

Student Conduct & Community Standards Annual Report

2018 – 2019 Academic Year



Introduction

Purpose

The Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards is charged with processing and adjudicating violations of the Code of Student Conduct, providing support and education to students as they navigate difficult and contentious situations, and investing in their learning and character development in order to prepare and educate them to discharge the offices of life with usefulness and reputation.

This document is meant to serve as a review of our accomplishments and challenges for the 2019 Fiscal Year as well as provide some information on critical priorities for our office. It also serves as an update to the progress we have made since the 2018 Annual Report. For further information regarding our Code of Student Conduct and resources our office provides, please refer to our website at www.brown.edu/osccs.

Mission and Values

As an office it is our mission and values that guide the work and the decisions we make. We have used these values as a cornerstone for the changes we have made through the code review as well as those made in our policy and practice. Our mission states:

The Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards at Brown University is committed to working within an educational framework to address potential violations of Brown's community standards. We aim to be fair and transparent and work with integrity to serve individual students as well as the campus community in ways that are socially just. We approach our work as an investment in students' learning and character development in order to prepare and educate them to discharge the offices of life with usefulness and reputation.

This mission is based on our values which undergird the work and the mission. We have outlined 5 values as follows:

- **Educational** - We engage students in honest discussions about their values and choices, the impact of their behaviors on the community, and the value of all community members being accountable for their actions. Our process encourages self-reflection and the building of healthy conflict resolution skills and offers leadership opportunities for students who want to be involved in promoting and upholding community standards.
- **Multipartial** - We treat all students with respect and aim to be supportive and inclusive, honoring students' perspectives and lived experiences in the consideration of appropriate outcomes. Our processes highlight and honor as many student voices as possible.

- **Fair** - We provide an opportunity for all students to communicate their perspectives and be heard without prejudice. There is a strong emphasis on due process and equitable treatment for all students who engage in our process.
- **Transparent** - We work to develop and disseminate a clear and understandable Code of Student Conduct that includes student input in its development and adjudication. Students are informed of their rights throughout the process, and we value open discussions with students about possible outcomes before decisions are finalized.
- **Socially Just** - We support the dismantling of all systems of oppression that erode human dignity and commit ourselves to continual education and purposeful action to ensure that our policies, processes, and interactions reflect this.

Staffing

Our current staffing model includes four full-time permanent employees, front desk reception services from the Student Support Services administrative coordinator and some assistance from the Campus Life financial coordinator. We have restructured our office by increasing our number of deans while eliminating our administrative support. This move was originally made after we contracted with Maxient, a database for conduct cases, which significantly reduced our administrative needs. The administrative tasks not covered by the above staff members are covered by those in our office.

Our current staff consists of Yolanda Castillo-Appollonio, Senior Associate Dean of Students and Director of Student Conduct & Community Standards, Kirsten Wolfe, Associate Dean of Students and Assistant Director of Student Conduct & Community Standards, and Michele Armstrong, Assistant Dean of Students. Our fourth position was most recently a Student Conduct Coordinator position filled by Mark Addison until January 3, 2019. This vacant position has been changed to an Assistant Dean of Students position for which the search is now open. We are looking to fill this position for the upcoming academic year. Following is a chart showing how we anticipate the major aspects of the work will be divided in the upcoming year.

Work Distribution for Student Conduct & Community Standards

	Vacant Assistant Dean	Michele Armstrong Assistant Dean	Kirsten Wolfe Associate Dean	Yolanda Castillo Sr. Associate Dean
Case Management/Administrative Intake and initial response Non-conduct responses Routine case administration Database entry and reports	30%	30%	0%	10%
Operational Functions Process and policy building Assessment and strategic planning Data management	10%	20%	10%	20%
Programs Student ambassadors Alternative conflict resolution Trainings	20%	5%	30%	5%
Case Administration Preliminary reviews Investigations Case administration (lower level) Case administration (higher level) Review and decisions	25%	25%	35%	5%
Management Office oversight Budget Staff supervision	0%	0%	5%	20%
Divisional/Campus Connections Liaison assignments Office representation Collaboration Title IX Presentations/Panel participation Joslin Awards	5%	10%	10%	25%
Crisis Management Administrator on Call Threat Assessment Team/BIT Crisis consultation	5%	5%	5%	10%
Other Duties Assigned projects Professional development	5%	5%	5%	5%
TOTALS	100%	100%	100%	100%

Relevant Data

Following are some data to provide context to our accomplishments, priorities and needs. These numbers show a snapshot of the work we do at all levels of the process. We will be producing a Community Notification Report over the summer that will contain our final numbers as well as information on outcomes.

Investigations and Hearings

The numbers reflected in this section are for Dean's Hearings, Student Organization Hearings, Letters in Lieu, Preliminary Reviews, and Investigations.

As can be seen, letters in lieu and lower-level hearings have stayed relatively consistent as compared to last year with a more significant decrease in the number of student organization hearings heard at this level.

