

# **UNION**

**Union Theological Seminary**  
Office of Student Affairs

# **Student Life Handbook**

## **2022-2023**



## A MESSAGE FROM THE ASSISTANT DEAN OF STUDENTS

Dear Seminarians,

Consistent with Union Theological Seminary's mission to prepare our students for committed lives of service to the church, academy, and society, The Office of Student Affairs endeavors to support the spiritual, physical, emotional, and social well-being of all students so that you may thrive.

This handbook contains important information about the many resources available to you, as well as the policies and community standards we expect all members of the Union community to uphold, so that we may continue to nurture and strengthen this diverse community of scholars.

The Office of Student Affairs encourages you to get involved on campus! Union has many student caucuses and an active Student Senate, all filled with opportunities to have fun and make connections.

We hope you find the Student Handbook a useful resource and encourage you to read it carefully. We hope that you will engage fully in all that Union has to offer. Here's to a great year!

Warmly,

**Abigail Asgaralli**

Assistant Dean of Students

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# **COMMUNITY STANDARDS**

## **STUDENT COMMUNITY STANDARDS**

Union strives to be a healthy, welcoming community to live and learn in for all of its members. As a member of our community, you have an equal responsibility to act with integrity and preserve our core values. Your individual duties and obligations include cooperation, respect, and participation.

Union expects members of the Seminary community to observe professional norms of scholarly discourse, academic integrity, and fairness. All members of the Seminary community are expected to exhibit a high level of personal integrity. Union insists on the greatest degree of freedom of inquiry, teaching, learning, and expression for all of its members. Thus, activities that disrupt the regular and essential operation of the Seminary, or which negatively impact the Seminary's reputation for academic excellence and personal integrity and accountability, are not permitted. Students or other members of the Seminary community may charge students with violating applicable standards of academic integrity and conduct. Students found guilty of violating these standards of integrity and conduct will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action including reprimand, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion.

**For academic standards and procedures, please consult the Academic Catalog.**

## **POLICY ON NON-DISCRIMINATION**

Union welcomes all persons and is committed through language and practice to cultivate an inclusive community. Union admits students regardless of age, color, national or ethnic origins, familial composition, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, race, racial, ethnic, cultural and gender identities and expressions, religious affiliation, faith tradition, socio-economic status, and disability. Students have access to all the rights, privileges, and programs Union makes available to students. Union does not discriminate on the basis of any of these factors in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarships and loan programs, or other programs administered by the Seminary.

The Seminary is committed to providing an environment where students, faculty, and staff can enjoy the full benefits of the above policy.

## **INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE AT UNION**

Union Theological Seminary is committed to equality for women, men, and transgender persons of every racial, ethnic, and religious background. Recognizing that language has often been used to imply racial and sexual inferiority, the Seminary urges students, faculty, and staff members to avoid discriminatory language and assumptions regarding race, sex, ethnicity, culture, gender, ability, family composition, marital status, sexual orientation, and gender identities and expressions of any kind in public discourse, classroom discussions, and written work. Failure to abide by appropriate behavioral norms in this regard may constitute grounds for discipline under the Seminary's anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies.

## **STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

Concerns, complaints, and grievances by students arising out of Seminary policies concerning Title IX and Sexual Misconduct, Disability Services, Academic Appeals, and the Student Standards of Conduct shall be governed by the policies, procedures, and mechanisms for redress set forth in this Student Handbook. Complaints against Seminary faculty or staff may be superseded or may be governed, in whole or in part, by the policies and procedures set forth in the Faculty Guide, the Employee Handbook, or by the provisions of any applicable Federal, State, or local law.

Students who are unclear about which policies, procedures, apply in a given situation, particularly those not expressly covered in the Student Handbook, should consult with the Assistant Dean of Students, the Academic Dean, or the Associate Dean for Academic Administration for guidance. The final determination regarding which, if any, policies or procedures in the Student Handbook, Faculty Guide, or Employee Handbook may be applicable to a particular concern, complaint, or grievance rests in the sole discretion of the Academic Dean. In the event that the Academic Dean is the subject of the complaint, then this final determination shall be made by the President or by the President's designee. This final determination made by the Academic Dean or by the President (or designee) is not appealable.

Regardless of whether or not a formal policy is applicable or grievance procedures are available to an aggrieved student in a particular instance, students are encouraged to attempt to resolve complaints and grievances directly with the faculty, staff, or other student(s) whose alleged acts or omissions have given rise to their concerns or complaint. However, direct contact with involved individuals should not be attempted if the risk of physical harm to anyone is foreseeable. When the student believes that such direct contact is not feasible or may be counterproductive, the student may seek the assistance of one of the following persons to facilitate an informal resolution: the Assistant Dean of Students, the Associate Dean for Academic Administration, or the Academic Dean. In cases involving sexual misconduct, discrimination, or harassment, the student may enlist the Title IX Coordinator as set out in the policies contained in this handbook. In the case of complaints involving the Academic Dean or the Assistant Dean of Students, the student may enlist the assistance of the President or the President's designee.

### **1. Definitions and Organization of the Disciplinary Review System**

1.1. Student: any person enrolled in a degree or non-degree program at Union or taking courses or participating in activities at Union as students. All students fall under the jurisdiction of the Community Standards. Any alleged infraction that was committed by an individual while that person was a student or on the Union campus may be addressed under this policy. If an accused student is enrolled at another institution, that student may also be referred to his or her primary institution at the discretion of Union.

1.2. Jurisdiction: Misconduct committed by students. Students who also serve as Union employees may be subject to separate disciplinary proceedings by virtue of their employment status. Nothing in the Standards shall prevent an investigation or discipline under other applicable Seminary policies.

1.3. Role of the Office of the Academic Dean: The Office of the Academic Dean has an overall responsibility for overseeing proceedings on and all matters related to the enforcement of the Seminary's Academic Integrity or General Misconduct policies. The Office of the Academic Dean will determine whether complaints should be referred to the Discipline and Dispute Resolution Committee and bring complaints as necessary or resolve complaints by voluntary agreements.

1.4. Discipline and Dispute Resolution Committee (DDRC): The DDRC is responsible for hearings related to alleged violations of Union policies by students, other than policies related to academic integrity. It is chaired by the Academic Dean or their designee and shall be comprised of the Assistant Dean of Students, one faculty member and one student chosen by the Academic Dean or the Dean's designee. The General Counsel of the Seminary, or outside counsel, may advise the DDRC as needed along with other individuals of varying expertise, if the pending case warrants additional consultation. Faculty and student DDRC members shall serve two-year staggered terms to ensure continuity as members of the DDRC rotate on and off the committee. DDRC hearings are conducted by the entire member panel of the DDRC convened by the Office of the Academic Dean.

1.5. Advisors: A Union faculty or staff member or student in good standing can serve as an advisor during the DDRC process and can help students involved in disciplinary proceedings to understand the disciplinary process, respect and comply with the provisions of this policy, and deal with all aspects of the process. An attorney may also serve, but the Office of the Academic Dean must be alerted in written no less than five calendar days before the hearing if an attorney will be present. Dates and times of hearings will not be changed to accommodate an advisor's schedule.

1.5.1. An advisor may accompany any complainant, witness, or respondent to, and may participate in, any meeting regarding a disciplinary complaint. Advisors also may accompany complainants, respondents, and witnesses to hearings, but **may not participate** in such hearings. An advisor to a respondent may quietly advise the respondent during the hearing but shall do so in a way that does not disrupt or taint the proceedings. If an advisor engages in disruptive or inappropriate behavior, in which determination is in the sole discretion of the DDRC chairperson at the proceeding, the advisor may be dismissed from the proceeding, but such dismissal shall not cause the proceeding to be suspended or terminated unless the chairperson, in her or his sole discretion, determines a suspension or termination to be warranted.

