

Disciplinary Suspension or Dismissal/Expulsion Documentation (November 2010)

- 1. Does your institution document the disciplinary suspension or dismissal/expulsion of students on the academic transcript or anywhere else beyond the office of the Dean of Students or Vice-President for Student Affairs?*
- 2. Please provide the rationale for the action your institution takes with regard to documentation of suspension or dismissal/expulsion.*

Centenary College

The transcript in the registrar's office is an academic only record. It does not contain non-academic information (apart from details to identify the person of the record). Thus, the transcript documents whether a student is on Academic Suspension. A final academic suspension (e.g., decision by the Honor Court that a student is expelled and unable to return) is noted on the transcript with the statement, "ineligible to return." The transcript does NOT otherwise contain disciplinary actions or consequences.

The registrar is the sole custodian of the academic records only; The Centenary Honor Court maintains records of its decisions, and the Dean of Students, etc. keeps records of disciplinary matters. Public Safety logs the incidences of crimes and related issues. These parties are custodians of the non-academic disciplinary actions and consequences on campus.

Regarding a rationale for documenting and not documenting suspension or expulsion:

1. AACRAO's recommendations on this subject: "Incorporating into the transcript institutional information such as sanctions for indebtedness and the record of transcripts issued should be avoided. Disciplinary actions should not be a part of the academic record or transcript." (AACRAO Academic Record and Transcript Guide, Revised 1984, p. 8)
2. ACCRAO's legal advice on the subject of the institution's responsibility to document disciplinary actions: "Institutions must maintain adequate and complete records on disciplinary and academic matters. Records relating to discipline should be kept routinely, and not on an ad hoc selective basis to counter charges of arbitrary discipline proceedings. The institution must decide whether to maintain discipline records in perpetuity or to purge certain records after a period of time or after graduation. Many policies call for the permanent retention of records of suspension, dismissal or expulsion only." (Legal Guide for Admissions and Registrar's Officers, 1984, p. 34)
3. The registrar's office follows the ACCRAO recommendations for the retention and destruction of academic records. In instances where the Registrar's judgment deems wise not to destroy a student's academic records according to the planned schedule, such records are kept in a secured location permanently. This information is retained because of the nature and/or complexity of academic decisions and the "paper trail" that resulted from making these decisions." Also, this information is retained in instances of legal actions involving the student and/or Centenary and the academic records on the student.
4. The Registrar documents "ineligible to return" as a message to the Centenary Admissions Office and Admissions Committees relative to future considerations should the expelled student attempt

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to re-apply to enter Centenary. This statement can affect the decision of other institutions whether to admit a student with this annotation on his transcript. Thus, this statement is not applied to a Centenary transcript without careful consideration and complete assurance of the accuracy of the message.

While the decision about where to record disciplinary on transcripts does not belong to me, both the registrar and I have personal, philosophical opinions about recording the behavioral consequences of a young, maturing adult on a permanent record that will follow that person for the next 40 plus years. However, our personal views only reinforce the current practice of not transcribing disciplinary actions; our views do not govern this practice.

Centre College

We do note "suspension" on the transcript -- but no distinction of a social vs. academic suspension.

Rhodes College

When a student has voluntarily withdrawn, the transcript is noted as "withdrew."

When a student has been involuntarily withdrawn (academic or disciplinary suspension/expulsion, the transcript is noted as "withdrawn."

Spelman College

We keep the academic transcript in the realm of academics. There are other mechanisms to record unrelated conduct issues. A transcript reflecting a gap should be a flag for an institution to inquire further. A strong student may have messed up and some average students may be great people, so we keep them disconnected.

University of Richmond

The only notation made on the permanent transcript is "suspension"...it does not say anything more than that. The reason is that suspensions only occur for serious academic honor or social issues.

Washington and Lee University

Note "suspension" on the transcript -- but no distinction of a social vs. academic suspension.