

2020-2021 Student Affairs Assessment Plan

Department: Student Conduct and Community Standards

Student Learning in Administrative Hearings for Non-Academic Misconduct Allegations

Division Mission

To engage the KU community in services and programs that make learning possible.

Department Mission

The Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards addresses incidents of non-academic misconduct on campus and educates students about the *Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities*. The office seeks to foster a holistic learning environment through education focused on community membership and standards.

Department Student Learning Outcomes

Students who utilize or interact with services and programs provided by Student Conduct and Community Standards will be able to...

1. Describe the campus and community expectations for behavior.
2. Apply campus and community expectations for their behavior in their interaction with the community.
3. Evaluate the congruence between their personal and community values.
4. Explain how their actions (including the use of alcohol and drugs) impact their academic success at KU, other students in the community, and members of the larger KU/Lawrence community.

Description of Service/Program

Students who have allegedly violated the *Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities* (the “Code”) are referred to the non-academic misconduct process. Specifically, alleged violations that, upon review of the initial information, do not rise to the level of suspension or expulsion may be resolved through an informal, administrative hearing.

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An administrative hearing is a meeting with a Hearing Officer to inform the student of their rights within the non-academic misconduct process, share the information the university is aware of regarding the alleged violations, allow the student to respond to the allegations and provide further, relevant information, and, if the student is in violation of the Code, discuss the appropriate sanctions that serve to educate the student and repair any harm to the community. When a student faces potential suspension or expulsion, they are given the choice to engage in an informal, administrative hearing or a formal hearing.

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)
- 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)

Divisional Student Learning Outcomes: *Check all that apply*

- Knowledge Acquisition
- Cognitive Complexity
- Intrapersonal Development
- Interpersonal Competence
- Humanitarianism & Civic Engagement
- Practical Competence

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Project Specifics

Project Title:

Student Learning in Administrative Hearings for Non-Academic Misconduct Allegations

Purpose of the project:

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 provided. In order to render rich assessment data, hearing officers must consider what students discuss in 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 assessment that occurs before, during, and after that meeting, SCCS intends to evaluate student learning that occurs prior to the meeting and while participating in the meeting. This immediate feedback has the potential to render richer data, which can be used for ongoing training for Hearing Officers and allow an in-depth evaluation of administrative hearing practices.

This project began in the 2019-2020 academic year. It is being continued for 2020-2021 due to the COVID-19 impact on case numbers in the previous academic year. Additionally, we will expand the project to pilot with KU Student Housing hearing officers in the fall semester, with the potential expansion to all KU Student Housing hearing officers in the spring semester.

Assessment method(s):

The project consists of three phases:

- *Pre-hearing student self-assessment*: this is conducted prior to every administrative hearing in Student Conduct and Community Standards that does not have the potential for suspension or expulsion. Students complete an assessment with seven questions prior to their meeting with a hearing officer. The hearing officer collects the survey for future use. Students are asked to reflect upon whether they know the purpose of the meeting, their awareness of

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the *Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities* and the Jayhawk Values, the impact their behavior had on themselves and the community, and the alignment between their behavior and personal values. Students are told that the survey is for assessment purposes and has no bearing on the outcome of their hearing. In addition to use by SCCS hearing officers, we will pilot this assessment with a selection of KU Student Housing hearing officers in the Fall 2020 semester, with possible expansion in the Spring 2021 semester.

- *Post-hearing assessment by the hearing officer:* this is conducted after every administrative hearing in Student Conduct and Community Standards that does not have the potential for suspension or expulsion. The hearing officer accesses a survey on survey.ku.edu to enter the student's pre-hearing self-assessment data. The hearing officer then completes a similar set of questions to document whether the student was able to articulate the impact of their behavior, opportunities for change, alignment with personal and university values and expectations, etc. This is particularly useful in assessing student learning, rather than simply relying on students' self-reported data. In addition to use by SCCS hearing officers, we will pilot this assessment with a selection of KU Student Housing hearing officers in the Fall 2020 semester, with possible expansion in the Spring 2021 semester.
- *Post-hearing assessment by the student:* this is applicable to students who meet with Student Conduct and Community Standards or with KU Student Housing for their administrative hearing. All students who participate in a student conduct hearing receive an outcome letter following their hearing. The outcome letter identifies the hearing officer's decision (either responsible or not responsible) for all alleged policy violations and the rationale for their decision. If the student is found responsible for the policy violation(s), the outcome letter includes the required sanctions and the hearing officer's rationale for assigning the sanctions. The outcome letter is delivered electronically and includes an invitation to complete a survey about their experience in the conduct process.

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The survey, administered through survey.ku.edu, asks students to identify any actions they took to prepare for the conduct hearing, their understanding of the process, their perception of the hearing officer's respect for them, their understanding of their rights, and their belief about whether the conduct process as outlined in university procedures was followed. Additionally, the survey asks students to reflect upon their learning as a result of the experience and their understanding of the rationale and sanctions, regardless of whether they agreed with the decision.

The survey contains multiple choice questions and one open-ended question for any additional information students wish to share.

