

Standards Board Best Practices

This resource is intended to complement the Holmes Murphy Fraternal Practice Code of Conduct Template, which can be found [here](#). The template uses a student chapter's internal conduct board to adjudicate students' alleged misconduct.

Size of the Board

The Conduct Code template recommends the standards board have an odd number of members (e.g., five), including a chair. Chapters may allow each new member class or class year to select a member to serve on the board. Sample language should be provided for chapters to use about how to replace a member who has a conflict, so the board isn't hearing cases with less than the proscribed number of members.

Election vs. Appointment

The board can be elected or appointed (with or without ratification by the chapter).

Option #1: Chapter Election. This option has the most potential for issues, risking potentially problematic chapter members directly electing the people who are supposed to hold them accountable.

Option #2: Appointment with Ratification. The chapter officers select a slate of standards board members, who the chapter can then ratify. Giving the chapter the option to vote the whole slate up or down creates some buy-in but also insulates the board from members cherry-picking people who won't hold them accountable.

Option #3: Appointment. Officers appoint the board without chapter input. This removes the element of buy-in included in Option #2.

Option #4: The chapter elects the chair and the officers appoint the rest of the board (with or without ratification). This gives the chapter the chance to choose the chair (if that's how other chairs in the chapter are selected), but then lets the officers balance out the board. The chair doesn't have any special powers, just more responsibilities.

Holmes Murphy Fraternal Practice recommends Option #2 as the preferred way to establish board membership. We recommend option #4 as a second alternative.

Advisors

Advisors should not serve on the standards board. It's an internal chapter conduct board. Advisors should attend standards board meetings and advise the students as they prepare for meetings, deliberate, and discuss sanctions, but should not have a seat on the board. Advisors could serve as an ex-officio member—like a student conduct staff member would be on a university hearing panel—to help manage the procedural aspects of the process, but this is not necessary. The standards board process shouldn't be so cumbersome that the students can't manage it with mature adult guidance.

Holmes Murphy offers this educational information to provoke thought and discussion and it should not be viewed as a mandate or requirement.

We view part of our role as an insurance and risk management professional to anticipate your needs and educate you in an effort to complement the organization's loss prevention and control efforts, not replace the decision-making autonomy of our client organizations. We hope you find this educational piece to be of value and stand ready to discuss it further with you or any of your constituents.