## **2. General Misconduct: Reviewed by the Discipline and Dispute Resolution Committee**

2.1. Any member of the Union community may bring a complaint about student conduct to the attention of the Academic Dean. Doing so in no way limits the complainant's rights to bring such matters to the attention of other Seminary offices, officers, or resources, or to seek recourse outside Union through civil or criminal legal proceedings.

2.2. General misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Obstruction or disruption of teaching, research, administration, Union procedures and activities, or other authorized activities on Union premises, including public service functions on or off the premises.
- Engaging in or threatening to engage in behaviors that by virtue of their intensity, repetitiveness, or otherwise, endanger or compromise the health, safety or well-being of oneself, another person, or the general Seminary community or that disrupt the effective continuation of the academic/educational process for individual students or for the general Seminary community. Such behaviors include, but are not limited to, threatening, tormenting, mocking, intimidating and exploiting known psychological or physical vulnerabilities or impairment.
- Abusive behavior toward a Seminary employee or agent acting in the performance of their duties.
- Physical violence, actual or threatened, against any individual or group of people.
- Harassment, sexual abuse, or misconduct. Please note that a separate policy exists in this handbook with respect to harassment, sexual abuse, or misconduct, and the DDRC reserves the right to refer complaints in this area to be reviewed and proceed under that policy).
- The unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs, unlawful drug paraphernalia, and alcohol, including public intoxication.
- Failure to comply with authorized directions of, or furnishing false information to, Union officials or representatives of the DDRC acting in the performance of their duties.
- Knowingly have in one's possession upon the premises to which these rules apply, any rifle, shotgun, pistol, revolver, or other firearm or weapon without the written and explicit authorization of the President, whether or not a license to possess the weapon has been issued to the person.
- Willfully incite others to commit any of the acts prohibited in this section with the intent to cause them to do so.
- Violation of any provision of the Union Alcohol and Drug Safety Policy included herein.
- Take any action, create any situation, or participate in the creation of any situation which recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health of any person, including endangering the mental or physical health of any person for the purpose of entering, being initiated into, or affiliating with any organization.
- Compel the consumption of alcoholic beverages or drugs by another person, including compelling the consumption of alcoholic beverages or drugs by any person for the purpose of entering, being initiated into or affiliating with any organization.
- Deliberately disrupt or prevent the peaceful and orderly conduct of classes, lectures, or meetings or attempt to disrupt or prevent the freedom of any person, including invited speakers, to express their views.
- Disorderly, disruptive or antagonizing behavior that interferes with the safety, security, health or welfare of the community and /or the regular operations of the community.
- Knowingly allowing one's guests or visitors to violate this policy or other University policies, or failing to monitor the behavior of one's visitors or guests to assure their adherence to such standards.

- Participating in any adverse action against any individual for making a good faith report of prohibited conduct or participating in any proceeding under this policy. Retaliation includes threatening, intimidating, harassing or any other conduct that would discourage a reasonable person from engaging in activity protected by this policy. Unauthorized entry or use of Union facilities or unauthorized possession or use of Union property or property of others.
- Forgery, alteration, or misuse of Union documents, records, or identification, furnishing false information to Union, or possession of any false identification or identification belonging to another person.
- Identity theft: Possessing or using another person’s name, address, Social Security number (SSN), bank or credit card account number, or other identifying information without that person’s knowledge, and with the intent to commit fraud or other crimes.
- Theft or other abuse of computer facilities and resources including but not limited to: any violation of Seminary computer use policy, using computing facilities and resources to send obscene or abusive messages or other unauthorized use of computing facilities and resources.
- Vandalizing, damaging, destroying, defacing, or removing Union property or property under its care, or the property of others.
- Violation of any residence hall policy including fire safety standards and guest policy.
- Violations of any other Union policy, rule, or regulation, or of federal, state, or local law.

2.3. Students taking only non-credit courses are guests of the Seminary. They are required to conform with Seminary standards of behavior, but are not entitled to the dispute resolution, grievance or hearing provisions, or the appeal rights set forth below and herein, that are afforded to Seminary students enrolled in degree programs or for-credit students. In the event of an alleged violation of the student standards of conduct or other inappropriate behavior by a student taking a non-credit course, the discipline or remedy imposed by the professor or instructor of that course shall be reviewable only by the President or the President’s designee; the process employed in connection with such a review, the standards of review and the review determination shall be in the sole and exclusive discretion of the Academic Dean, whose determination shall be final.

## **DISCIPLINARY REVIEW PROCESS**

### **3. Informal Procedures**

3.1. When an issue arises involving general conduct of a student, the Student Code provides informal avenues by which the complaint may be resolved:

- Personal/Informal Resolution: It is recommended that a complainant consider addressing the person against whom the complaint is being made. Such informal efforts at resolution often are successful. However, this effort is not required, and students are particularly cautioned that they should immediately report any circumstance where the complainant feels an imminent threat of harm or danger from the person against whom the complaint is being made.

3.2. Mediation:

- Union encourages mediation of disputes, whether involving academic integrity or general conduct, whenever practical and appropriate. Mediation may take place only if the



complainant and respondent agree to participate; a matter is resolved through mediation only if all parties agree on a resolution. Mediation usually occurs within the office of the Assistant Dean of Students, but may be delegated elsewhere.

- General Misconduct: In situations involving alleged general misconduct, any involved party may contact the Office of the Academic Dean with a request for mediation. A representative of the Office of the Academic Dean may then convene a meeting to discuss possible resolution of the matter. If, as part of the mediation, a resolution is agreed to that involves the imposition of sanctions, these will be communicated in writing to the student by the Academic Dean and handled by the Academic Dean.

#### **4. Formal Procedures**

4.1. If attempts at personal resolution or mediation fail, or any member of the community wishes to bypass informal procedures and/or mediation and file a formal complaint, the complainant shall notify the Academic Dean in writing. The Academic Dean will convene a Hearing Panel, which will comprise the entire DDRC (for general misconduct complaints) or the Committee on Standing (COS) (for Academic Integrity Complaints). The Academic Dean shall then deliver to the charged student a statement of the charges being brought, the student's rights in the proceeding, and potential consequences.

4.2. The student shall be informed, in writing, of the reasons for the proposed disciplinary actions with sufficient particularity to insure an opportunity to prepare for the hearing. At least seven days' notice of the hearing will be given to both parties.

4.3. A hearing may be expedited in appropriate circumstances, including disciplinary matters involving students who have been placed on mandatory temporary suspension or conditional attendance, graduating students, or students who are about to take a leave of absence or leave campus to study elsewhere. Students who withdraw from Union remain subject to this Code and hearing policy.

4.4. The Hearing Panel may seek advice from the General Counsel or outside counsel, if necessary. The Academic Dean is responsible for ensuring that the process occurs in a timely fashion.

4.5. All members of the Union community are required to cooperate with these policies and procedures. Individuals who are interviewed or called as witnesses (including respondents and complainants) are obligated to provide honest and complete statements during the process.

4.6. Disciplinary or dispute hearings are not trials, and they are not governed by rules of procedure, evidence, or judicial formality. They are designed to encourage open discussion among the participants that promotes the Hearing Panel's understanding of the facts, the individuals involved, the circumstances under which the alleged incident occurred; the nature of the conduct, and the attitudes and experience of those involved. All information, including hearsay evidence, may be considered.

