

# INFORMATION FOR WITNESSES

## IN STUDENT DISCIPLINARY HEARINGS

Complainants and respondents in student disciplinary hearings may present witnesses on their behalf. The following are guidelines and expectations for witness participation in a hearing:

1. **Witnesses must be members of the University community.** In rare circumstances a hearing body may make an exception if a non-University witness has direct knowledge of the incident in question.
2. Witnesses will only **comment on their direct knowledge** of a specific incident in question. **Character witnesses are not allowed**, and statements characterized as opinions, gossip or assumptions will be given little consideration.
3. **Witnesses should appear in person.** Written witness statements are allowed but are generally given less consideration than “in person testimony”. Also, because both parties have the right to question those presenting information (oral or written), the hearing body may choose to disregard all or a portion of written statements if a reasonable opportunity to question the author cannot be arranged.
4. **Expert witnesses**, who by virtue of their education, training, skill, or experience, are believed to have knowledge in a particular subject beyond that of the average person, **will not be allowed to participate** or provide written information, unless it can be demonstrated that they have direct knowledge of the incident in question.
5. **Witnesses may be asked questions** by the complainant, the respondent, and the hearing body. If needed, questions may be routed through the hearing body. Witnesses are not allowed to ask substantive questions of anyone participating in the hearing.
6. **Witness participation is voluntary** and cannot be compelled by the hearing body or the University. Therefore it is the responsibility of the complainant and the respondent to communicate all relevant information to witnesses in advance of the hearing.
7. **Witnesses** should know that they **may be held accountable** through the University disciplinary process if implicated in a violation of a University policy or regulation. More specifically, false information or evidence of personal misconduct may result in disciplinary action.
8. **Witnesses may not intimidate** other participants in a hearing, and **should expect to be free from intimidation** directed toward them. Such behavior should be reported to the Department of Student Life (355-8286), and/or the MSU Police Department, (355-2222), immediately.
9. Student disciplinary hearings are recorded for appeals purposes only and remain the sole property of the University.