How can I participate in the University conduct process? 
Parents and/or guardians may indirectly participate in the student conduct process by being supportive while holding the student accountable to the University’s expectations. You can also help identify and provide necessary interventions, such as alcohol or drug evaluations, anger management, and others, so that the student can recover from their current challenge and be successful in the future. Allow, encourage, and expect the student to set appointments, attend meetings, and fulfill sanctions. It is usually not helpful to the educational development of the student, or resolution of the matter, for you to take over the process for the student.

4.) Can I be present with my student in a Student Conduct Hearing? 
According to the UCO Code of Student Conduct (section III.), the complainant, the accused student, and / or the accused student organization representative(s) shall have the right to be assisted by any advisor they choose, at their own expense, unless that person’s presence and / or actions disrupt the operations of the hearing. The complainant, the accused student, and / or the accused student organization representative(s) may be assisted by no more than one (1) advisor. The advisor may be an attorney. The complainant and / or the accused student or organization is responsible
for presenting his, her, or their own case and, therefore, advisors are not permitted to speak or to participate directly in any Student Conduct Hearing before a student conduct body. Participating students should select an advisor or person whose schedule allows attendance at the allotted dates and times for Student Conduct Hearings. Generally, delays shall not be allowed, because of scheduling conflicts of advisors.

5.) What factors are considered when determining whether a student is “responsible” for an alleged behavior? The University of Central Oklahoma uses a “preponderance or weight of the evidence” standard in determining whether a student should be held responsible for an alleged behavior. Primarily, the Director of Student Conduct or qualified designee shall make the determination of responsibility on the basis of whether it is “more likely than not” that the accused student violated the Code of Student Conduct.

The factors that are considered in each case include, but are not limited to, the following:
(listed in no particular order)

- Police reports, if any
- Witness statements, if any
- The nature of the incident
- The intent of the student(s) involved
- The effect on the University community
- Prior conduct records of involved students
- Prior criminal record(s), if any
- The role of the accused student(s) in the incident
- The cooperation and honesty of the involved student(s)
- The development and education of the student(s) involved
- The safety, well-being, and recovery of the surrounding and/or impacted University community

6.) What is the difference between probation, suspension, and expulsion?
A student may be placed on probation in Housing or on a University level. As defined by the UCO Code of Student Conduct, section III. P., there are two (2) levels of University probation. The following descriptions apply to University Probation only.

**Probation 1**: A written reprimand for violation of specified regulations. Probation is for a designated period of time and includes the probability of more severe sanctions, such as suspension or expulsion, if the student is found responsible for violating any further institutional regulation(s) during the probationary period.

**Probation 2**: A written reprimand for violation of specified regulations and a loss of privilege from representing the University in on or off campus co-curricular and/or extracurricular academic, athletic, or other social functions sponsored by the University during the probationary period. Probation is for a designated period of time and includes the probability of more severe sanctions, such as suspension or expulsion, if the student is found responsible for violating any further institutional regulation(s) during the probationary period.

**University Temporary Suspension** occurs when a student may be temporarily suspended from the University without a hearing when there is an immediate and present danger of damage to life and property or disruption of University life. Such an administrative decision will be effective immediately.

**University Suspension** occurs when a student may be suspended for a definite period of time, not less than the remainder of the current semester in which he or she is enrolled. The student who has been suspended may apply for readmission at the close of the period for which he or she was suspended. A suspension hold may be placed on the transcript during the period of suspension. Likewise, a notation of the suspension may be placed on the student's academic transcript. In addition, a student may be suspended from Housing facilities.

**University Expulsion** is a permanent separation of the student from the University. When a student is expelled, a notation of the suspension may be placed on the student's academic transcript. Generally, a student who is expelled may not be allowed to reenter the University.

7.) How do we appeal a disciplinary decision?
In general, there are two (2) types of student conduct appeals. First, appeals that do not involve temporary suspension, suspension, expulsion, credit recession, and/or degree revocation are handled by the Vice President for Student Affairs. Secondly, appeals that do involve temporary suspension, suspension, expulsion, credit recession, and/or
degree revocation are handled by the Committee on Student Conduct. The Committee on Student Conduct is a committee consisting of faculty, students, and sometimes staff members.

**Appeals handled by the Vice President for Student Affairs:** A decision reached by the student conduct body or a sanction imposed by the Director of Student Conduct may be appealed by accused students or complainants to Vice President for Student Affairs. To initiate an appeal, the student must make the request. The request and reason for appeal should be made in writing, by hard copy, signed, and dated, to the Office of Student Conduct within three (3) University days after the disciplinary decision is rendered and received by the student. The decision of the Vice President for Student Affairs shall be final.