4.7. The following procedures and standards apply to all hearings:

- Participants in the process may be accompanied by advisors as described in Section 1.5 above; participation of advisors shall be limited as set forth in the preceding section.
- No less than three days prior to the hearing, the parties shall submit to the Academic Dean and to each other all documents that they anticipate submitting as evidence and the names and anticipated areas of testimony of any witnesses. The Hearing Panel may exclude any evidence that is not submitted in accordance with this provision, but may consider such evidence if the party offering it demonstrates a good reason for failing to include it in the exchange of evidence.
- The complainant and the respondent may each make a brief opening statement and a brief closing statement.
- All matters upon which the decision may be based must be introduced into evidence at the proceeding. The decision shall be based solely upon such evidence, but the traditional rules of evidence shall not apply, and hearsay shall be admissible, if in the discretion of the Hearing Panel such hearsay is probative and appropriate.
- The burden of proof rests upon the person bringing the charge. The Hearing Panel will presume a respondent innocent, unless proven responsible for a violation by a preponderance of the evidence.
- There shall be a single official record, such as a tape recording or transcribed notes, of all hearings. Hearing Panel deliberations shall not be recorded. The record shall be the property of Union.
- If the accused fails to appear at the hearing, proceedings will continue. Evidence may be presented and considered even if the accused is absent.
- After the hearing concludes, the Hearing Panel shall deliberate in private. Upon reaching decisions on the charges and any recommended sanctions, the Hearing Panel will promptly advise the respondent of its decision. The Hearing Panel will then promptly deliver a brief written decision and any recommended sanctions to the Academic Dean who will communicate the findings of the Hearing Panel in writing to the respondent.
- All decisions of the Hearing Panel require a majority vote.

4.8. A student who wishes to appeal a decision must submit a written appeal, including any evidence supporting the appeal, to the President within fourteen calendar days following written notification of the decision from the Academic Dean. The President will be given access to any evidence submitted at the hearing. After review, the President will notify the student in writing of their decision, which will be final. The decision on appeal is the final decision of Union.

- If the President brought the action against the student, their function with respect to that appeal shall be discharged by a full professor, who will be selected by lot from professors of that category.

4.9. In an emergency or other extraordinary situation, including but not limited to a situation involving health and safety, threatened violence, serious criminal behavior, or circumstances presenting a credible risk of harm to the mental or physical well-being of one or more members of the Seminary community, the President or Academic Dean may take such interim disciplinary action, including but not limited to suspension from studies, suspension from campus housing, expulsion from campus housing, or such other conduct as is deemed, in the

discretion of the President or the Academic Dean, necessary to deal appropriately with the situation pending a hearing or a decision on appeal, which shall take place as soon as practicable.

**5. Disciplinary Sanctions. Disciplinary sanctions may include but are not limited to one or more of the following:**

5.1. Reprimand: an admonition and an official written warning, course or grade failure.

5.2. Restitution: repair or replacement of property when loss or damage is part of the offense.

5.3. Restriction: loss of privileges consistent with the offense and the rehabilitation of the student.

5.4. Disciplinary probation: placing a student in a probationary status that takes away the privilege of holding office and may also include social restrictions.

5.5. Suspension: dismissal from Union and/or its residence halls for a specified time. Suspension, pending a hearing, may be imposed when there is reason to believe the action is necessary to maintain Union functions or to protect the safety of individuals.

5.6. Expulsion: permanent dismissal from Union and/or its residence halls.

5.7. Revocation: withholding or repealing admission or a degree award based on fraud or misrepresentation.

5.8. Counseling, evaluation, and treatment programs: in some cases of misconduct, such as those committed under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, participation in an evaluation and/or treatment program by an approved counseling service may be required as a part of a sanction. The successful completion of treatment, certified by the provider of the treatment, may also be a condition of readmission to Union or a condition for remaining at Union.

**6. Additional Safety and Wellbeing Measures**

Union recognizes the importance of student academic progress and personal wellbeing. Bearing in mind the safety and wellbeing of all members of its community, the Seminary may take the following actions against a student who is manifesting behavioral issues that may impede their safe and successful participation in the academic program, or that threaten the safety or well-being of others.

6.1 Temporary Suspension Policy/Procedure. If a student commits an act deemed threatening or dangerous to self or others, the Academic Dean (or, in their absence, the Assistant Dean of Students) can immediately affect a Temporary Suspension from the Seminary and/or residence halls. The Temporary Suspension will be in writing and delivered to the student and cannot be appealed. Such a suspension will be in effect until the student meets with the Academic Dean or designee(s), who will then decide whether to continue or lift the suspension in consultation with other members of the Academic office and outside authorities as deemed necessary. If a decision is made to lift the suspension, the student will receive written

permission to return to class and/or the residence halls. If the student is not permitted to return to the Seminary, procedures for Involuntary Withdrawal will be followed. If the student is not allowed to return to the residence halls, their emergency contact will be notified.

6.2. Involuntary Withdrawal. The Seminary may discontinue the enrollment of a student whose conduct prevents safe and successful participation in his or her academic program, disrupts or impedes the work of other students, faculty or administrative staff, or threatens the safety or wellbeing of others. This decision shall be made by the Academic Dean in consultation with various members of the academic office and others as deemed appropriate. The student will not be eligible to re-enroll until the Conditions for Continuance as a Student have been met. An involuntary withdrawal may be appealed. A student who wishes to appeal this decision must submit the appeal in writing to the President's office within five business days of the decision. The President's office will review the appeal and provide the final decision to the student within seven business days of receipt. There is no further appeal of the President's decision.

6.3. Conditions for Continuance as a Student. A student who has faced either of these sanctions is required to meet certain requirements before being permitted to return to the Seminary, including a recommendation for readmission or continuance by a qualified professional designated by the Seminary. The student may also be required to enter into a behavioral contract to establish conditions under which that student may continue or resume enrollment at Union. Conditions may include reduced course loads or maintenance counseling with a licensed professional. Final readmission authority for a re-entering student rests the Academic Dean, in consultation with others. The Academic Dean reserves the right to require administrative evaluations with subsequent recommendations through the Office of Student Affairs.

## **7. Disciplinary Records and Confidentiality**

7.1. Records of disciplinary proceedings are maintained by the Office of the Academic Dean. Records are only entered into the student's official Seminary file when a final disciplinary sanction is rendered and any appeals are concluded.

7.2. All disciplinary proceedings, the identity of individuals involved in particular disciplinary matters, and all disciplinary files, testimony, and findings are kept confidential to the extent possible.

## **CONDUCT STANDARDS AT CONSORTIUM SCHOOLS**

Our consortium schools (i.e., Columbia, Jewish Theological Seminary, New York Theological Seminary, General Theological Seminary, Hunter College, etc.) have separate Rules of University Conduct, which apply to all who visit their campuses or use their facilities. Violations of these Rules can lead to sanctions including the eradication of permission to visit these campuses or use of its facilities, and suspension or dismissal from Consortium school courses in which a Union student may be enrolled.

## **TITLE IX AND SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICY**

In May 2020, the U.S. Department of Education issued new regulations mandating how colleges and universities must investigate and adjudicate sexual misconduct, and specifically sexual harassment cases, under Title IX, the federal law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities. The regulations went into effect August 14, 2020. You can find Union's Policy at this link: <https://utsnyc.edu/about/institutional-info/>.

## **ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT POLICY AND COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

Union is committed to a work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Each individual has the right to work in a professional atmosphere that promotes equal employment opportunities and prohibits unlawful discriminatory practices, including harassment. Therefore, Union expects that all relationships among persons in the office will be business-like and free of bias, prejudice and harassment.

It is the policy of Union to ensure equal employment opportunity without discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, sex, gender (including gender identity and expression), pregnancy, religion, creed, national origin, age, alienage and citizenship status, status as a perceived or actual victim of domestic violence, physical or mental disability, marital status, sexual orientation, military status, partnership status, genetic predisposition or carrier status, arrest and or conviction record, or any other individual or groups of individuals protected by federal, state or local laws.

Union encourages reporting of all perceived incidents of discrimination or harassment. It is the policy of Union to promptly and thoroughly investigate such reports. Union prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports discrimination or harassment or who participates in an investigation of such reports.

### **Definitions of Harassment**

#### *Sexual Harassment*

Sexual harassment constitutes discrimination and is illegal under federal, state and local laws. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when, for example

- a) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment;
- b) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or
- c) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Sexual harassment may include a range of subtle and not-so-subtle behaviors and may involve individuals of the same or different gender. Depending on the circumstances, these behaviors may include unwanted sexual advances or requests for sexual favors; sexual jokes and innuendo; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; commentary about an individual's body, sexual prowess or sexual deficiencies; leering, whistling or touching; insulting or obscene

comments or gestures; display in the workplace of sexually suggestive objects or pictures; and other physical, verbal or visual conduct of a sexual nature.