Letters in Lieu	FY18	FY19
Letters in Lieu Accepted	37	25
Letters in Lieu Referred to Hearing	0	3
Letters in Lieu - Charges Withdrawn	8	0
Total	45	28

Lower-Level Hearings	FY18	FY19
Dean's Hearings (Closed)	130	102
Student Organization Hearings (Closed)	6	4
Total	136	106

Investigations are more formal and result in a final document to be reviewed by the hearing officer(s), while preliminary reviews involve gathering initial information to determine whether we should begin a more formal investigation. When a matter may need to be referred to a higher-level hearing (a hearing at which separation is an option), we must first conduct an investigation. In some cases, we will first perform a preliminary review to gather some additional information before determining next steps for the matter.

This year we have incorporated the use of preliminary reviews for student organizations. This change allows for organizations to take on more responsibility in the process and has led to the decrease in

hearings at the lower level. Investigations are time consuming and some can take up most of a staff member's time in more complex cases. We have had fewer investigations this year, even counting the 5 which remain open. However, the investigations completed have been more complex in nature and we had a significant increase in the number of witnesses interviewed.

Higher Level Hearings	FY18	FY19
Administrative Hearings	5	1
Student Conduct Board Hearings	3	2
Student Conduct Board Organization Hearings	2	1
TOTAL	10	4

Investigations	FY18	FY19
Full Investigations with Reports	11	4
Preliminary Reviews	7	19
Respondents Investigated	14	9 (5 open)
Complainants	2	0
Witnesses Interviewed	92	124

Non-Disciplinary Actions

Much of the work we do is outside the hearing processes. Non-disciplinary processes we work on include No Contact Orders which require at least one meeting with each of the students, letters in response to alcohol and drug transports, records requests, and warning letters. Additionally, beginning last year we incorporated the use of restorative justice conferences in our work and continued that work this year.

No Contact Orders	FY18	FY19
Complainants	13	9
Respondents	14	8
Total	27	17

Alcohol and Drug Transports	FY18	FY19
Health Promotions Referral	114	114
Referred to Hearing	1	5
Total	115	119

Other Non-Disciplinary Work	FY18	FY19
Records Requests	640	1471
Warning Letters	40	51
Dean's Conferences	5	7
Restorative Justice Conferences	2	3

Significant Accomplishments

This has been an exciting and busy year for the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards. We have had continued change and growth while maintaining high standards in all of our work. This section will highlight our most significant accomplishments for the academic year.

Code Review

As an office we have spent the last two years working on a review of our Code of Student Conduct. In the 2017-2018 academic year we met biweekly to begin the research and preparation for the review. This academic year we formed a committee, chaired by Kirsten Wolfe, to review the Code. In the spirit of our mission and values, I tasked the committee with allowing themselves to start fresh and build a code that centers social justice instead of trying to fit new pieces into the existing Code. The new Code of Student Conduct was voted on by the Corporation this May and will be implemented in the fall semester.

The major changes made to the Code can be seen in the following diagram.

Code of Conduct – 2019 Changes

Language

- Move away from legalistic language to make the Code more approachable and reinforce that it is an educational document
- New names for hearings, sanctions, processes

New Prohibited Conduct

- Violation of Law
- Invasion of Privacy
- Collusion
- Bribery
- Trespassing
- Participation in Derecognized Organizations
- Disruption of Safety

Restorative Justice

- Restorative Circles
- Restorative Conferences
- Restorative Board Hearings

Student Groups

- Create separate procedures document for student groups
- Publish status of student groups that are not in good standing

Appeals

- Complainant appeal rights for cases of harassment and physical/emotional harm

For more information about the Code of Student Conduct, Student Conduct Procedures, Student Conduct Procedures for Student Groups, and the Report from the Committee to Review the Code of Student Conduct, please visit our website at www.brown.edu/osccs.

Refining our Processes and Practices

We continue to work toward having clear documentation of our processes and general practices to increase transparency and efficiency. The work creating clear guides for our hearing officers, our students, and our staff has been undertaken by Michele Armstrong. She has made significant updates in our materials for students, including language for our website answering our most frequently asked questions and new one-page documents for students going through each process. Additionally, she has provided training and work aids for our case administrators and hearing officers which have led to a decrease in appeals based on procedural error.

Professional Development and Trainings

With our hosting of the COFHE Judicial Officers Conference last summer we began a year of learning and discussion which has been fruitful for us and our hearing officers. The Director participated in a Behavioral Intervention Conference and Symposium hosted by NaBita in San Antonio, Texas. We also hosted trainings for our hearing officers including topics such as using a restorative approach in hearings, implicit bias, and skills training for hearing officers. Our hope is to continue to increase our training curriculum and to diversify the learning of our hearing officers.

Community Development and Connections

We have continued to work on developing connections across the division and with other campus partners. Below is a list of some of the work we have engaged in to support others and build relationships.

- Title IX. Yolanda Castillo-Appollonio has continued to serve as the Deputy Title IX Coordinator which has been more of a liaison role to ensure our offices are working well together.
- Bias Response Team. Michele Armstrong has been invited to serve as an ex officio member of the Bias Response Team and has begun attending meetings.
- DPS Oversight Committee. Kirsten Wolfe has continued in her role on the DPS Oversight Committee which meets on a monthly basis.
- Residential Life Support. Our office has provided support to the residential life operations in charring searches, assisting with onboarding, and participating in lottery and closing.
- Community Events. Our office has sponsored community luncheons for colleagues across the division in an effort to build and strengthen relationships.

