

**COLLEGE of  
CHARLESTON**  
OFFICIAL DIVISIONAL POLICY  
Academic Affairs Division  
Division of Student Affairs

**Credential Revocation Policy**

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**1.0 Policy Statement**

1.1 The purpose of this Divisional Policy is to articulate the principles and procedures by which a recommendation shall be made to the President of the College (hereafter, "President") and the College of Charleston Board of Trustees (hereafter, "Board") for the revocation of an academic credential previously awarded by the College of Charleston (hereafter, "College"), such as an undergraduate degree, a graduate degree, an undergraduate certificate, or a graduate certificate. Such a recommendation shall be made by the relevant divisional leadership following receipt of an allegation of grave academic misconduct; an investigation conducted in accordance with this Policy that substantiates the allegation based on a preponderance of the evidence; and the written agreement of both the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs (hereafter, "Provost") and the Executive Vice President for Student Affairs (hereafter, "EVPSA") that a recommendation for revocation is appropriate.

1.2 The current joint Divisional Policy has been established with the agreement of the EVPSA and the Provost, consistent with the provisions of the Board-approved Campus Wide Policy Formation Procedures. Should this Divisional Policy conflict with any present or future institutional policy, the institutional policy shall prevail.

1.3 Consistent with all applicable institutional policies and the authority of the Board, an academic degree at the College of Charleston is awarded following certification by the Registrar

and/or the Graduate School that a student has completed all requirements for the degree, agreement by vote of the Faculty Senate on the conferring of the degree following receipt of the relevant certification by the Registrar, and final approval of the conferral of the degree by the Board.

1.4 This Policy is applicable to former undergraduate and graduate students who have completed credentials at the College of Charleston and to former graduate students who have completed credentials under the auspices of the University of Charleston, South Carolina, which is a component of the College of Charleston.

1.5 No recommendation shall be made under the provisions of this Policy regarding a credential earned more than twenty-five (25) years prior to the initial receipt of any allegation of serious academic misconduct. Should there be any dispute regarding this matter, the date on which the credential was earned and the date of the initial receipt of any such allegation shall be determined at the sole discretion of the Provost. The decision of the Provost in this determination is final. However, consistent with their authority, the President and/or the Board have the option to consider any allegation relevant to potential credential revocation, no matter how long ago the relevant degree might have been earned.

1.6 This Divisional Policy is applicable only to earned academic credentials and is not relevant to approval and awarding of honorary academic degrees or credentials by the College of Charleston. Further, the Policy is not relevant to non-credit-bearing certificates or such other non-credit credentials as might be presented to students completing certain requirements in the College's School of Professional Studies.<sup>1</sup> Finally, this Divisional Policy is not applicable to academic degrees earned by a person who is deceased at the time the initial complaint is received or who dies before a recommendation regarding credential revocation is made by the Provost and EVPSA.

1.7 A recommendation by the Provost and the EVPSA for credential revocation, as made to the President and, should the President agree, the Board, is made with no right to or expectation of Board review or a particular result or outcome where the recommendation is concerned. Only the Board has the authority to revoke an academic degree once awarded, consistent the provisions of the Bylaws of the College of Charleston Board of Trustees. Any recommendation by the Provost and the EVPSA for the revocation of an academic credential that is not a degree shall be made to the President for the President's final determination.

1.8 A recommendation for the revocation of an academic credential shall be made to the President of the College only if a determination is made based on a preponderance of the evidence that a former student who has previously been awarded an academic credential has engaged in grave academic misconduct that, if discovered at the time academic credit was being

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<sup>1</sup> Recommendations regarding the revocation of non-credit-bearing certificates or other credentials may be made to the Provost by the Dean of the School of Professional Studies, with the Provost to consult with the EVPSA, the Office of Legal Affairs, and with other institutional leadership as appropriate prior to determining the disposition of the recommendation.

pursued and where that credit ultimately fulfilled a requirement for an academic credential, would likely have prevented that academic credit from being granted. The requirement for a preponderance of the evidence is the standard set for making a recommendation for revocation and does not set an evidentiary standard to be used by the President or the Board of Trustees for making any determination in such a case.

