

## **Policy on Sanctions for Job-Related Faculty Misconduct**

Prepared by: Committee of Academic Freedom and  
Professional Status of the Faculty, 04-04-05

Policy Statement: (To be standardized by University Policy Office)

Reason for Policy: (To be standardized by University Policy Office)

Entities Affected by this Policy: University professors and college or school faculty members.

Who Should Read this Policy: (must include faculty and deans, to be standardized by University Policy Office)

### **I. Definitions**

A. College or school faculty member: as defined by Art. XIII of the Bylaws of Cornell University:

Each college or school faculty, except the Graduate Faculty, shall be composed of the President; the Dean or director of the college or school; and all professors, associate professors, and assistant professors in the department or departments under the charge of that faculty. Instructors, senior research associates, senior extension associates, lecturers, senior lecturers, clinical professors, associate clinical professors, and assistant clinical professors, and those bearing the adjunct title shall be non-voting members. Each college or school faculty may, in its discretion, grant membership to senior scholars, senior scientists, and other professional personnel for whom such membership is deemed appropriate by such faculty. Any college or school faculty may elect to its membership persons who are already members of other faculties of the University for so long a period as they continue to be members of such other faculties.

B. Emergency suspension: A suspension with full salary pending the ultimate determination of the faculty member's case where the member is charged with misconduct and the member's continuance threatens imminent serious harm to the member or others or to property.

C. Minor sanction: any sanction other than a "severe sanction."

D. Severe sanction: dismissal or suspension.

E. Suspension: a temporary abrogation of the faculty member's rights or responsibilities that effectively prevents the faculty member from carrying out the responsibilities of his or her position or a temporary partial or full reduction of a faculty member's salary will be considered a suspension for the purposes of

this policy, whether or not it is named as such.

## **II. Purpose and Scope of this Policy**

To ensure fair and adequate processes for faculty charged with job-related misconduct or failure to perform the duties required of the position held, the following procedures govern the imposition of severe sanctions, minor sanctions, and emergency suspensions.

## **III. Procedures**

### **A. Severe Sanctions**

1. Duration of suspensions: No suspension, other than emergency suspension, shall be imposed for a period of less than two weeks, nor more than 12 months.
2. Reporting requirements for dismissals or suspensions: All dismissals or suspensions, including those resulting from informal settlements, shall be reported to the Dean of Faculty by the appropriate administrator. Such reports shall include a summary of both the complaint and its resolution, and shall be maintained in a permanent archive.
3. Suspension procedures for university professors, professors, associate professors, and assistant professors<sup>1</sup>:
  - (a) The term "faculty member" in subsection III A. 3. shall refer exclusively to university professors, professors, associate professors, or assistant professors.
  - (b) If the administration believes that the conduct of a faculty member is sufficiently grave to justify imposition of a suspension, the procedures in III.A.3. (d) below shall apply.
  - (c) Where the recommendation for a suspension is a result of action taken under any other university policy (including those policies governing "academic misconduct," "sexual harassment," "financial irregularities," and "conflict of commitment/interest"), the faculty member may appeal the recommendations issued under that policy by requesting a hearing according to III.A.3.(d) below. In this case, the administrator shall not implement the sanctions recommended under the initial policy procedures but shall instead report to the Provost the results of any investigations undertaken, together with his or her recommendations. The Provost shall cause the faculty member to be furnished with a

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<sup>1</sup> The procedure used for dismissals is the procedure adopted for that purpose by the Board of Trustees.

written and detailed statement of the charges against him or her if, after receiving the administrator's report and making such independent investigation as may seem appropriate to the Provost, it is the opinion of the Provost that further proceedings are warranted.