Additional Accomplishments

- NEASC Team Report Mention. We were extremely proud to have our process mentioned in the NEASC Team Report. They stated, “The University’s response to a recent violation of the anti-hazing policy by the Men’s Swimming and Diving Team, resulting in the suspension of the team’s 2018 spring and fall seasons and probation during the 2019 spring season, is one clear example of how seriously violations of the University Code of Conduct are taken and how deeply the values embedded in the Code are held.”

- Joslin Awards. Yolanda Castillo-Appollonio planned a successful program for the Joslin Awards. This program is important to the community in recognizing students who have made an impact on campus life at Brown.
- Staffing. We were able to successfully advocate for changing our staffing by transitioning our student conduct coordinator position to an assistant dean position which will allow us to better serve our students.

Critical Priorities - Fiscal Year 2019

The Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards has five critical priorities that need to be explored and addressed in the coming year. These are the external review, rolling out the new Code and Procedures, hiring and onboarding of new staff, determining space needs as we grow, and creating more focus for the student ambassadors.

External Review

We have spent the past two years reviewing the documents around which our work is centered. Our office is scheduled for an external review in the upcoming academic year as we implement our new code. Our first priority will be to collect information in the fall semester in order to inform the external reviewers. We hope to bring external reviewers to campus for the spring semester after we have had some time to internally assess how the changes to the Code have affected the work. This review will be an important step in ensuring that we are engaging in best practices and keeping to our stated mission.

New Code of Student Conduct

With the approval of the new Code of Student Conduct and the new Student Conduct Procedures we will need to ensure that we are communicating with all students at the University regarding the updates made to these documents. We will be constructing a plan over the summer to ensure we are ready to begin an information campaign when students return to campus in the fall. During our conversations with students, in particular with graduate students, there was concern regarding how students might learn of the new documents. This will be a priority for our office during the end of the summer and beginning of the fall to ensure we are reaching students with this vital information.

Hiring and Onboarding

We are in the process of hiring a new assistant dean of students for our office. This position is one we advocated for when a vacancy was created in the student conduct coordinator position. As we continue to look for someone to work in this role, we are looking to build our capacity at the higher level, in particular regarding investigations. This will allow for the current primary investigator to focus more time on restorative justice. The two assistant deans will create a strong team that can investigate complex cases and serve as the case administrators for higher level hearings in addition to other responsibilities. This will also increase our capacity around training and assessment.

Space

Space continues to be a concern and priority for our office. As we grow and change, we are looking at ways to remain in close proximity to each other while maintaining privacy for students involved in our processes. With the anticipated addition of another dean in the office, we will need to find a way to create appropriate office space for their work. Currently, we have two empty spaces, one is a small, semi-private space in our suite, and the second is a conference room outside our suite that has no windows and may need work on the air circulation. Additionally, we continue to have concerns regarding soundproofing and security in our offices.

Student Ambassadors

We have been able to grow the numbers for our student ambassadors; however, they have lacked focus and continuity. One of our priorities for the upcoming year is to create a more solid and consistent foundation for the work of the student ambassadors. Part of what we would like to see is some type of compensation for leaders of the student ambassador program. As we move forward with this program, we hope to build capacity in the area of restorative justice, proactive work, and marketing.

Necessary Resources

Student Conduct has been fortunate to be able to successfully manage on the resources available with small changes and increases throughout the years. We have two priorities for new resources in the coming fiscal year. The most imminent is the need to find an office space for the new assistant dean. This is our first priority and we are in the process of assessing our current spaces to determine the best solutions. Our second need for resources currently is working to find some compensation structure for our student ambassadors. In particular, resources for one or two team leaders so that the work can be more continuous and reliable.

In addition to the above new resources, we also require continued administrative support. Without an assigned administrative person, we rely on the use of the floor administrative coordinator and the campus life financial coordinator. These resources have been invaluable for the efficiency of our office and are necessary for the functioning of our office.

Conclusion

Our work is time intensive and requires a keen attention to detail. We work with students and parents at their most vulnerable and during some of the most distressing moments of their lives. Our work in the end is often, unrecognized, challenged, misunderstood, or subject to lawsuits. We are expected to handle all manner of incident and crisis expeditiously and with as little negative impact on the community as a whole.

This work could not be done were it not for our strong team in student Conduct & Community Standards. Even though we have been understaffed for part of this year, we have worked incredibly hard

to end the year successfully. It is a testament to the hard work of the team, in particular Kirsten Wolfe and Michele Armstrong, that we have been able to maintain our high standards. It is also a reflection of the support we receive from Christine Rugg and Christine Decesare in completing administrative and financial tasks.

We are grateful to Eric Estes, Vice President for Campus Life and Katherine Tameo, Chief of Staff and Director of Finance & Administration for Campus Life for their support during this time of transition. We look forward to working with the new Dean of Students, Koren Baakegard, to continue our good work and progress.