

# Student Conduct & Community Standards Annual Report

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2017 – 2018 Academic Year



## **Introduction**

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 2018 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 2017 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](http://www.brown.edu/osccs).

In this document I will focus on significant accomplishments, such as the progress we have made with our student ambassadors, and on the priorities for the upcoming year, such as our review of the Code of Student Conduct.

Our current staffing model includes four full-time permanent employees and we have a shared receptionist who falls under Student Support Services but provides front desk coverage for the floor. Our 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, Michele Armstrong, Assistant Dean of Students, and Mark Addison, Student Conduct Coordinator. Most significant in our staffing changes were the promotion of the Director to a Senior Associate Dean of Students position, and the promotion of Kirsten Wolfe to an Associate Dean of Students and to the Assistant Director position.

### **Significant Accomplishments - Fiscal Year 2018**

This has been a year of growth and building on initiatives within the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards and we have made some significant accomplishments of

which we are extremely proud. In this section I will address a few of our accomplishments with a focus on some of our most significant projects and initiatives.

### Departmental Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan

We continue to make progress on our Departmental Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (DDIAP). This year we have submitted an updated report delineating our progress and the work that remains. We have made significant progress in education, compositional diversity, and the incorporation of restorative justice practices in our work. We continue to monitor the composition of those referred to our office and how we assign and respond to cases in an effort to ensure equity with our responses.

Based on the data collected during the last year, we have made some changes, such as formalizing a preliminary review process for potential lower level hearings. Although this review process can be used for any case where there needs to be further information, our purpose in implementing the review was to ensure that in cases where we think there might have been bias in the reporting we had a standard way of giving notice and gathering information before any charges are made. For more information about our progress on the DDIAP, please refer to our 2018 DDIAP update.

### Student Ambassadors

The student ambassador program has had great growth in the short time it has been piloted. Although the group this past year was small, they made a lot of progress in shaping the work the ambassadors will do in the coming year. Applications to be a Student Conduct Ambassador were created and we are excited that there will be ten new ambassadors in the next academic year. These students will have the opportunity to develop greater leadership skills and engage with students and offices across campus. We were also very proud this year when one of our ambassadors was honored with a Joslin Award.

### Restorative Justice

We have made significant progress in the development of restorative justice practices within Student Conduct & Community Standards and across campus. We have hosted

restorative justice conferences, have scheduled restorative justice circles, and hosted a training on campus in collaboration with various campus partners including Residential Life, Office of the Chaplains, Student Support Services, Student Activities, and the Office of the Vice President for Campus Life. Based on the implementation team training provided by David Duke we will be working toward conducting restorative circles with staff as well as student groups. We are excited to see this initiative expand with the guidance of the newly formed implementation team.

### Professional Development/Training

The work in Student Conduct is ever changing and it is important that as a staff we are engaged with others to ensure we keep up with best practices and are supporting our students in the best way possible. This year we had the honor of hosting the COFHE Student Conduct Officers Conference which was a wonderful time of sharing information with our peers as well as sharing our knowledge and strengths with others.

Additionally, we hosted a restorative justice training for staff across campus by bringing in David Duke, the preeminent trainer in restorative justice for higher education. We are also working toward having staff members certified in mediation so as to broaden our ability to assist students in dealing with conflict.

### **Relevant Data**

We have had a significant number of lower level cases, non-disciplinary letters, No Contact Orders, and investigations. Following are some data to provide context to our accomplishments, priorities and needs. We will be producing a Community Notification of Statistics over the summer that will contain our final numbers as well as information on outcomes.

### Investigations and Hearings

We had a significant number of lower-level hearings this fiscal year. The numbers reflected in this section are for Dean's Hearings, Student Organization Hearings, Letters in Lieu and Investigations. Some investigations are more formal and result in a final document to be

reviewed by the hearing officer(s) while others are a gathering of information to determine whether we can begin a more formal investigation. Formal investigations are time consuming and some can take up the majority of a staff member’s time if it is a complex investigation. This year we had several long and time intensive investigations.