#### *Other Harassment*

Harassment on the basis of any other protected characteristic is also strictly prohibited. Under this policy, harassment is verbal, written or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his/her race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, genetic information or any other characteristic protected by law or that of his/her relatives, friends or associates, and that

- a) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment;
- b) has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance; or
- c) otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities.

Harassing conduct includes epithets, slurs or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating or hostile acts; denigrating jokes; and written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group and that is placed on walls or elsewhere on the employer's premises or circulated in the workplace, on company time or using company equipment via e-mail, phone (including voice messages), text messages, tweets, blogs, social networking sites or other means.

#### **Individuals and Conduct Covered**

These policies apply to all applicants, employees, and others who perform services to Union (i.e., consultants, contractors, interns, etc.) whether related to conduct engaged in by fellow employees or someone not directly connected to Union (e.g., an outside vendor, consultant or visitor).

Conduct prohibited by these policies is unacceptable in the workplace and in any work-related setting outside the workplace, such as during business trips, business meetings and business-related social events.

#### **Complaint Process**

Individuals who believe they have been the victims of conduct prohibited by this policy statement or who believe they have witnessed such conduct should discuss their concerns with their immediate supervisor, the Office of Human Resources or any member of management.

When possible, Union encourages individuals who believe they are being subjected to such conduct to promptly advise the offender that his or her behavior is unwelcome and request that it be discontinued. Often this action alone will resolve the problem. Union recognizes, however, that an individual may prefer to pursue the matter through complaint procedures.

Union strongly urges the prompt reporting of all incidents of discrimination, harassment or retaliation, regardless of the offender's identity or position. Individuals who believe they have experienced conduct that they believe is contrary to the Union's policy or who have

concerns about such matters should file their complaints with their immediate supervisor or the Office of Human Resources. Individuals should not feel obligated to file their complaints with their immediate supervisor first before bringing the matter to the attention of one of the other Union- designated representatives identified above.

**The Complaint Form for Reporting Harassment/Discrimination is included in Appendix I of the Policy (pg. 17 of th Student Life Handbook)**

Employees who have experienced conduct they believe is contrary to this policy have an obligation to take advantage of this complaint procedure. Managers and supervisors are **required** to report any complaint that they receive, or any harassment that they observe to the Office of Human Resources. Early reporting and intervention have proven to be the most effective method of resolving actual or perceived incidents of harassment. Union strongly urges the prompt reporting of complaints or concerns so that rapid and constructive action can be taken. Union will make every effort to stop alleged harassment before it becomes severe or pervasive but can only do so with the cooperation of its employees.

Any reported allegations of harassment, discrimination or retaliation will be investigated promptly, thoroughly, and impartially. The investigation may include individual interviews with the parties involved and, where necessary, with individuals who may have observed the alleged conduct or may have other relevant knowledge. Additionally, the investigation may include a review of relevant documents, emails or phone records, as applicable.

Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigatory process to the extent consistent with adequate investigation and appropriate corrective action. We urge any individuals who participate in the investigative process to keep all information confidential. All employees and third parties doing business with Union are expected to cooperate in any investigations conducted by or on behalf of Union.

When Union has completed its investigation, it will, to the extent appropriate, inform the person filing the complaint and the person alleged to have committed the conduct of the results of the investigation. Misconduct constituting harassment, discrimination or retaliation will be dealt with promptly and appropriately. If Union determines that an employee is guilty of harassing another individual, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against the offending employee up to and including termination of employment.

If a party to a complaint does not agree with its resolution, that party may appeal to the President of Union or their designee.

**Retaliation**

Union prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports discrimination or harassment or participates in an investigation of such reports. Retaliation against an individual for reporting harassment or discrimination or for participating in an investigation of a claim of harassment or discrimination is a serious violation of this policy and, like harassment or discrimination itself, will be subject to disciplinary action. Acts of retaliation should be reported immediately and will be promptly investigated and addressed. If an employee feels

he or she has been subjected to any such retaliation, he or she should bring it to the attention of the Office of Human Resources.

Retaliation means adverse conduct taken because an individual reported an actual or perceived violation of this policy, opposed practices prohibited by this policy, or participated in the reporting and investigation process described above.

False and malicious complaints of harassment, discrimination or retaliation may be the subject of appropriate disciplinary action.

### **External Remedies**

All forms of discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment, are not only prohibited by Union's policy, but are also prohibited by federal, state and local law. In addition to the internal complaint procedures outlined above, employees may also choose to pursue legal remedies in state or federal court or with administrative agencies, which have the authority to award various forms of relief. Please be mindful that failure to use Union's internal complaint procedure may limit an individual's ability to file or maintain a claim with an administrative agency or in a lawsuit.

In New York City, the applicable governmental agencies are: The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) – For more information, visit [www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov); The New York State Division of Human Rights (DHR) – For more information, visit [www.dhr.ny.gov](http://www.dhr.ny.gov); The New York City Commission on Human Rights (CHR) – For more information, visit [www.nyc.gov/html/cchr/html/home/home.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/cchr/html/home/home.shtml).

Finally, if the harassment involves unwanted physical touching, coerced confinement or coerced sexual acts, employees may want to contact the local police department.



**APPENDIX I**

**COMPLAINT FORM FOR REPORTING HARASSMENT/DISCRIMINATION**

If you believe that you have been subjected to or have witnessed workplace harassment or discrimination, you may use this form to provide information supporting your concern(s) to the Chief Human Resources Officer & Title IX Coordinator, or any of the other individuals identified in Union’s Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy. If you are more comfortable reporting verbally or in another manner, you may do so.

**COMPLAINANT INFORMATION**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Communication Method:

**COMPLAINT INFORMATION**

1. Please describe the conduct or incident(s) that is the basis of this complaint, including the name and contact information of any relevant witnesses, relevant dates/locations of the conduct or incident(s) discussed, and your reasons for concluding that the conduct is harassment or discrimination. Please use additional sheets of paper if necessary and attach any relevant documents or evidence.

2. Have you previously complained or provided information (verbal or written) about the conduct or incident(s) to a supervisor, manager, and/or the Office of Human Resources?

1 Yes 1 No

If yes, when and to whom did you complain or provide information?

3. Have you filed a claim regarding this matter with a federal, state or local government agency?

1 Yes 1 No

Have you instituted a legal suit or court action regarding this matter?

1 Yes No

Have you retained legal counsel with respect to this matter?

1 Yes No

I affirm the information I am providing is accurate to the best of my recollection and that I will cooperate with Union’s investigation of this matter.

*SIGNATURE:*

*DATE:*

## COMMUNICATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

- **Campus Monitors**

Flat screen monitors located in the Hastings Lobby and "The Pit" display upcoming campus events, chapel services, classroom assignments, the central calendar, and other pertinent campus communications.

- **Student Digest**

The Student Digest is a weekly e-newsletter for Union students and contains up-to-date information on activities (both on and off campus), job opportunities, as well as important community announcements. Students are encouraged to submit content to the Student Digest to promote upcoming programs & events via the following online form:

[https://utsnyc.formstack.com/forms/sd\\_submit](https://utsnyc.formstack.com/forms/sd_submit) or by emailing

[studentdigest@utsnyc.edu](mailto:studentdigest@utsnyc.edu). Please be advised—submissions to the Student Digest must be received by Thursday at 5 PM to be included in the Sunday afternoon edition.

- **Marketing & Communications Support**

The Office of Marketing & Communications is responsible for maintaining Union's public website and social media accounts. Students wishing to publicize upcoming programs & events should consult with this department to understand what kinds of services—design, social media, e-news—can be leveraged. Please provide a minimum of two weeks' notice for any communications support requests. For more information, please contact Ian Reese at 212-2580-1591.

