

A photograph of the Rice University Main Building, a large, ornate, light-colored stone structure with multiple arches and windows. The building is set against a clear blue sky. In the foreground, there is a green lawn and a large, leafy tree on the right side. The title text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

A Student's Guide to Rice University Student Judicial Programs

This document is a resource to a student interested in knowing more about the role SJP plays on campus. It is an informational aid, but should not be your only source of information. Feel free to explore the SJP website, and email SJP@rice.edu to make an appointment to talk about your specific questions.

For more information:
Visit SJP.rice.edu or
Email SJP for an appointment, SJP@rice.edu

SJP in a Nutshell

Decisions are made fairly, based on all the information, including input from the accused student.

Students know in detail what they are accused of and the source of the accusation.

Students may review their disciplinary file, and may respond to the information in the file before SJP makes a decision.

Students may appeal the decision for various reasons.



The Investigation

SJP gathers information that is relevant or helpful to determine what happened during a reported incident. Witness statements can be helpful when recreating a moment in time. SJP might request to speak with witnesses.

SJP might also request that accused student or the complaining student to provide other types of information that would help to determine whether the reported behavior occurred. The standard SJP uses is “more likely than not.”

What Does SJP Tell Students?

Before SJP makes a decision, the accused student is told all the important substantive and procedural information, including:

1. What SJP knows that led to the charge
2. What sections may have been violated;
3. How the alleged behavior might violate the Code;
4. Student may review the file;
5. Student may submit a written response to the charge;
6. The next steps in the procedure, including that the decision can be appealed.



April 15, 2016

Emily A. Garza
Associate Director, Student Judicial Programs

Notes from SJP

Student Name
College or Graduate Department
Rice University

Via hand delivery [or via email]

Dear [Student],

I have recently received a report from RUPD regarding your behavior on the night of April 13, 2016 and into the early morning of April 14. April 13 was the night of [a large public party] at Rice. The report states that an officer observed you stumbling around outside, near the Will Rice College commons. The report states that while speaking with you, the officer noticed that you had red, watery, glossy eyes, were slurring your speech, and had a strong odor of alcoholic beverage emitting from your person. The officer also noticed you were holding a clear water bottle containing a brown liquid you later identified as whiskey. You admitted to the officer that you had consumed six shots of whiskey and three beers that night. You are under the legal drinking age. RUPD has referred your case to SJP for resolution.

We met today to talk about the incident. You told me essentially the same facts as described in the RUPD report. You told me that a friend was celebrating his 21st birthday earlier in the evening, and after everyone went home, you continued drinking whiskey alone outdoors in the Will Rice quad.

Based on the information available to me at this time, I am concerned that you may have violated the Code of Student Conduct. The Code of Student Conduct is based on expectations the community has for Rice students.

The Code of Student Conduct makes the expectations placed on students very clear:

The life and work of a Rice University student should be based on integrity, responsibility, and consideration. In all activities each student is expected to be respectful of the rights and interests of others and to be personally honest. Rice University, through appropriate policies and rules, encourages mature and responsible behavior of its students . . .

By entering Rice University, students accept several responsibilities: to respect the welfare of all persons in the University community and their guests . . . Failure to fulfill these responsibilities may result in the suspension of specific privileges, the withdrawal of the student's privilege of attending the University, or the imposition of other sanctions.

Generally, the first paragraph describes the information SJP currently has, and the source of the information.

Here, SJP describes any information the student relayed during the meeting that supplements or is related to the information from the reporting source (e.g. RUPD) about the incident.

This paragraph quotes the Code of Student Conduct, and the expectations Rice has for its students.

And again:

Students are expected to govern their conduct by standards of considerate and ethical behavior so as not to harm or discredit themselves, the University, or any other individual. Moreover, just as the learning environment does not end at the classroom door, neither is the exercise of individual responsibility, civility, and honor limited to the academic domain.

I am concerned that by drinking hard alcohol to the point of intoxication and while under the legal drinking age, you failed to meet these expectations. Furthermore, the Code lays out examples of specifically prohibited behaviors, and I am concerned you may have violated several of those. I am therefore charging you with violating section II.B.1.p., which prohibits being a minor in consumption and publically intoxicated; and II.B.1.o., which prohibits violations of the Rice Alcohol Policy. Section B.8.e. of the Alcohol Policy states that “undergraduate consumption or serving of hard alcohol is banned from campus...on the nights of large public parties,” which includes [the large public party being held that night]. Further, I am concerned that your behavior that night might also have been a violation of the general expectations of civility and respect placed on all Rice students, as described in the Code of Student Conduct.

The question for me, and the charge against you, is whether your conduct that night more likely than not violated the general expectations placed on students and/or the specific prohibition detailed above. In deciding to charge you under the Code, I have reviewed the details of the RUPD report. While that material is described here, you may review your file in my office if you would like. To do so, you must first make an appointment by emailing sjp@rice.edu.

You have until the end of the day on April 22, 2014, to provide me with your response to these charges and any additional information you wish for me to consider as I deliberate. You should email your response to sjp@rice.edu. Once I receive that, and conduct any further investigation that seems appropriate, I will make a decision as to whether you were in violation of the Code of Student Conduct, and what sanctions should apply (as appropriate). You will be notified of the decision in writing. Students may appeal decisions by SJP to the Dean of Undergraduates; more information on appeals is available in the Code of Student Conduct.

Sincerely,
Emily Garza
Associate Director, Student Judicial Programs

cc: Dean of Undergraduates, Associate Dean of Undergraduates, Student Judicial Programs, College Masters

Notes from SJP

This part relates the specific alleged behavior to the specific sections of the Code the student is charged with violating.

Rice evaluates alleged behaviors using the “more likely than not” standard, which is described here.

Deadline for the student to submit response to the charges.

What happens next, procedurally?

Student is notified of the opportunity to appeal a decision.

Who is cced on this letter?

Appeals

Students can appeal any decision made by SJP. There are four reasons to appeal, described in the Code section IV.F. Read the Code for more information about appeals.



What Should I Tell Grad Schools?

When a student applies to a graduate program, the new school will often ask the student if he/she was ever “found responsible” for a conduct violation. Different schools ask differently, so you should read the question carefully and answer honestly. Where appropriate, you may consider attaching a brief explanation of the event.

What Will Rice Tell Other Schools?

Rice answers briefly and truthfully. An example of what Rice might say:

“[Student Name] was found in violation of the Rice University Code of Student Conduct [or Honor Code, as applicable] during Spring 20XX. This student has complied with all sanctions and penalties and is in good standing.”