- (d) The charges against the faculty member shall be heard by a hearing panel appointed as follows. The faculty member and the Provost shall each choose four members of the University Appeals Panel. The faculty member's nominees shall choose two of the Provost's nominees, and the Provost's nominees shall choose two of the faculty member's nominees. The four so chosen shall then choose a fifth tenured University member, who shall chair the hearing panel. Any person nominated who has participated in the matter being heard or feels unable to render an unbiased judgment or perceives a conflict of interest shall disqualify him or herself.
  - (e) At the hearing, the faculty member shall be entitled to be accompanied by an advisor or counsel of his or her own choice, to present witnesses in his or her own behalf and to confront and question the witnesses against him or her. The faculty member's advisor or counsel may not address the panel or question the witnesses unless requested to do so by the chair of the panel.
  - (f) If the faculty member requests before or at the opening of the hearing, he or she shall after its conclusion be furnished, without cost to him or her, a full report of the proceedings before the panel, including an audio recording of the testimony taken, copies of documents received, and the panel's findings and recommendations.
  - (g) The panel shall report its findings to the President in writing within eight weeks of being formed. The decision of the President will not be subject to further appeal or reconsideration.
  - (h) The office of the Dean of the Faculty will provide staff support for the panel.
4. Procedures for suspension and dismissal of college or school faculty members other than professors, associate professors, and assistant professors:
- (a) When complaint from any source is made against such member which might lead to the imposition of a dismissal or suspension, and unless the alleged misconduct falls under the jurisdiction of a specific Cornell policy containing alternate

procedures, the Dean of his or her college shall inform the member of the complaint against him or her, investigate the case, and if the faculty member is willing, consult with him or her regarding it.

- (b) If the matter is adjusted informally to the satisfaction of the Dean and the faculty member, no further proceedings shall be invoked by them. If the matter is not adjusted informally, the Dean shall cause the faculty member to be furnished with a written and detailed statement of the charges against him or her.
- (c) No dismissal or suspension shall be imposed without first giving such member an opportunity to invoke grievance procedures and seek review by the Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Status of the Faculty [AFPS], to the extent permitted by the specific policy guidelines governing such reviews, and within the following stated time periods: The member shall have 4 weeks after being informed in writing of the charges and recommended sanctions to invoke grievance procedures or review by the AFPS. Where a review by the AFPS is requested following a grievance action, the faculty member shall have 4 weeks after the completion of the grievance procedure to request review by the AFPS.
- (d) The opportunity to invoke grievance procedures and seek review by the AFPS before the imposition of a dismissal or suspension, as described above, applies also to cases where the recommendation for a dismissal or suspension is a result of action taken under any other college or university policy (including those policies governing "academic misconduct," "sexual harassment," "financial irregularities," and "conflict of commitment/interest").

## B. Minor Sanctions

If the administration believes that the conduct of a faculty member justifies imposition of a minor sanction, the following procedures will be followed:

1. If a minor sanction is imposed under a specific university policy (such as "academic misconduct," "sexual harassment," "financial regularities," and "conflict of commitment/interest"), the faculty member may obtain consideration and, possibly, redress by invoking a formal grievance action according to the grievance procedures adopted by his or her college and, where appropriate, request review by the AFPS.

2. If the conduct justifying a minor sanction is not regulated under any other specific university policy, the appropriate administrator will notify the faculty member of the basis of the proposed sanction and provide the faculty member with an opportunity to persuade the administration that the proposed sanction should not be imposed. A faculty member who believes that a minor sanction has been unjustly imposed may invoke a formal grievance action according to the grievance procedures adopted by his or her college and, where appropriate, request review by the AFPS.
3. A faculty member who believes that a sanction proposed under the procedures for "minor sanctions" is, in fact, a "dismissal or suspension" may invoke a formal grievance action according to the grievance procedures adopted by his or her college and, where appropriate, request review by the AFPS.

### C. Emergency Suspension

1. If a university professor, or college or school faculty member, is charged with misconduct and if the member's continuance threatens imminent serious harm to the member or others or to property, the faculty member may be suspended by the President (or his or her designee) or assigned to other duties in lieu of suspension pending final resolution of the charge.
2. The scope and duration of the emergency suspension shall be tailored as narrowly as possible to the nature of the harm posed, so that the faculty member's rights and privileges are not summarily abrogated more broadly than is reasonably necessary to protect persons or property pending completion of the suspension procedures. Whatever other rights and privileges may be withdrawn by an emergency suspension, the faculty member's full salary shall continue during the period of the emergency suspension.
3. The President (or his or her designee) shall promptly report to the Dean of Faculty concerning the propriety, the length, and any other conditions of the emergency suspension.