- **Union Network**

Union's magazine for alumni/ae and friends is produced by the Office of Development & Alumni/ae Affairs and is published bi-annually. Copies are made available to all Union students.

- **All-Student E-mail Distribution List**

Student e-mail distribution lists were created in order to facilitate the flow of important information from the faculty, administration, and student representatives of student groups to all the students. The purpose of the list is for ANNOUNCEMENTS ONLY. Messages must be official and directly pertain to all students. Students cannot opt off the list and must delete any unwanted messages.

### **Poster and Bulletin Board Protocol**

- All notices, posters and/or fliers whether concerning on or off campus or private events must be approved and stamped by the Director of Housing and Campus services in Office A39, before being displayed/posted in designated areas. However, please be reminded that all student events must be approved first by the Office of Student Affairs prior to the creation of any notices, posters and/or fliers.
- All notices, posters and/or fliers will need to include the name of the (co)sponsoring caucus' or seminary office or individual, and the date(s) of the event. No anonymous notices, posters, or fliers will be permitted or approved.
- Notices, posters, and fliers will be stamped for a period of no more than 30 days.

- No posters in the seminary complex may ever appear on glass doors or windows with the exception of same day announcements of campus emergencies, or urgent announcements by facilities and seminary administrators.
- Posters may be posted on designated BULLETIN BOARDS & ELEVATORS ONLY, unless special approval is given by the Director of Housing and Campus Services.
- Seminary employees may post announcements outside of their offices or on their office doors. (For example, XYZ is out for the day or at lunch, etc.) These announcements do not need to be stamped.
- Notices, posters, and fliers that are unauthorized or placed in non-designated locations will be removed.

### **EVENT PLANNING AND USE OF PUBLIC SPACE**

Union requires all events; large and small, public and private, be approved and scheduled several weeks in advance of the date of the event. This enables the seminary staff to know what is occurring in particular buildings and rooms at all times, and to know who is responsible for an event if questions arise. The date, time and room of the approved event is entered into a scheduling system maintained by the Facilities Department and distributed to our front desk personnel. There is a fee schedule for space rental to a person or organization from outside the Seminary or for Union community members organizing a private event. There is usually no room rental fee for events sponsored by Union for the Union Community. These rental fees are an essential part of the Seminary's income. Please consult with Student Affairs and the Office of Housing and Campus Services before planning any event.

## HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The Assistant Dean of Students has responsibility for promoting the well-being of students at Union in collaboration with Student Life Assistants and the Director of Housing and Campus Services. These positions oversee the co-curricular and extracurricular programming of student activities at the Seminary to maintain a positive environment for living and learning.

### WORSHIP AND PASTORAL CARE

Spiritual life has nearly as many definitions as there are people engaging in its expression. At Union and in New York City there are unlimited opportunities to participate in a wide variety of spiritual practices. James Chapel, located on Union's campus, is the setting for regular chapel worship during the academic term at 12:00 PM, Monday through Thursday as well as special services at various times throughout the week. You may volunteer to participate or be invited; the Dean of Chapel works with students and faculty in planning these services. Participation in the Seminary Choir and the Gospel Choir provides opportunities for singing in chapel services and other special events. For more information please contact our Dean of Chapel, Dr. Sandra Montes at [smontes@uts.columbia.edu](mailto:smontes@uts.columbia.edu).

### PASTORAL/SPIRITUAL CARE RESOURCES

Union's diversity, academic rigor, and fast-paced New York City location make the Seminary an especially challenging place for students, faculty, and staff alike. The following resources exist to assist community members requiring pastoral and spiritual care and counseling: Interfaith Ministers, hours by pre-arranged appointment:

Reverend Bertram Johnson [bjohnson@utsnyc.edu](mailto:bjohnson@utsnyc.edu)  
Reverend Fran Thiessen [fthiessen@utsnyc.edu](mailto:fthiessen@utsnyc.edu)

### RESIDENTIAL LIFE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Student Life Assistants (SLAs) are available to provide peer support and mediate conflicts as they arise in the residential community. SLAs also develop community programming for residential and non-residential students and serve as advocates and liaisons for residential and community issues.

#### **Student Life Assistants for the 2022-23 Academic Year:**

Radiance Richardson, she/her (Hastings Hall) [rr3365@utsnyc.edu](mailto:rr3365@utsnyc.edu)  
Riot Mueller, any pronouns (McGiffert Hall) [rm3811@utsnyc.edu](mailto:rm3811@utsnyc.edu)

### COVID-19 RESOURCES:

If you are feeling sick, or believe you have come in contact with someone who is COVID-19 positive, you should immediately isolate and contact Assistant Dean of Students Abigail Asgaralli at [aasgaralli@uts.columbia.edu](mailto:aasgaralli@uts.columbia.edu). You can access a wide variety of health information about the COVID-19 virus, including social distancing guidelines, use of masks and other prevention recommendations, and quarantine and isolation guidelines: <https://covid19.columbia.edu/content/about-covid-19>. For policies specific to Union, including **Visitor Policy** and **Safety and Security Policy**, visit [this webpage](#).

## COLUMBIA HEALTH

Columbia Health offers a broad range of on-campus and virtual services including routine and urgent medical visits, short-term mental health counseling, sexual violence prevention and advocacy services, and prevention-oriented health programming.

- **Primary Medical Care Services** are available for a wide variety of concerns, including routine and urgent medical care, sexual and reproductive health, immunizations, and confidential HIV testing. You can see the full offerings at <https://health.columbia.edu/services/primary-care>.

The offices are located at John Jay Hall, 519 W 114<sup>th</sup> Street, 4<sup>th</sup> floor. For appointments and 24/7 urgent care call 212-854-7426.

- **Columbia University Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS)** support the psychological and emotional well-being of students by providing counseling, consultation, and crisis intervention. CPS offers short-term individual counseling and referrals for longer-term care. Union students are welcome to select a personal mental health clinician. Bios are available online. You can see a list of all services at <https://health.columbia.edu/content/counseling-and-psychological-services>.

CPS is located in Lerner Hall 2920 Broadway, 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> floors. For appointments and 24/7 urgent care call 212-854-2878.

- **Alice! Health Promotion Services** is a health education website supported by a team of Columbia Health research specialists, health care providers, writers, and other professionals offering up-to-date information on a wide variety of priority health issues. <https://health.columbia.edu/content/alice-health-promotion>

- **Dodge Fitness Center** has memberships available to purchase for students, faculty, and staff of Union, located at 3030 Broadway, which are available by the semester or by the year. Membership to the Dodge Fitness Center also allows Union students to join Columbia Club Sports teams. For membership fees and detailed information on the Center call (212) 854-2546 or visit the website: <https://perec.columbia.edu/>.

### - **Health-Related Emergencies: 24/7**

- **Columbia University Emergency Medical Services (CU-EMS)** is a New York State-certified, Basic Life Support (BLS) volunteer ambulance corps that provides pre-hospital emergency medical care, free of charge, to Columbia University's Morningside Heights Campus, surrounding University-owned buildings, and the surrounding area 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year at (212) 854-5555.
- **St. Luke's Hospital** at 113<sup>th</sup> Street and Amsterdam is the nearest emergency room to Union's campus and is open 24 hours a day. Ambulance service to St. Luke's Hospital Emergency Room is available by dialing 911.

## **24-HOUR HOTLINES AND REFERRAL SERVICES**

**Sexual Violence Response (SVR)** (212) 854-HELP (4357): provides trauma-informed, confidential support through crisis counseling/intervention, advocacy, prevention, and outreach focused on interpersonal violence and harassment.

**New York State Office of Mental Health** 24/7 Crisis text line: Got5 to 741741

**New York State Office of Addiction Services** 24/7 HOTLINE: 1-877-8-HOPENY. Text: 467369 Provides anonymous, confidential information and referrals.

