

Hillsdale College Honor Code

A Hillsdale College student is honorable in conduct, honest in word and deed, dutiful in study and service and respectful of the rights of others. Through education the student rises to self-government.

Understanding the Code

Hillsdale College was founded in 1844 out of gratitude to God “for the inestimable blessings resulting from the prevalence of civil and religious liberty and intelligent piety in the land” Its original and abiding mission is “to furnish all persons who wish, irrespective of nation, color, or sex, a literary, scientific or theological education...and to combine with this, such moral, social and artistic instruction and culture as will best develop the minds and improve the hearts of the students.”

True education of the mind and heart teaches and requires self-government. Self-government calls for the active cultivation of intellectual and moral excellence and humility before our Creator. It commands courage in pursuit of justice and diligence in performing the duties of scholarship. Self-government instructs each person to hold honor sacred.

Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are every person’s natural rights. Mindful of these gifts from God, Hillsdale College students uphold their rights with care for the common good.

Self-government is a challenge with the promise of a rich reward: liberty of the soul. A soul enjoys liberty when it is ordered—when its passions are ruled by reason and its habit is virtue. Hillsdale College exists for the improvement and ultimate happiness of its students. This great and enduring happiness is its highest purpose.

Guided by faculty, staff and their parents, Hillsdale College students learn to cherish the liberty of the soul; to defend, as the College founders declared, the “civil and religious liberty” of the American order; and to live with “intelligent piety” as self-governing citizens and scholars.

Virtus tentamine gaudet. Strength rejoices in the challenge. This truth, the motto of Hillsdale College, means that to be strong in virtue, one must welcome a challenge. In offering its students the challenge of self-government, Hillsdale College asks its students to act at all times worthy of the blessings of liberty.