2015-2016 Assessment Final Report

Department: Student Conduct and Community Standards

Student Learning During an Administrative Hearing

Introduction

Assessment Project Description

Assessing student conduct learning outcomes can be challenging since the student population that is 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 the meeting, we will evaluate students' learning that occurred prior to and while participating in the meeting, including their understanding of the *Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities* and the Non-Academic Misconduct Process, how they see their actions impacting others and the KU community, consider their personal values and how their behaviors intersected (or not), identify the impacts their behaviors had on their success (academically and personally) at KU, reflect on how their actions were inconsistent with KU's expectations, and develop strategies to prevent future behaviors in the future and how to repair harm for the past incident. This immediate feedback allows for deeper understanding of how students actively process their reason for being referred to the student conduct process and how we may be able to better engage and challenge them to develop further from what occurred. This rich information will also bolster training practices for hearing officers so that they may engage in deeper, more intentional conversations with students.

Service/Program Student Learning Outcome(s)

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

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- Explain the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities and the reason for its existence.
- Describe the Non-Academic Misconduct Procedures and the reason for its existence.
- Analyze how their behaviors impact the KU community.
- Contrast their personal values with their actions during the incident.
- Articulate why their actions may be inconsistent with KU's expectations.
- Identify how their behaviors impact their personal and academic success at KU.
- Develop strategies that prevent future behaviors from occurring and how to repair harm to the community.

Population/Sample:

The sample included any student referred to Student Conduct and Community Standards for an alleged violation of the *Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities* that will not face suspension or expulsion. Specific population demographics include:

- 12 Female Identifying Students, 12 Male Identifying students
- All students were White/Caucasian
- 17 Freshmen, 2 Sophomores, 1 Junior, 3 Seniors, and 1 Professional School
- 12 had a Greek Affiliation
- 1 Student Athlete
- 16 students were residential (living on campus)

Assessment Method(s):

A hearing rubric was used by university hearing officers located in Student Conduct and Community Standards when meeting with students. The rubric included a demographics section (which would be drawn from Enroll and Pay) and questions to perform the assessment. As the student participated in the hearing, the hearing officer would note their responses and, at the conclusion of the hearing, enter their information into Student Voice for data collection. At the conclusion of the semester, all of the data was reviewed and coded for common themes. It is worth noting that approximately half-way through the assessment project, the structure and some questions were slightly

modified to allow for a fluid integration of the rubric into the larger student conduct meeting.

Summary of Key Findings/Results

- Regarding the Code and Process, prior to the meeting, students had a rudimentary understanding of both. By the end of the meeting, there was a deeper understanding of the foundational documents of the student conduct process. Specifically, there was recognition that the code keeps students safe and the process has finite rights all students are guaranteed shows a growth in understanding after speaking with the hearing officer about them. However, when students were asked to analyze their behavior within the context of the code, most of them still articulated a fairly rudimentary relationship of their behavior solely violating a policy. This may indicate a lack of depth of the holistic nature of the code, seeing it only as a "rule book" that must be followed.

  - Prior to the incident they were referred for, 58% were aware there was a code. Of those aware:

    - 79% were aware of a presence of rules or policies.
    - 21% had an awareness of the presence and a general understanding of some of the rules or what they were referred for

  - Prior participating in the meeting, when asked why KU has a code (those that were unaware were informed of the Code):

    - 25% were unsure or unable to articulate why
    - 50% discussed a need for rules, order, and a document to address "problems"
    - 17% discussed a need for standards
    - 8% discussed it was there for safety

  - After participating in the meeting, when students were asked why KU has a code:

    - 33% said the Code was there to keep students safe
    - 21% said that it is necessary to have rules at KU
    - 17% said that there was a need to discuss standards for students and what KU expects of them
    - Other responses included: it guaranteed student rights, it ensured learning, established "real world" expectations that would prepare them for jobs, and the importance of having consequences for their actions.

- After the meeting, students discussed how their behaviors interacted or aligned with the code:

    - 21% discussed that their actions were inconsistent with the expectations of the code and did not solely identify a rule they "broke."
    - 54% said that they had violated a policy.
    - 25% discussed their behavior was "wrong", but did not tie it directly to the code.