**New York State AIDS Hotline** (800) 541-2437: Recorded messages available on transmission, prevention, diagnosis, treatment of HIV/AIDS, and general information on STDs. Referrals are given for HIV Testing and other related services.

**New York State HIV Counseling Hotline** (800) 872-2777: Counselors are available to answer questions about HIV/AIDS/STDs and provide referrals for related services.

**National Eating Disorders Association Information and Referral Helpline** (800) 931-2237: Support services, help, and guidance for individuals struggling with disordered eating.

**Gay and Lesbian National Hotline** (888) 843-4564: Hours: Monday - Friday: 4 PM – 12 AM; Saturday 12 PM – 5 PM. Provides peer counseling, information, and referrals.

**CONNECT's Legal Help Line** (212) 683-0605: Founded in 1993, CONNECT is dedicated to the prevention and elimination of interpersonal violence in New York City.

**New York State Adult Domestic Violence Hotline** (800) 942-6908

**NY Women's Foundation Violence Prevention Program** English/Spanish HOTLINE: (800) 664-5880

**NYC Youth Connect Youthline** (800) 246-4646: Confidential and anonymous crisis intervention and resource hotline.

**Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN)** (800) 656-HOPE: Connects callers directly to the rape crisis center nearest them.

**National Suicide Prevention Hotline** (800)273-8255

**The Samaritans** (212) 673-3000: A confidential, non-religious crisis hotline, providing support to those individuals and groups who are in crisis, have lost someone to suicide, and/or are feeling suicidal.

**Cocaine Anonymous:** [www.ca.org](http://www.ca.org)

**Narcotics Anonymous:** [www.honyana.org](http://www.honyana.org) (NY area)

**Alcoholics Anonymous:** [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)

**Marijuana Anonymous:** [www.ma-newyork.org](http://www.ma-newyork.org)

## **HEALTH INSURANCE AND COLUMBIA HEALTH SERVICES FEE**

All *full-time* Union students are required to have adequate health insurance. You may elect to purchase Columbia Health Insurance through the Columbia Student Medical Insurance Plan, which is administered by Aetna Student Health. This coverage is also available to dependents at an additional cost. Alternatively, if you are carrying other health insurance and do not wish to enroll in Columbia's plan, you must provide proof of comparable coverage to Union.

All *full-time* students and students who are enrolled in Columbia Health Insurance (whether full-time or not) are required to pay Columbia University's Health Services Fee, which is automatically charged to your student bill each semester. The fee is used to cover expenses for basic medical services, health education, counseling, and wellness programs offered by Columbia University Health Services, which you have full access to as a Union student.

More information about the Health Services Fee and the Columbia Health Insurance Plan, including details about your benefits package, is at:

<https://myunion.utsnyc.edu/myunion/health-insurance>. Please note that the information posted here is the most up-to-date available.

## **How to Use the Columbia Plan**

For primary medical and mental health, your care starts at Columbia Health Medical Services and Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS). Referrals are mandatory for most off-campus series not including urgent care or emergency care. If you need to see a specialist or access long-term mental health care, your clinician at Columbia Health will provide you with a referral. If you receive care without a referral, you may be subject to higher fees.

## **DISABILITY POLICY AND SERVICES**

Union admits students regardless of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, national or ethnic origin, gender identity, expression, or disability to all the rights, privileges, and programs generally accorded or made available to students at the seminary. Union does not discriminate based on any of these in the administration of its educational and admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, or other programs administered by the seminary.

Students with disabilities are afforded full participation in the seminary's programs and activities. In response to a request made by a qualified student with a documented disability, the seminary will provide health and disability-related services, including reasonable academic accommodations, to ensure students with disabilities have equal opportunity to attain the same quality of education as students without disabilities.

The Office of Student Affairs coordinates services for students with permanent and temporary disabilities such as but not limited to cognitive learning disabilities/ADD/ADHD; dyslexia; mobility, visual and hearing impairments; chronic medical conditions; psychiatric disabilities; and substance abuse/recovery with the goal of addressing the individual disability needs of students while upholding the academic integrity and standards of Union.

For more information on Disability Services at Union, view: [www.utsnyc.edu/disability](http://www.utsnyc.edu/disability).

The seminary must provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities that are necessary to ensure students are not denied the benefits of, or excluded from participation in, their degree program.

The individual responsible for implementing these responsibilities is Abigail Asgaralli, Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, phone: 212-280-1396, email: [aasgaralli@uts.columbia.edu](mailto:aasgaralli@uts.columbia.edu)

### **Procedures**

If you are a new or returning student with a disability, you must register by completing the **Disability Services Registration and Disability Release Form** accessible here: <https://utsnyc.edu/life/student-affairs/disability-services/>

Students with disabilities who wish to request reasonable accommodations must submit the above form promptly, so there is time to review the student's documentation and discuss accommodations **before the student begins the class or program** for which the accommodation is being requested.

Within fourteen (14) calendar days of receipt of documentation of a disability from a medical provider, and a meeting with the student to discuss their individual accommodations, the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs confirms appropriate and reasonable accommodations.

Accommodations are not retroactive – they become active on the date approved by the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs in a written letter, following the receipt of documentation and meeting as noted above. Academic accommodations are not granted without appropriate supporting medical documentation. However, if a student is not yet under the care of a provider and/or needs provisional accommodations until documentation can be secured, please set up a meeting with the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs. Provisional accommodations can be granted with medical documentation follow-up expected within 45 days of the request.

**Documentation should be current and relevant.** Students must provide documentation of disability from an appropriate professional, which depends on the nature of the disability. This documentation may be the student's existing medical records or assessments created by an appropriate professional (e.g. medical doctor, psychiatrist, psychologist, or social worker). It may be documentation from past educational records or the record of the accommodations the student previously received. The documentation must describe the approved accommodations related to the disability.

The Assistant Dean for Student Affairs outlines the approved accommodations in writing and provides a copy of this letter to the student via email. One letter is crafted for the duration of the student's degree and shared with appropriate faculty members each semester once requested by the student. If accommodations need to be adjusted, a student can submit updated medical documentation at any time and a new letter is then issued.



Students should use this link to request that their accommodation letter is sent to faculty each semester: [https://utsnyc.formstack.com/forms/request\\_for\\_accommodations](https://utsnyc.formstack.com/forms/request_for_accommodations)

### *Additional Factors*

The institution is not obligated to provide accommodations that would result in a fundamental alteration of any of Union's degree programs. In this case, the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs promptly searches for an equally effective alternate accommodation for the student that would not fundamentally alter the program and offers that accommodation to the student.

The seminary is not obligated to provide accommodations that would result in an undue financial or administrative burden on Union Theological Seminary. If the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs decides that a requested accommodation might impose such a burden, they discuss the issue with the Dean/Vice President for Academic Affairs, who takes into account the overall financial resources available. The Dean makes the final decision, in accordance with the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. If the Dean determines that the requested accommodation would be an undue burden, the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs promptly searches for an equally effective alternate accommodation for the student and offer the alternate accommodation to the student.

### **ASSIGNMENT EXTENSION ACCOMMODATION GUIDELINES**

The purpose of the assignment extension accommodation is to provide reasonable flexibility for a student who has a disabling health condition that may have episodic and acute symptoms that interfere with the ability to meet the due date of a class assignment. With the benefit of advance notifications of paper or assignment due dates in the syllabus, students are expected to schedule their time with consideration given to the possibility that they may experience challenges as a consequence of their disability or chronic medical condition and with the awareness that work for other classes may be due.

This accommodation is not designed to comprehensively address and fully support a student who regularly misses deadlines or is unable to meet multiple course deadlines. A student who is experiencing these challenges should meet with either the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs or the Associate Dean to consider alternative strategies and options, such as academic coaching, a reduced course load, or other skill development.