**Appeals handled by the Committee on Student Conduct:** To initiate an appeal, a student must make the request. The request and reason for appeal should be made in writing, by hard copy, signed, and dated, to the Office of Student Conduct within three (3) University days after the disciplinary decision is rendered and received by the student. If the student appeals a decision of suspension, expulsion, degree revocation, or rescission of credit, the decision will stand until after a hearing before the Committee on Student Conduct. Any act by a properly constituted committee, at which a quorum of the committee is present, shall be binding.

A decision to temporarily suspend becomes effective immediately, but may be overturned after a hearing before the Committee on Student Conduct. Hearings will be held as soon as practical after the student makes the request.

The Director of Student Conduct shall serve as the University’s representative in appeals before the Committee on Student Conduct. The University Legal Counsel shall serve as the advisor to the Committee on Student Conduct on matters of procedure.

8.) If my student is found to be responsible, does the outcome go on my student's academic transcript? Usually, behavioral disciplinary sanctions will not appear on a student’s transcript, unless the student was found responsible for academic misconduct and/or sanctioned a suspension or expulsion.

9.) Will a student conduct record prevent my student from being accepted into Graduate School or getting a job? No, not necessarily. If a student completes an Educational Records Release Authorization (ERRA) form or an official release form from a potential employer or a graduate school registration program, then the Office of Student Conduct may release the requested information from the student conduct file. If a prior conduct record is discovered about your student, the graduate school and/or potential employer may decide to investigate the application and/or the severity of the conduct incident(s), and then make a decision. This information will not be released unless the student grants the University written permission.

10.) My student has to appear in court for the same incident. Why do we need to go through the University process too? Contrary to popular belief, this is not double jeopardy, which only applies to the criminal court system. Students are held responsible by the University of Central Oklahoma for their behavior under the UCO Code of Student Conduct.

University conduct proceedings may be instituted against a student with violation of a law which is also a violation of the UCO Code of Student Conduct; such as, when both violations result from the same incident. Proceedings under the UCO Code of Student Conduct may be carried out prior to, simultaneously with, or following civil or criminal proceedings off-campus.

11.) This incident occurred off campus. Why is the university involved in this matter? Generally, University jurisdiction and discipline shall be limited to conduct which occurs on or near University premises or which adversely affects the University Community and/or the pursuit of its objectives. Thus, even if an incident occurs off campus, it may still be considered a violation of the Code of Student Conduct, which, if reported to the University, will be handled by the Office of Student Conduct.

12.) What is FERPA? The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."
Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance.

For further information about the details of FERPA, please go to section VI. A. of the UCO Code of Student Conduct or to http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html.

13.) What does UCO consider “Directory Information?”

Public Directory Information and Student Access to Official Educational Records at the University of Central Oklahoma (UCO) designates the following student information as public or directory information:

Category I
Student’s name, local and permanent address, e-mail address, telephone number(s), classification, dates of attendance at UCO, enrollment status (full-time, half-time, or less than halftime).

Category II
Major field of study / degree program, educational institutions previously attended, degrees and awards granted, educational background degree(s) held and date(s) granted and institutions granting such degree(s).

Category III
Date and place of birth, participation in officially recognized organizations, activities and sports, and weight and height of participants in officially recognized sports. This information may be disclosed by the institution for any purpose, at its discretion.

Students may choose to withhold disclosure of all the above categories of “Directory Information” under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. Forms requesting the withholding of "Directory Information” are available in Enrollment Management, Nigh University Center 124, (405) 974-2338.

14.) Well, how can I check on how my student is doing regarding his/her grades?

The Office of Student Conduct encourages direct communication between parents and their students as the primary effort. The college years are sometimes difficult and stressful, which lead to less than desirable communication between family members. Even so, your balanced efforts, support and desire to be involved in their lives is invaluable.

The University of Central Oklahoma has two (2) options for parents who seek to find out about students’ grades and/or other specified educational records.

1. Eligible students (18 years of age or older or a student of a college or University) may fill out an Educational Records Release Authorization (ERRA) form and submit it to the Office of Student Conduct, as a form of permission, to disclose specified information from their record(s).

2. Parents of a dependent student, as defined in Section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, are entitled to access to official educational records of that student. Access, however, may not be granted unless proof of dependency is established through Enrollment Management or the Office of Student Conduct. Proof may be established by submitting a copy of the parents'/guardians’ most recent federal income tax form(s).

15.) Who can I contact to find out more information on Student Conduct at UCO?

The Director of Student Conduct, may be reached in the Office of Student Conduct, Lillard Administration Building 213, (405) 974-2361 or studentconduct@uco.edu.

The structure of the questions and answers were inspired by and adapted from the Judicial Affairs webpages of the University of Colorado at Boulder and the University of Maryland.