Lower-Level Hearings	
Dean’s Hearings (Closed)	130
Dean’s Hearings (Open)	0
Student Organization Hearings (Closed)	6
Student Organization Hearings (Open)	0
Total	136

Higher-Level Hearings	
Administrative Hearings (Open)	5
Student Conduct Board Hearings	3
Student Conduct Board Organization Hearings	2
Total	10

Investigations	
Full Investigations with Reports	11
Preliminary Reviews	7
Respondents Investigated	14
Complainants	2
Witnesses Interviewed	92

Letter in Lieu	
Letters in Lieu Accepted	37
Letters in Lieu Referred to Hearing	0
Letters in Lieu - Charges Withdrawn	8
Total	45

### Non-Disciplinary Actions

Much of the work we do is outside the hearing processes. One of the processes we work on outside of hearing processes are the No Contact Orders which require at least one meeting with each of the students. The other work is the processing of letters in response to alcohol and drug transports, records requests, and warning letters (primarily for copyright violations).

No Contact Orders	
Complainants	13
Respondents	14
Total	27

Alcohol and Drug Transports	
Health Promotions Referral	114
Referred to Hearing	1
Total	115

Other Non-Disciplinary Work	
Records Requests	640
Warning Letters	40
Dean's Conferences	5
Restorative Justice Conferences	2

### **Critical Priorities - Fiscal Year 2019**

The Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards has four critical priorities that need to be explored and addressed in the coming year. These are the Departmental Diversity

and Inclusion Action Plan, a full Code Review, refining our processes and practices, and Assessment.

### Departmental Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan

The advancement of our priorities in the Departmental Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (DDIAP) is one of our accomplishments of the last fiscal year. However, there is still more work to be done as we transform our practice in ways that meet the goals set out in our plan. We have made some progress on some goals, however we have more work to do in regards to education and training of colleagues to ensure fairness and equity in how the Code of Student Conduct is applied. Engaging in discussions on how we can tie principles of social justice into our work is paramount to our success. We are looking forward to how our DDIAP will improve our services and educational outcomes for all students as we apply our goals and values to the upcoming Code Review.

### Code Review

One major project for the upcoming year is our Code Review. This review is meant to be a new look at our work and how we approach community standards at Brown. Our hope is to unbind ourselves from the constraints of the current code and imagine a new way of handling conflict. We strive to create a code and processes that remove as many barriers as possible and create equity in our practice. Although it is not a reimagining of our values as a community but a reimagining as to how we discuss those values, it is a restructuring meant to make the work we do more closely align with our expressed mission and vision as a department.

A committee has been formed and as we begin the work ahead, it is our goal to complete the review and present recommendations to the corporation at their May meeting. This would allow us to institute the changes for the 2019 - 2020 academic year.

### Refining our Processes and Practices

As we head into the year, one of our concerns is to work more diligently to streamline processes and practices within our office. Having clear documentation of decision making,



documentation processes and general practices will increase our transparency as well as our efficiency. We are committed to always improving our practice for the benefit of the students we serve and hope that this work will supplement the work of the code review and set up a culture of review and change.

### Assessment

In order to advocate for our students and for the resources necessary to meet their needs, we must engage in useful assessment of the work we do. We have begun to assess learning outcomes from interaction with our office. This year we will be working on creating a stronger cohort of hearing officers by using assessment tools to ensure equity and fairness across hearing officers.

### Necessary Resources

In thinking about our critical priorities, the growth of our work, and the year ahead, I anticipate needs in four areas - staffing, student stipends, copy machines/equipment, and space.

The number of investigations we conduct has risen as well as the length of many of the more complicated investigations. This year saw an extremely time consuming group investigation as well as several other lengthy investigations of individuals. This, combined with the growth of our Restorative Justice Initiative and the time needed to successfully implement restorative conferences, has created a strain on our resources. Our greatest need is in having a neutral party to conduct our investigations, in particular our more complicated and longer investigations. We need to think about how to address these concerns, either by sharing resources with other offices, having funds to hire outside investigators as necessary, or hiring a staff member whose primary function is to conduct investigations for our office.

Our second need for resources is around support for our student ambassador program. This year we are starting with a group of ten students who will be working with us to push forward our proactive initiatives. Our goal is to have a competitive program where

students are gaining leadership skills and which is accessible for participation by all students. As we grow the program, we intend to identify two to three students to be leaders in the program. Our main priority would be to identify funds to provide stipends for the student leaders with a long term goal of having funds to provide stipends for all our student ambassadors.

### **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, or subject to lawsuits. We are expected to handle all manner of incident and crisis expediently and with as little impact on the community as a whole.

This work could not be done if it were not for our strong team in Student Conduct & Community Standards and the continued support of our Associate Vice President for Campus Life and Dean of Students, Mary Grace Almandrez. We look forward to a year of reflection and change and welcome input from the community as we proceed with our review of the Code of Conduct.