Serving as “respondent” for your group or student organization
Student organization leaders are asked to represent their groups or organizations in the student conduct process at Northwestern. Often that means the president or another leader is contacted by the Office of Community Standards (OCS) and asked to speak with the office regarding allegations that the group or organization has violated one or more University policies. This document is intended to assist student leaders as they navigate the student conduct process on behalf of their organization.

Northwestern Student Handbook
Student leaders are encouraged to review the Northwestern Student Handbook prior to meeting with the Office of Community Standards. Page 23 of the Student Handbook describes the circumstances under which an organization or group may be held responsible for violating University policy.

Faculty or Staff Advisor
If your organization has a faculty or staff advisor at Northwestern, you are encouraged to meet with that advisor prior to your meeting with the OCS. Sororities and fraternities are encouraged to connect with their chapter coach in Fraternity and Sorority Life in preparation for their meeting with the OCS.

Advisor in the Student Conduct Process
Student leaders serving as respondents may be accompanied by one advisor throughout the student conduct process, provided that the involvement of the advisor does not result in an undue delay of the process. It is the responsibility of the student leader to coordinate scheduling with their advisor for any meetings or hearings. An advisor is a support person who is present to provide support to either a reporter or respondent during the student conduct process. As such, advisors may not speak, write, or otherwise communicate with an investigator, hearing officer, or panel and may not represent the reporter or respondent in the process.

To enhance integrity in the student conduct process, to help ensure fairness for all parties, and to ensure that the focus of the student conduct process remains the Northwestern community and its students, advisors cannot be witnesses or a party in the matter or a related matter, MUST be a member of the University community (faculty, staff, or student), and cannot be a family member of the reporter or respondent, or an attorney. Additional information about advisors can be found on Page 106 of the Student Handbook.

Typically, staff in Fraternity and Sorority Life or Student Organizations and Activities will not serve as advisors in the student conduct process.

Contacting Inter/National Headquarters
When an organization or group has a governing body, such as an inter/national headquarters, the OCS will make outreach to that governing body to inform them the local organization is engaged in the student conduct process at Northwestern. If the organization or group is a sorority or fraternity the OCS will work with the Fraternity and Sorority Life team to communicate with the inter/national headquarters. Student leaders are encouraged to proactively outreach to their inter/national headquarters.
Student Representatives
In cases involving a student organization or group the hearing officer in the OCS may be accompanied by a trained Student Representative to serve as a co-hearing officer. Student Representatives receive specific training on how to co-adjudicate organizational conduct issues in a fair, impartial, and confidential manner. Student organization leaders will receive notification of the name of the Student Representative prior to the hearing. If the student leader is concerned about the Student Representative’s ability to act impartially or participation in the hearing, they can request that the Director of Community Standards, Lucas Christain (lucas.christain@northwestern.edu) review the assignment of the Student Representative.

Information Collection
The OCS encourages student leaders representing their organization or group to collect information on who in the organization or group may have been involved in an incident, what may have taken place, and who else may have witnessed the incident in question, prior to meeting with the OCS. Student leaders are discouraged from falsifying information or coaching potential witnesses on what to share with the investigators. Falsification, distortion, or misrepresentation of information in the investigation, hearing or administration of a case is considered misconduct within the student conduct process and will be adjudicated individually. Retaliation towards any individuals who report the alleged misconduct is also prohibited.

Hearing Types
Cases involving non-separation level allegations will typically be resolved through an Administrative Hearing facilitated by a hearing officer and a student representative in the OCS. Cases that may result in separation will be resolved by two investigators and if applicable a Sanctioning Panel. Information on non-separation level cases can be found on Page 115 of the Student Handbook. Information on separation level cases can be found on Page 117 of the Student Handbook. Information on Acceptance of Responsibility can be found on Page 114 of the Student Handbook.

Appeals
Following a resolution a student organization or groups may request an appeal. In circumstances when an organization or group formally accepts responsibility the matter will not be eligible for appeal.