

# 2016-2017 Assessment Final Report

Department: Student Conduct and Community Standards

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## **Considering Impact, Behavior, and Values: Assessing Student Learning During an Administrative Hearing**

### **Introduction**

#### **Assessment Project Description**

Assessing student conduct learning outcomes can be challenging since the student population being assessed does not initially see the value in the service and education you provide. In order to render rich assessment data, we must consider what students discuss with us in our informal, administrative hearings. The student conduct practice at the University of Kansas embraces the impactful nature of the conversation and learning that occurs during these meetings and, as such, seeks to evaluate them in “real time.” Through an assessment that occurs during that meeting, we will evaluate student learning occurring prior to the meeting and while participating in the meeting. This immediate feedback renders richer data which can be used for ongoing training for Hearing Officers and allow an in depth evaluation of our administrative hearing practices.

#### **Service/Program Student Learning Outcome(s)**

Students participating in an administrative hearing with a University Hearing Officer will be able to...

- Analyze how their behaviors impact the KU community (Department Learning Outcomes 1 & 3)
- Contrast their personal values with their actions during the incident. (Department Learning Outcome 2)
- Articulate why their actions may be inconsistent with KU’s expectations (Department Learning Outcome 1)

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- Identify how their behaviors impact their personal and academic success at KU. (Department Learning Outcome 3)
- Develop strategies that prevent future behaviors from occurring and how to repair harm to the community (Department Learning Outcome 1 & 4)

### **Population/Sample:**

Convenience sample of 15 students who attended administrative hearings with Student Conduct and Community Standards staff in Strong Hall.

### **Assessment Method(s):**

A standardized set of questions was developed that the three Hearing Officers in Student Conduct and Community Standards will ask in every Administrative Hearing that does not involve potential suspension. The responses were entered into a CampusLabs survey (for records retention purposes) and coded at the end of the semester. The coding was crosschecked by another member of the student conduct staff to ensure that there were consistent themes and outcomes, adding to some interrater reliability.

The questions asked in the hearing would seek to assess:

- Student understanding of the Administrative Hearing processes
- Self-Evaluation of the impact of their behavior (including academic success)
- Reflecting on the impact of their behaviors on others (including the university community)
- Reflection on their personal values
- Comparing and contrasting their personal values to their behaviors
- Discuss the changes to their behavior they have made immediately
- Articulate plans for long term behavioral change

### **Summary of Key Findings/Results**

When students were asked to describe what they believed the administrative hearing may look like, students had a basic understanding of what the meeting would entail. Specifically: 73% were aware that they would be discussing the incident that happened, and that this meeting would determine if they were in violation of a policy, while 14% knew they would talk about the incident they were referred for but were unsure what it may fully look like. Following the meeting, 73% of students found that the

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meeting met or exceeded their expectations. Most notably, students found the meeting to be more relaxed than expected, and that hearing officers were less judgmental than expected. Of those 73% of students, 36% shared that while it was what they expected, there was still one or more aspects of the meeting that they didn't expect (i.e. harsher sanctions, more judgement from hearing officer, longer meeting, etc.).

When students were asked to discuss the impacts their behaviors have had on them, stress was a consistent answer. Specifically, 26% of student said they were more stress than they were before the incident. Students indicated that two of the biggest stressors for them from their incident were external stressors: either legal ramifications (40%) or financial burdens (33%). Though less salient, students (20%) discussed the time impacts the incident had on them related to having to meet with a hearing officer. Additionally, students did not correlate their behaviors in the incident with the impacts on their academics (only 6%).

When asked to consider the impacts their behavior on others, the majority of students (50%) indicated that their parents were most affected by their actions, many of them sharing that their parents were angry with them (57%) or worried about them (43%). Additionally, some students discussed the impacts the incident had on their friend, discussing that it caused their friends stress (14%). Some students (14%) also discussed that their relationships with their immediate community and the City of Lawrence.

When students were asked to consider how they may repair harm or the impacts they have had, the majority (57%) focused on not engaging in the same behavior in the future. Additionally, some students (29%) felt the need to apologize to those they impacted to restore the trust they may have lost through the incident.