1.8.1 Grave academic misconduct shall be interpreted in light of the version of the *Faculty/Administration Manual* and the *Student Handbook* (or multiple editions of the *Faculty/Administration Manual* and the *Student Handbook*) in effect at the time the alleged academic misconduct took place and while the former student was enrolled at the College, along with any other relevant policies of the College. The responsibility for determining how best to interpret the various policy statements of the College, relevant to an investigation under the provisions of this Divisional Policy, shall belong to the ad hoc investigative panel, subject to the guidance, review, and determination of the EVPSA and Provost.

1.8.2 Alleged criminal misconduct or former student misconduct not directly linked to earning university credit is not covered by the provisions of this Divisional Policy. Alleged misconduct of any sort occurring prior to or following matriculation at the College of Charleston by the former student is not covered by the provisions of this Divisional Policy.

1.9 This Divisional Policy does not create any contractual rights or entitlements.

## **2.0 Procedure**

2.1 If in receipt of or in a position to make informed allegations of grave academic misconduct against a previous recipient of a College degree or other relevant credential, any member of the College community or other interested person may inform the Provost (or Provost's designee) or the EVPSA (or EVPSA's designee). The party who receives the allegation shall inform other relevant College employees regarding the allegation.

2.2 Usually within thirty (30) business days following the receipt of an allegation, whether orally or in writing, and following review of such evidence as is available, the Provost and EVPSA (or their designees) shall determine whether there is credible evidence of grave academic misconduct, as this term is interpreted and understood under the provisions of this Divisional Policy. The EVPSA and Provost shall seek guidance from the College's Office of Legal Affairs as appropriate. If insufficient evidence of such misconduct is found, the Provost and EVPSA (or their designees) have the option to inform the party who made the allegation that the file has been closed and no other action is contemplated.

2.3 If the Provost and EVPSA (or their designees) find credible evidence of grave academic misconduct, they shall jointly direct that an investigation of the allegation shall be conducted under the direction of an ad hoc investigative panel, to be chaired by a panel chair who must

have the word “dean,” “director,” or “vice president” in their title at the College of Charleston. The investigative panel, as jointly appointed by the EVPSA and Provost, must be made up of a minimum of four (4) College of Charleston faculty and staff, including the Dean of Students (or the Dean of Students’s designee) and may include additional employees and/or an undergraduate or graduate student, at the sole discretion of the EVPSA and Provost. A minimum of three (3) members of the panel shall be tenured members of the College’s roster faculty. The panel shall receive legal advice as necessary from the College’s Office of Legal Affairs. Further, the panel shall have an eligible chair who is jointly appointed from its membership by the EVPSA and Provost.

2.4 At least thirty (30) days prior notice shall be given of the work of the ad hoc investigative panel to the individual whose alleged grave academic misconduct is under review and for whom a recommendation regarding credential revocation is under consideration. The individual whose alleged misconduct is under review shall have ten (10) business days from the time notice is received to contact the Office of the Dean of Students to respond in writing to the complaint and to signal their willingness to appear before a meeting of the investigative panel to address the charges. A meeting with an official in the Office of the Dean of Students may be arranged to receive an explanation regarding the nature of the complaint and to assist in preparing the written response to the complaint (if the individual wishes to respond). At the time of any such meeting with the Office of the Dean of Students, the former student may choose to make no statement or admission regarding the complaint, to admit to the veracity of the complaint, to admit to some allegations in the complaint and to contest others, or to contest all the alleged elements of the complaint.

2.5 The ad hoc investigative panel shall review the available evidence of grave academic misconduct and gather and consider additional evidence as appropriate, including testimony if available, and using such sources and methods of gathering additional evidence as shall seem necessary to the panel members. Interviews with relevant parties may be conducted, but such interviews are not required. The panel shall have no authority to compel prospective interviewees to cooperate with panel requests, but the panel may ask the Provost, EVPSA, or the leaders of other College of Charleston divisions and offices to assist them in securing the cooperation of prospective interviewees.

