The Investigation

Possible Violations of the Honor Code

At UNC, students pledge to support the principles of academic integrity and to refrain from conduct that would be contrary to a safe, respectful, and productive University environment. For a complete list of Honor Code violations, please consult sections II.B and II.C of The Instrument of Student Judicial Governance [1].

The Investigation

After a report of an alleged violation is received by the Office of the Honor System, the appropriate Student Attorney General conducts a preliminary investigation to determine whether the alleged conduct constitutes an offense under the Honor Code and whether a reasonable basis exists to refer the matter for a hearing before the Honor Court. In making their decision, the Student Attorney General may discuss the report with the reporting party and any witnesses, review any written material, and discuss the matter with the accused student(s). Students are not required to answer any questions that may be self-incriminating, and anything the student says to the Student Attorney General or staff during the investigation may be used in an Honor Court hearing if the student is charged.

If the Student Attorney General finds that a reasonable basis exists, they will charge the student and schedule an Honor Court hearing. A decision to charge a student with a violation does not mean that the student has been found guilty; rather, it means only that there is enough evidence supporting the allegation to warrant a hearing.

If the Student Attorney General's investigation does not lead to charges being brought against the accused student(s), the matter is closed and neither the reporting party nor the Honor Court may impose sanctions.

Pre-Hearing Preparation

After a student is charged, they receive an email and letter from the Student Attorney General's office informing them of both the charge and of the possible sanctions that may be issued if the student is determined responsible for the charge. Additionally, the student meets with a Managing Associate for a Preliminary Conference to receive more information about the Honor System process and to prepare for the hearing.
Managing Associate also assigns an Investigative Counsel and a Defense Counsel to the case to prepare it for a hearing.

The Investigative Counsel serves on behalf of the University community, presenting facts to the Honor Court that support the charge. The Investigator is obligated to share all evidence with the accused student(s) and their Defense Counsel prior to the hearing.

The accused student(s) and their Defense Counsel work to gather information that reflects the accused student's version of events and help the accused student organize and present it to the Court in an orderly and coherent fashion. Defense Counsels are also responsible for making sure that accused students understand the Honor System process thoroughly.

All Counsels who serve on the Undergraduate or the Graduate and Professional School Student Attorney General's Staff are fully trained by the respective Student Attorney General and the Office of Student Conduct, and are certified to serve as Attorney General's Staff Counsels by the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

Additionally, an accused student may be represented by any currently-enrolled undergraduate or graduate or professional student on campus, the classification of which is dependent upon the respective Court hearing the case. However, the respective Student Attorney General of the respective Courts cannot be responsible for the level of training or expertise of students who are not on their staff.

Source URL: https://studentconduct.unc.edu/honor-system/honor-system-process/investigation

Links
[1] https://studentconduct.unc.edu/instrument