### *Assignment Extension Request Process*

1. If an extension is needed beyond a posted due date, students may initiate the accommodation request by first contacting their instructor via email. Students are expected to request an extension as soon as possible **before** the assignment is due. However, the nature of disability symptoms may make this impossible, in which case, the request should be made as soon as the student is reasonably able.
2. Once an extension request is received, the instructor is encouraged to contact the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs if there are questions regarding the reasonableness of an extension for the assignment in question. For example, questions may pertain to the length of extension time requested, or if they believe that an assignment extension

would fundamentally alter the nature of their course, or significantly compromise the integrity of the course.

***While an instructor may approve an extension request from a student directly, a denial of such a request should not occur without first consulting the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs.*** Typical extensions are within 24-48 hours of the due date but may be reasonably up to seven (7) calendar days depending on health circumstances.

3. This accommodation is approved on an individualized, assignment-by-assignment basis and is not a blanket approval of extensions for all work in a semester.
4. Instructors are not permitted not to ask for specific disability information from students or the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs. Documentation from a medical provider regarding the episodic symptoms should be sent to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs and **not** individual faculty members regarding disability information.
5. Agreed upon assignment extension due dates **must be addressed in writing** and include the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs.

### **ACCOMMODATION APPEALS**

A student may appeal any accommodation decision made by the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs if the student disagrees with the decision. Some examples may include:

- appeal a decision of an alternate accommodation
- appeal a decision that the student has not presented sufficient documentation to support the requested accommodation
- appeal when a faculty member fails to provide an approved accommodation

When a student wishes to file an appeal, the appeal is submitted to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs. The student must explain their reason(s) for appeal, explain how their accommodation is not being implemented (if applicable), and submit any relevant documentation. Students are encouraged to address the issue informally with faculty members (with the assistance of the Assistant Dean if requested) before filing an appeal.

Within seven (7) calendar days of receiving a student's appeal, the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs meets with the student to discuss the issues presented by their appeal. If appropriate, the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs also discusses the issues with faculty member(s) and the Associate Dean.

The Assistant Dean for Student Affairs informs the student of the decision in writing no later than fourteen (14) calendar days after receiving the student's appeal.

### **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES ON THE BASIS OF DISABILITY POLICY**

Once a student has received a decision on their appeal, if they still perceive that their concern has not been addressed, they can initiate a grievance procedure. Union Theological Seminary then has the responsibility to objectively investigate the allegations in the complaint and determine whether the student has been discriminated against. If the seminary determines that discrimination occurred, appropriate steps must occur to correct the discrimination and

prevent it from reoccurring. Grievances should be directed to the office of the Dean/Vice President of Academic Affairs, Su Yon Pak at [spak@uts.columbia.edu](mailto:spak@uts.columbia.edu).

A student must file a grievance in writing within thirty (30) calendar days of the date the discriminatory act occurred or within 30 calendar days of the end of an appeal attempt to resolve the issue, whichever is later. In the grievance, the student must describe in detail: what happened, the dates the acts took place, and who was involved. The student should explain why they believe the acts were taken based on their documented disability and provide copies of any relevant documents or emails, if available.

#### *Investigation of the Grievance*

When the Vice President of Academic Affairs/Dean receives a written grievance, they immediately begin an objective investigation. The institution has the right to contract with an independent investigator to conduct any investigation. Within seven (7) calendar days, the Dean discusses the allegations in the complaint with the student and obtains any needed additional information from them. During the investigation, the Dean discloses the grievance and appropriate confidential information about the student, only to the extent necessary to investigate the allegations of the complaint.

#### *Written Decision*

The Dean provides the student with a written decision no later than thirty (30) calendar days after the date the student filed the complaint. The decision states the determination and reasoning reached by the Dean at the conclusion of the investigation. If the Dean concludes that the student **was** discriminated against on the basis of disability, the decision states the types of remedial action that Union has taken or will take to correct the discrimination, and it also states how Union will prevent the discriminatory acts from occurring again.

The decision of a grievance made by the Academic Dean is final and cannot be appealed.

### **ALTERNATIVE ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES FOR IN-PERSON CLASSES**

***In-person attendance is normally expected of students in an in-person class.*** These guidelines refer to *temporary* alternative means of attendance when a student cannot attend class in person due to illness or a family emergency. Faculty *may* create a zoom link for a course to be used if necessary, but students will not see a zoom link in course syllabi for in-person classes. Disability accommodations are managed entirely differently - see below.

#### **Temporary Arrangements for Alternative Attendance for In-Person Class**

- a) Such arrangements must be due to illness or a family emergency.
- b) Alternative attendance *should not exceed three* class sessions, and faculty should report individual student absences of more than *two* class sessions to the office of Student Affairs. The Assistant Dean of Student Affairs then determines if a meeting with the student and professor is necessary, or other appropriate measures.
- c) Faculty are *not required* to accommodate requests for alternative arrangements.
- d) The *least distracting option* with regard to other students in the class is preferred.

- e) It is the student's responsibility to initiate a conversation with the professor about appropriate alternative to in-person attendance, with as much advance notice as possible. Examples of alternative arrangements include:
- 1) have a classmate take notes
  - 2) have a classmate audio record the class session, with instructor and full class permission
  - 3) attend the class virtually via audio/phone call
  - 4) attend the class virtually via Zoom (see a, b, c below)
  - 5) meet up with a classmate after the class session for a particular assignment

**If instructor permits Zoom attendance:**

- a) the Zoom link is provided only to the student with the approved alternative attendance
- b) the student is expected to give their full attention to class, located in a suitable quiet location without other people in the immediate vicinity (for the sake of class confidentiality). Students should not attend class while driving a car or on public transportation.
- c) IT staff is not able to create ad hoc / last minute Zoom setup in spaces where a setup does not already exist, and should not be asked to do so. Relocation to another classroom for a particular session may be possible, but not guaranteed (and up to instructor's discretion). Classroom change requests must be made with at least 48 hours' notice to Director of Housing & Campus Services and the Registrar.

**Reasonable Disability Accommodations**

- a) If a student has an approved accommodation – disability or medical – and is required to attend an in-person class remotely on a regular basis, the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs communicates the need to the instructor of the course.
- b) Approval to attend in-person classes via Zoom is must meet the standards of a “reasonable accommodation” to be negotiated by the student with the instructor, based on course pedagogy as well as ongoing disability-related needs to attend classes remotely.
- c) Permission for zooming into in-person classes must be negotiated one course at a time, and is not assumed to transfer automatically from one course or semester to another.
- d) The Zoom link is provided only to the student with the accommodation.
- e) IT staff is not able to create ad hoc / last minute Zoom setup in spaces where a setup does not already exist. Relocation to another classroom for a particular session may be possible, but not guaranteed (and up to instructor's discretion). Classroom change requests must be made with at least 48 hours' notice to Director of Housing & Campus Services and the Registrar.

**AIDS AND HIV POLICY**

The Seminary will make reasonable accommodations for any persons with AIDS or HIV to ensure their full participation in the Seminary community. Union strives for equitable treatment of all who study and work in the Seminary community and to follow the legal guidelines for Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

## **POLICY ON ALCOHOL AND DRUGS**

Union Theological Seminary (Union) is committed to creating and maintaining a community, free of alcohol and drug abuse, complying with federal, state, and city laws that promote the health and well-being of students, faculty, and staff as well as visitors and friends of Union.

### **Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention & Safety Policy**

Union's academic, social, and theological milieu supports individual freedom with the expectation that members of Union will support and promote a healthy and safe environment for everyone in its community. Union complies with New York State law and other applicable regulations governing alcoholic beverages for those on the Seminary's premises or participating in its activities. Union strongly supports education and treatment programs as the most effective means to help prevent and reduce alcohol and drug abuse.

To that end, Union expects that those who wish to include alcohol as part of their activities will do so responsibly, lawfully, and mindfully, with consideration for the needs of the larger community. The choice to drink responsibly lies with the individual and can and should not be forced for any reason.