When asked, the personal values that students indicated most often were: education (57%), respect (50%), and friends (43%). Most students (71%) were able to recognize the incongruence between their personal values and their actions, noting that they may have failed others (friends or family), being disrespectful, and that their decisions could impact their education in the long term (specifically, that they may be removed from KU). Approximately 29% of students did not find inconsistencies in their behavior. These students often were unable to reconcile their behaviors because they felt they "did nothing wrong."

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When students discussed their behavior change after the incident, all said they made some kind of change, most of which (60%) said they would not engage in the same behavior again or be more careful with their decisions (20%). Interestingly, though a small number said their academics had been impacted by their behavior, 33% said they would focus more on school and classes. When asked about their dedication to these changes in the long term, these answers were consistent regarding students abstaining from the same behaviors (54%) or engaging in alternative behaviors such as drink counting eat before going out, etc. (23%). Others (30%) said they would change their priorities towards school.

### **Conclusions**

#### **Impact of Assessment**

We will use these results to inform our training practices, meeting process, and follow up guidelines including effective sanctions for students.

When considering our training practices, we will use the information regarding values congruence to further facilitate effective questioning techniques. It is clear all the students within this assessment have salient values that can be leveraged for deeper reflection on their behavior (regardless of whether they are responsible for a policy violation) and how they may grow their values system in relation to the larger university values. Trainings may continue to focus on Brief Motivational Interviewing with deeper prompts on values and values congruence that hearing officers may use. Additionally, we may explore further questions hearing officers may use to evaluate the stress students are experiencing since it is a clear theme throughout the assessment both for themselves but also their concerns for causing their peers stress.

Additionally, though many students had a general understanding about what the meeting would look like, there is room for growth on educating them about the administrative hearing process. As all of these meetings did not involve a potential suspension or expulsion, the meetings have an even greater ability to be conversational and fluid (though all student conduct processes are founded in education). Many of the students made it clear they knew there would be a conversation about what occurred and there would be some accountability affiliated with it. That being said, that is still a rudimentary understanding. This can inform our practice in both our outreach prior to

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the meeting and at the time of the meeting. We may create a “flow chart” that explains the process in more detail and also offers so preemptive questions students should consider before entering the meeting. This could lead to a pre-hearing guide for students that would be distributed with our outreach letter so they have a clear understanding of what the meeting will look like. Additionally, hearing officers can spend more time discussing what the meeting will look like and ensuring that all of the student’s questions are answered before proceeding into the meeting.

Finally, with the salience of stress and the importance of values of congruence, we may develop further sanctions that can support students in their stress management. After the previous assessment, we partnered with the Health Education Resource Office to development a stress management sanction. This sanctions has been used conservatively and it is clear a broad application would appropriate. Additionally, there are opportunities through free online assessment for students to explore their values and how they play in their day to day lives. We could leverage these assessments in a reflection/research sanction where students could further evaluate their values and deeply analyze how they act within their values system on a day to day basis.

### **Lessons Learned**

The benefit of qualitative assessment is the rich data that we receive from students. Though only 15 students were part of this assessment, the depth of data is invaluable considering the individual contacts we have as part of the conduct process. As our process emphasizes the majority of the learning should occur during the hearing, the assessment data shows that there is indeed reflection and growth occurring prior to and during the meeting. Further, we see that students are seeing that were are not a star chamber where decision come from an unknown place that had little meaning to the student. What we have gained for our training and meeting practices will be invaluable as we seek to grow the student conduct process at the university.

A challenge, however, of qualitative assessment is the time commitment and cross checking that goes into ensuring you have the best data possible. This assessment involved the Graduate Assistant and Director of the office going through the data, working through it, and verifying that they found the same information. Though

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reliability increases, it is time intensive. Further, the input of data after a hearing often was time consuming (usually taking approximately 15 minutes to complete) which led to further time. Finally, there were some adjustments that were made early on in the process to ensure that the survey was being used consistently. With these delays, the sample size decreased.

The hope was to compare the data from this assessment to the previous year's assessment findings; however, when considering the work we wanted to do this year, it was less process focused and more learning focused. This is not necessarily a pitfall, but it would be interesting to compare data sets each year to see what changes (if anything) based on the use of the assessment results to inform training and follow up processes. Though the data gathered has been valuable, the assessment methods now may change over to reviewing hearing officer experiences. This will allow us to determine whether the training we are offering are facilitating the educational conversations we have assessed the past two years.