

**Commission on Student Affairs**  
**CSA Resolution 2006-07B**  
**Withholding Academic Degrees for Misconduct**  
**Resulting in Suspension and Dismissal**

Approved by Commission on Student Affairs:	April 6, 2006
First Reading by University Council:	September 18, 2006
Approved by University Council:	October 2, 2006
Approved by the President:	October 2, 2006
Approved by Board of Visitors:	November 6, 2006
Effective Date:	Upon Approval by the Board of Visitors

Whereas, the University Judicial System is an educational tool with two main objectives: to hold students accountable for unacceptable behavior, and to modify those behaviors deemed unacceptable by the university, and

Whereas, the University Judicial System strives to address unacceptable behavior in a manner that informs students and guides them toward a greater sense of personal responsibility, and more mature and ethical standards, and

Whereas, the Office of Judicial Affairs has adjudicated cases of misconduct (including serious offenses involving illegal drugs, abusive conduct, sexual misconduct and sexual harassment, and numerous repeat violations that would result in suspension or dismissal) of graduating seniors where suspension would have been appropriate and expected due to the severity of the violation and judicial system case precedent, but could not suspend because the University Judicial System does not have the ability to withhold an academic degree for a disciplinary matter, and

Whereas, Virginia Tech's stipulation for awarding a degree includes completing all academic requirements and being in good standing with the university which includes disciplinary standing, and

Whereas, the Office of Judicial Affairs would withhold a degree for an appropriate period of time (typically one or two semesters) that is consistent with stated policy and case precedent, and

Whereas, a review of SCHEV peers and other elite institutions indicate that the majority of institutions have the authority to withhold degrees for disciplinary matters and consider the ability to be a best practice, and

Whereas, the Virginia Tech Undergraduate Honor System already has the authority to withhold academic degrees indicating that Virginia Tech already allows degrees to be withheld for behavior contrary to stated community standards, therefore let it be

Resolved, that **Section III.D. - Formal University Judicial Sanctions** be amended as follows:

*(Preamble paragraph and numbers 1 – 5 were omitted for space reasons)*

**6. Deferred Sanction** In some cases, a sanction of suspension or a denial of privilege may be held in abeyance for a specified period. This means that, if the student/organization is found responsible of any violation during that period, he or she will be subject to the deferred sanction without further review in addition to the disciplinary action appropriate to the new violation. During this time, the certain student organizations may be prohibited from participating in any social functions. For students found

responsible for misconduct that results in a deferred sanction, the conferring of an academic degree will be deferred for the duration of the sanction.

**7. Suspension from the University** Student is notified that he or she is separated from the university for a specified period of time. Students who are suspended must leave campus within the time prescribed by the hearing/appeal officer. Permission to return to Virginia Tech may be required by the director of judicial affairs. This must be completed before a student will be permitted to re-enroll. If the decision to suspend a student is made in an academic semester, imposition of the suspension may be delayed until the following semester. A notation is placed on the student's academic transcript: "suspended by university action." For student organizations, recognition with the university is withdrawn for a specified period of time. Permissions to regain status may be required by the director of judicial affairs and other appropriate university officials. For students found responsible for misconduct that results in suspension, the conferring of an academic degree will be deferred for the duration of the suspension.

**8. Dismissal** Student is notified that he or she is permanently separated from the university. A notation is placed on the academic transcript: "dismissed by university action." Student organization is notified that the university is permanently removing recognition of the organization. For students found responsible for misconduct that results in dismissal, the conferring of an academic degree will be denied.