

**Letter from Hearing Board or Department Chair
to Independent Witness**

Date

Dear :

Thank you for accepting the appointment as Independent Witness for the upcoming primary hearing. (Faculty member) will be getting in touch with you regarding the date and location of the hearing.

I am writing to give you a more complete idea of what your responsibilities include. In the Code of Academic Integrity it states, "The function of the independent witness is to observe the proceedings impartially, and in the event of an appeal from the judgment of the faculty member, be prepared to testify as to the procedures followed." (Code II.B.4.b.)

Basically, this means that you will be an observer, not a participant in the discussion. Your presence will hopefully serve to ensure that neither party is threatened, intimidated or coerced by the other.

If the case is settled at the primary hearing, your job is over. If, however, the case progresses to an Academic Integrity Board hearing, you may be asked to testify as to what went on at the primary hearing. Some experienced independent witnesses recommend bringing a tape recorder to the primary hearing, but this should be discussed with all parties involved. If no tape recorder is used, you may have to take detailed notes as to the charge presented and the student's response.

This website explains Cornell's Academic Integrity procedures, contains a link to the Code of Academic Integrity, and provides information about Judicial Codes Counselors:

<http://theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/academic-integrity/>

Once again, thank you for your participation in this important University function.

Sincerely,

Chair of Department [or Hearing Board]