- Prior to the meeting, 33% had reviewed the non-academic misconduct procedures.

- When asked to describe what will occur in the meeting they are attending:

    - 29% were unsure
    - 50% knew that they had to meet to talk about something that occurred, but did not know what would happen.
    - 17% were aware of at least some of their rights within the process and knew they might have to answer questions
    - Other responses expected it to be "court like."

- After participating in the meeting, when students were asked why KU has a process to address alleged non-academic misconduct:

    - 21% discussed students having specific rights at KU
    - 21% articulated a need to have a clear, well outlined process to address the behaviors
    - 17% discussed the need for a fair way to address incidents
    - 13% spoke to the need to learn from the process
    - Other responses included the need for accountability for students, lending vocational/human resources like processes for their profession, and that it ties them further to KU since the university addresses their behavior

- Though most of the students could identify at least one individual that was impacted by their behaviors, they struggled to discuss what the impact was beyond causing stress and returning the focus to their own experiences. That many of the students could not articulate how they impacted others could indicate that they are compartmentalizing their experiences and do not see wider impacts. Additionally, they may be in a specific developmental stage where perception and understanding of community impacts (beyond identifying that someone else was affected, but unable to say how) has not fully matured. When asked how they could repair any harm or effects, many of them deferred to the hearing officer rather than developing some original ideas or attempting to come up with ideas unprompted. This may further be indicative of the developmental stage they are in,

where they defer to an authority figure to instruct them how to "fix" a situation or may not see a larger impact beyond their individualistic experiences.

- o When students were asked how they impacted those who were affected by their behaviors, they said:

  - 38% indicated that others were disappointed with them
    - Specifically, 44% of that group indicated parents being disappointed in them and there being slight changes in their relationships with them
  - 25% said it created stress for other people
  - 13% discussed that their relationships with other students had changed

- o When students were asked how they could repair the harm they caused:

  - 33% were unsure how or deferred to the hearing officer to give them an answer
  - 25% discussed that the sanctions they would need to complete would suffice
  - 17% indicated they will not engage in the same behavior again and no other changes
  - There were some individuals who had already engaged in reparative behaviors such as apologized, completed community service hours, and made restitution.

- All of the students stated some very salient values and many recognized that their actions were not consistent with these values. What is of note is all of the individuals (barring one) who said their actions were congruent with their values then proceeded to explain they regretted their behavior but had since changed or attempted to portray actions in a way that would make it appear that their behaviors are prosocial (i.e.: helping others, being honest).

  - o When asked to consider how their actions in the incident intersected with their personal values:

    - 58% indicated that their actions were inconsistent with their values.
      - Of this subset, they noted their actions of harming others, personal irresponsibility, and that it portrayed a self-image inconsistent with what they value. Interestingly, of this group, about 30% value responsibility/self-accountability.
    - 16% that did not find inconsistencies:

- They recognized inconsistencies in their behaviors at the time, but had changed since have changed (i.e.: they valued honesty and were honest with the hearing officer or valued helping others and were trying to help people when documented for incident).

  - The remaining students were unable to clearly articulate or reconcile their values with their behaviors.

- The students compartmentalized their actions from their personal and academic success. Though stress was mentioned within the personal success/wellbeing area, most did not see their actions impacting either area.

  o When students were asked to discuss their behaviors have had on their personal success and wellbeing:

    - 21% said there were no effects
    - 21% said they have experienced heightened levels of stress over the incident
    - 13% indicated they have felt distanced from social groups
    - 13% said that this was a positive experience because it has caused them to reevaluate their engagement

  o When students were asked to discuss their behaviors have had on their academic success:

    - 54% said there was no impact
    - 21% said that it affected their study habits

- Most students engaged in some behavior change immediately after the incident occurred in order to prevent themselves from being referred again. There was limited recognition of a more integrated perception of the necessity of community standards and values. This may indicate that students do not see a larger community impact of their behavior or the comprehensive nature of the code. Once again, this also could be part of what developmental stage the student is progressing through. Though not statistically significant, it is worth noting that there were some students that recognized a longer term change beyond not re-engaging in similar behaviors in the future.