Students and Caucuses may not plan events promoting or encouraging the consumption of alcohol, nor may event planning be based upon the assumption of abusive or illegal alcohol consumption. Event organizers should remember that many events at Union take place without alcohol, and that many in the community choose not to drink for various reasons. Students and Caucuses choosing to plan events are expected to maintain a reasonable balance in programming events with and without the provision of alcoholic beverages and to abide by the Student Senate Pub policies and event planning.

Consumption of alcohol is allowed in residential common areas. At events in residential spaces where alcohol will be consumed, reasonable advance notice will be given to all residents on the floor. While the individual student or host has primary responsibility for abiding by this policy, members of the Student Affairs team may address consumption or possession violations in their respective buildings, and refer student to the Office of Student Affairs.

The commercial sale of alcoholic beverages by any campus organization or individual is strictly prohibited.

Union recognizes the illegality and danger of drug abuse and, accordingly, strictly prohibits the possession, use, manufacture, or distribution of illicit drugs on the seminary's premises or as part of any seminary activity.

Union students, students taking courses at Union from other institution, and students employed by Union who violate the seminary's policies concerning illicit drugs will face discipline up to and including expulsion or termination of employment, and may also be required to complete an appropriate rehabilitation program. Students may also be subject to sanctions under federal and state law.

### **Alcohol and Drug Support Services**

Union's Office of Student Affairs is the referral base for counseling, treatment, and educational programs that can identify and help those who abuse alcohol and drugs through Columbia University's Health Services, including Columbia's Counseling and Psychological Services Center. See also hotlines and referral services on page 6.

### **GREEN ZONE POLICY**

Believing that there is a call to participate in stewardship of the environment, Union designates itself as a Green Zone. A Green Zone is a designated physical area in which a person or community consistently and intentionally works toward the ideal of ecologically-sound living. This process includes reducing damage to the environment, and dependence upon lifestyles and choices that exploit it. It also includes attempting actively to restore and maintain the environment.

### **SMOKING POLICY**

The Smoke-Free Air Act of 2002 signed into law by Mayor Michael Bloomberg substantially changed the law with regard to smoking in the workplace and virtually all public places, including educational institutions.

Effective March 30, 2003, employees in the city may no longer smoke in private offices, even with the door closed. Separate smoking rooms are also prohibited in the workplace.

In compliance with the law, smoking is prohibited in all hallways, restrooms, library rooms, meeting and conference rooms, offices, classrooms, lounges, The PIT, the Fred Davie Terrace, the Quad, the elevators and all areas on campus not specifically designated as a smoking area. This policy applies to all employees, students, visitors and any other individuals on campus.

# SAFETY AND SECURITY

## POLICY ON INVESTIGATION OF VIOLENT FELONY OFFENSES, REPORTING CRIME AND REPORTING MISSING STUDENTS

While crime on the Seminary's campus is rare and violent crime exceedingly rare, the Seminary recognizes that such crime, as well as missing students, can have devastating impact on both the victims and the community as a whole. The prompt, effective, and thorough investigation of violent crime and students missing without reason or justification is, therefore, critically important to the safety and ongoing security of the Seminary community.

### Reporting Crime

Nothing in this policy, including the identification of available internal resources, should be considered as a substitute for the prompt reporting of criminal activity to the police. The police are specially trained to investigate, identify, and preserve evidence, and apprehend responsible parties. Thus, ***the Seminary urges any victims of crime to report the crime, immediately, to the police. A 911 call is the fastest*** and best way to report and should generate an immediate response. If possible, *after* making such a call, please alert the Seminary's administration, and the front desk attendant, so that they can provide effective assistance when the police arrive, and get them to you as quickly as possible. The Assistant Dean of Students, the Director of Housing and Campus Services, and Deputy Vice President of Buildings and Grounds are helpful resources for victims of criminal conduct as well, particularly where assistance with reporting or requesting police support may be needed.

In the event that the situation is not urgent, or you would prefer to speak with a police officer in person, the local NYPD in this area are:

- **NYPD 26<sup>th</sup> Precinct**  
520 West 126th Street (between Amsterdam and Old Broadway)  
**Telephone:** (212) 678-1311

The 26<sup>th</sup> Precinct has primary patrol responsibility for the Seminary's campus and surroundings.

It is the responsibility of all members of the Seminary community to *immediately* report any criminal activity, threatened criminal activity, or threatened violence. In addition to the police reporting options discussed above, such a report can be made to the Assistant Dean of Students, the Director of Housing and Campus Services, or the Deputy Vice President of Buildings and Grounds.

In the event that a report of a violent felony offense is received by any of these people, appropriate law enforcement officials will be notified immediately, and the Seminary will cooperate with those officials as requested. The Seminary, to the best of its ability, will seek to secure the crime scene and to preserve physical evidence pending the arrival of the law enforcement officials.

In the event that a report of potential criminal conduct, not involving a violent felony offense, other violent or felonious conduct, is received by the Seminary's Assistant Dean of Students, the Director of Housing and Campus Services, or Deputy VP of Buildings and Grounds, the Seminary will request permission from the victim to report the offense to law enforcement. When such permission is granted, or if the victim is unavailable for consultation for any reason, such a report immediately will be made. If the victim refuses permission to report, and there are no other victims that have been or may have been impacted by the criminal conduct being reported, the Seminary will not make a report to law enforcement over the victim's objection, but will urge the victim to do so directly, and will facilitate that reporting process.

When a report is made to law enforcement authorities, the Seminary will expect the investigation to be undertaken by law enforcement officials and will support that investigation to the extent requested by law enforcement authorities and within the Seminary's capabilities.

Whether or not the victim of alleged criminal conduct or improper behavior wishes to make a report to law enforcement, the Seminary will conduct its own, independent investigation into the reported facts and circumstances, generally resolved in 60 calendar days (though the process can sometimes take longer).

In all events, victims and others will be informed that retaliation against a person making a report of allegedly criminal or improper conduct is strictly prohibited, and sanctions can be imposed upon any person engaging in retaliatory behavior, whether the report of underlying criminal conduct or impropriety is substantiated or not.

### **Reporting Missing Students**

The Seminary's student body, consisting exclusively of graduate students, is a motivated, highly mobile group with many commitments on and off campus. While students, therefore, may not access the campus proper for lengthy periods due to off-campus commitments, the Seminary recognizes the importance of identifying those situations where students are missing without apparent reason or justification. In those situations, prompt and effective reporting can be critical.

The Seminary will report to responsible law enforcement agencies any situation of which it is aware when a student is absent from campus without apparent reason or justification for more than twenty-four hours, or where (regardless of the temporal duration) a student absence is accompanied by circumstances suggesting that the absence may be due to abduction, emotional breakdown, criminal activity, or other reason suggesting that the student's health or well-being might be at stake.

Upon making such a report to appropriate law enforcement authorities, the Seminary will expect a prompt investigation to be undertaken by law enforcement officials and will support that investigation to the extent requested by law enforcement authorities and within the Seminary's capabilities.



**Closing Due to Severe Weather or Another Emergency**

In the event that a decision is made to close the Seminary or delay opening due to severe weather or some other extraordinary condition, it will be announced by a general email message and on the website generally not later than 5:00AM of the day of closing.

## **EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION**

On-Campus Medical Emergencies 24/7	212-854-5555
Columbia Security 24/7	212-854-2797
Sexual Violence Response 24/7	212-854-4357
Michael Orzechowski <i>Director of Housing &amp; Campus Services</i>	Office: 212-280-1301 Mobile: 917-860-5493
Police and Fire Emergencies 24/7	911
Off-Campus Medical Emergencies 24/7	911
Local 26 Precinct (non-emergency)	212-854-2797

## **SEMINARY CONTACTS**

Hastings Lobby Desk 24/7	212-280-1427 or ext.1427
McGiffert Lobby Desk 24/7	212-280-1349 or ext.1349