2.6 The ad hoc investigative panel ordinarily will conclude its work and offer a report to the EVPSA and the Provost within 150 calendar days of the initial receipt of the allegation. The panel shall advise the EVPSA and the Provost of its recommendation regarding credential revocation, if any, and provide a rationale for the recommendation. A recommendation for credential revocation must include the finding, as supported by at least three-quarters of the panel members, that grave academic misconduct has occurred and that this misconduct would be sufficient to have prevented the awarding of the degree. If no recommendation for credential revocation is returned, the Provost and EVPSA (or their designees) have the option to inform the party who made the allegation that the file has been closed and no other action is contemplated. In such a case, the Provost EVPSA (or their designees) also are required to inform the former student alleged to have engage in misconduct that the file has been closed

and no other action is contemplated.

2.7 If the ad hoc investigative panel makes a recommendation for credential revocation, that recommendation shall be transmitted to the EVPSA and Provost for their review. Ordinarily within 30 calendar days, the Provost and EVPSA will determine whether or not they concur with the recommendation and convey their final recommendation to the President for review. Such a recommendation shall be conveyed to the President only if the Provost and EVPSA both agree to support the recommendation. If the Provost and EVPSA do not agree to support the recommendation and transmit it to the President, the EVPSA and Provost (or their designees) have the option to inform the party who made the allegation that the file has been closed and no other action is contemplated. In such a case, the Provost and EVPSA (or their designees) also are required to inform the former student alleged to have engaged in misconduct that the file has been closed and no other action is contemplated.

2.8 In a case where the review of a specific case by the ad hoc investigative panel is concluded and no recommendation for credential revocation is made, the investigation shall not be reopened unless substantial new evidence is brought forward and the EVPSA and Provost (or their designees) conclude that the new evidence makes it highly likely that the new evidence will lead to a different conclusion than the original panel provided to the EVPSA and Provost.

2.9 Within thirty (30) business days, notice shall be given of the recommendation outcomes resulting from the work of the ad hoc investigative panel to the individual whose alleged grave academic misconduct is under review and for whom a recommendation regarding credential revocation has been under consideration.

2.10 In a case where the potential loss of earned credit as a result of grave academic misconduct could result in a final recommendation for credential revocation, the EVPSA and Provost shall include in their final recommendation some comment regarding whether the former student whose credential is recommended for revocation should have some opportunity to return to the College and earn the credit required for degree conferral or to cure in some other way the defect leading to the recommendation for degree revocation. The recommendations of the EVPSA and Provost are final and not subject to appeal. The recommendations of the EVPSA and Provost are advisory only and do not bind or constrain the actions of the President and the Board.

### 3.0 Reservation of Authority

No provision of this Divisional Policy shall constrain the policy-making authority of the College of Charleston Board of Trustees or the authority of the Board to confer degrees or revoke degrees, consistent with the Bylaws of the College of Charleston Board of Trustees. Further, no provision of this Divisional Policy shall interfere with or limit the authority of the President to supervise the work of the Provost or the EVPSA, or such other employees of the College of Charleston for whom the President is responsible, or to separately conduct investigations or to appoint separate or additional investigative committees regarding the subject matter of this Divisional Policy, or to separately receive and act to review allegations potentially sufficient to

warrant credential revocation.

**4.0 Policy Manager and Responsible Department or Office**

Provost (or Provost's Designee), Office of the Provost  
Executive Vice President for Student Affairs (or the designee of the Executive Vice President for Student Affairs), Division of Student Affairs

**5.0 Departments/Offices Affected by this Policy**

Office of the President  
Office of the Provost  
All Academic Schools, Departments, and Programs  
Office of the Registrar  
Office of the Executive Vice President for Student Affairs  
Dean of Students  
Office of Legal Affairs

**6.0 Procedures Related to this Policy**

The procedures related to this Divisional Policy are provided at Section 2.0.

**7.0 Related Policies, Documents or Forms**

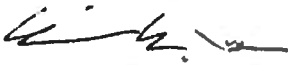
*Bylaws of the College of Charleston Board of Trustees*  
*Faculty/Administration Manual*  
*Student Handbook*  
Campus Wide Policy Formation Procedures

**8.0 Review Schedule**

*Approved: February 2019*

*Next Review Date: October 1, 2027*

Signed:   
Alicia Caudill, Executive Vice President for Student Affairs

Signed:   
Brian R. McGee, Provost