  o Students were asked what changes they made to their behavior since the incident. All of them said they made some change, including:

    - 79% saying they would not engage in similar behaviors again
      - 37% of this group explicitly stated what they would not do (i.e.: go out)

- 21% said that they need to make broader behavioral changes (i.e.: not drink as much, find new friends, etc.)

  o When considering why they made the changes:

  - 42% said they did not want to "be in trouble" again
  - 38% saw that their actions had impacts on others and there were consequences beyond "being in trouble"
  - Other themes included: safety, parental disapproval, and ongoing stress since the incident.

  o Students were asked their dedication to these changes for the long term and asked to describe what their plans are moving forward:

  - 46% said they will engage in different behaviors to prevent the situation from arising again (for example: counting drinks, eating before going out, etc.)
  - 33% said they would not engage in the explicit behavior again
  - 25% discussed that they will reevaluate their peer group and end friendships that continue to put them in similar circumstances

- It was explicitly mentioned in several of the responses the clear roll stress has on students and how it impacted them immediately after the incident, how it impacted others (whether they were stressed or the student's stress impacted them), and that it was a repercussion for their behavior after it occurred.

Conclusions

Impact of Assessment

Though limited by the number of respondents, this assessment allowed the collection of more comprehensive responses than a traditional survey. Though many of the numbers are not surprising, the richness of the data allows us to drill into more tangible skills that we can work to improve our interactions with students. Specifically, it is clear that students had grown in their understanding of the Code and process at the end of the meeting. Though this is an admirable accomplishment, the question remains on whether it is retained after their departure from the meeting. It would be worth considering a follow up with the students to see what they recall.

There is a clear compartmentalization of the student's misconduct and all other aspects of their life. We can use the information regarding personal values (specifically, there is a surface level application of inconsistencies between values and actions) to have students further explore values congruence with their behaviors. This could be developed in new sanctions or integrated into the conversation with the hearing officer. Also, students struggled articulating how their behavior impacts others or the broader community. Though they could identify specific people, they were unable to describe how it impacted them. This information could allow us to further explore effective questioning processes and reflective essays/exercises to have a student further consider the impacts their behaviors have the on the community. Finally, seeking to connect their behavior to their personal wellbeing and academic success is essential to student progression and retention. Hearing officers can be further trained to break down the "wall" that the student builds to distance their explicit behavior from their larger engagement in order to have the student to connect all experiences they have at KU. This ongoing training could include hearing officers being equipped to facilitate discussions about prior academic performance, what immediately occurred before and after the incident in occurred related to their studies, and how the incident effected their interpersonal relationships with others and the effects it has had on them in more concrete ways.

Lessons Learned

Admittedly, this may have been an overly ambitious project to take on. The temptation to use a rubric during a conduct meeting was appealing because of the real time data that would be gathered coupled with gaining substantially deeper information. That being said, it was not a wholly practical way to implement an assessment process. As indicated by the low number of students that were surveyed, it is not fully generalizable to the larger student conduct process. Further, that we made a change to the rubric half way through the process was not ideal, but did make data collection easier moving forward (the first rubric was "clunky" and difficult to integrate into conversations with students). Additionally, do to time constraints and availability, the process was initiated much later than originally intended. Finally, the analysis of the data was challenging

since three different individuals, with different conduct "styles", were inputting what they heard from their meeting.

If this project were to be attempted again, we would do more intentional training around asking the questions from the rubric and do interrater comparisons to further bolster the reliability of the information. Though the original intent of this project was to do just that, time constraints quickly made it impractical. However, qualitative data is a necessity in student conduct work because much of it relies on the conversation that occurs with a student. Considering this, there may be a way to gain that data without relying on an in-hearing rubric to assess the questions (such as a focus group or a survey that requires some qualitative responses).

This assessment was "broad net" that sought to gain data on many different aspects of the student conduct process. In the future, it would be worthwhile to select only a small subset of the process to more intensively assess. Any of the topics (values congruence, impacts on others/community, and behavior change) could be a focus of an assessment in the future.