Staff contact(s):

Katie Treadwell, Director of Student Conduct and Community Standards

Katie@ku.edu

Timeline/frequency:

- Pre-hearing assessments will be administered to students immediately prior to their meeting with a Student Conduct and Community Standards hearing officer. This began in August 2020 and will continue through July 2021. Additionally, a selection of KU Student Housing hearing officers will engage students in this process in October and November 2020. Based upon the success of the initial trial with KU Student Housing, the project may be expanded to all KU Student Housing hearing officers in Spring 2021.
- Post-hearing assessment by hearing officer will be completed immediately following the student's administrative hearing with a Student Conduct and Community Standards hearing officer. This began in August 2020 and will continue through July 2021. Additionally, a selection of KU Student Housing hearing officers will engage students in this process in hearing officers will engage students in this process in October and November 2020. Based upon the

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success of the initial trial with KU Student Housing, the project may be expanded to all KU Student Housing hearing officers in Spring 2021.

- Post-hearing assessment by the student will be completed following receipt of their hearing outcome letter. This will be sent to students participating in either a Student Conduct and Community Standards administrative hearing or an administrative hearing with a KU Student Housing hearing officer. This began in August 2020 and will continue through July 2021.

Population/Sample:

This project involves two sample populations. First, the pre-hearing self-assessment and post-hearing assessment by a hearing officer will be administered to any student assigned to meet with Student Conduct and Community Standards hearing officers. This includes students who allegedly violate the *Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities*, but whom do not face suspension or expulsion charges. Typical charges include drug and alcohol violations, fake ID use, and minor violence, disruption, or harassment charges. Students who violate housing policies and meet solely with a housing hearing officer will not participate in this phase of the assessment project, due to scalability issues. SCCS estimates the number to be 500 people in the academic year. In addition to use by SCCS hearing officers, we will pilot this assessment with a selection of KU Student Housing hearing officers in the Fall 2020 semester, with possible expansion in the Spring 2021 semester. This could add another 500 students to the sample.

Additionally, all students who meet with a Student Conduct and Community Standards or KU Student Housing hearing officer will receive the post-hearing assessment. The assessment will be sent in the student's outcome letter. Approximately 1500 students will receive this survey.

Special challenges to this assessment:

First, students may be hesitant to complete the pre-hearing survey or be fully transparent, if they believe the survey has an impact on the outcome of the hearing. They may tell the hearing officer what they believe the officer wants to hear, rather than being honest about their perceptions. Hearing officers explain to students that the

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survey is for departmental assessment and has no bearing on the outcome, but this may present a challenge in obtaining accurate data.

Additionally, students participating in a conduct hearing often do not view the process as an educational experience, but rather punishment for something which they may or may not be willing to accept responsibility. This lack of recognition of the learning experience may impact their responses to the pre- and post-hearing assessment.

Finally, different hearing officers may have different interpretations of the administrative hearing experience and students' ability to articulate impact and learning, thus leading to inconsistent assessment. This is addressed through ongoing training and discussions among the Student Conduct and Community Standards hearing officers.

Use to inform current practice:

Results of student learning before, during, and after the administrative hearing will be instrumental in continuing to serve students and shape learning experiences offered through Student Conduct and Community Standards. SCCS will use results of this multi-phased assessment project to better inform hearing practices in SCCS and KU Student Housing, as well as educate students and families about the process and impact of the student conduct experience.

First, SCCS will use the data to continually revise the administrative hearing process within SCCS and KU Student Housing. Hearing officers in SCCS and KU Student Housing will engage in training each semester to learn more about student experiences during the hearing process. Hearing officer will review results of the various phases of assessment and engage in training to identify and overcome gaps in the student learning experience. Student responses will be used to help hearing officers consider how to be more effective in the administrative hearings and design motivational-based questions accordingly. For example, results of the 2019-2020 assessment indicated students knew why their decision was not acceptable, but did not understand the impact their decision had on others (a trend we also saw in 2018-2019 and have begun to address through

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educational programming). Continuing to engage in intentional, year-round assessment will help to inform hearing officer preparedness and student learning as a result.

Additionally, the results will be used to train campus students, faculty, and staff who volunteer for hearing panels and investigation teams. By having a greater understanding of the holistic student experience as it relates to the conduct process, hearing officers will be better prepared to ask meaningful questions, observe student engagement during the hearing, and tailor their approach as a result. Engaging in meaningful assessment of student learning during the administrative hearings helps to inform campus colleagues about the impact of SCCS interactions and contributions to students' overall KU experience.

Finally, results from the assessment project will be used to better educate students and their families about the student conduct process. By creating comprehensive and transparent descriptions of students' experience during the conduct process, SCCS may help foster students' learning before they arrive at the administrative hearing. SCCS hopes that by providing more meaningful information about student experiences during the administrative hearings, students and their families will have a better understanding about how their behaviors align with or contradict KU's community standards. In sharing this information with students, SCCS hopes to foster student learning throughout the process, not just during the hearing itself.

Plans for reporting results:

Results of student learning before, during, and after the administrative hearing will be reported through the following opportunities:

- Student Affairs annual report
- SCCS annual report to be developed following the 2020-2021 academic year
- SCCS website
- Campus trainings for hearing officers and Student Affairs partners
- Association of Student Conduct Administrators conference presentation



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Qualtrics Used: Yes No