

## Student Conduct Learning Outcomes Assessment (2014-15)



Public

**Name of Assessment Project:** Student Conduct Learning Outcomes Assessment (2014-15)

**Name(s) of Person(s) Responsible for Assessment Project:** No Roles Selected

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**Other Contacts:** Student Conduct

**Providing Department:**

**Other**

**Units/Departments Involved in Assessment Project:**

**Program, Service, or Event Related to Assessment Project:** This assessment project is linked to the UC San Diego campus-wide non-academic student conduct process, which is centrally coordinated by the Office of Student Conduct.

**Assessment Project Description:** The purpose of this assessment project was to assess student learning through the student conduct process. The assessment was included in the resolution letters for all students participating in Administrative Resolution meetings. It was designed to measure the impact of their experience being documented for violating the *Student Conduct Code* and what they learned by going through the process. This assessment also was designed to analyze the effectiveness of our Student Conduct Officers and whether students feel they were treated fairly during their student conduct experience.

**Unit/Program Specific Goals and Learning Outcomes:** As a result of their involvement in the student conduct process:

- Students will gain a greater understanding and awareness about the impact of their behavior on themselves and other members of the UC San Diego community.
- Students will gain a greater understanding and awareness of the Student Conduct Code, the Principles of Community, and other relevant policies.
- Students will learn practical tools for being a positive member of the UCSD community.
- Students will participate in educational programs and sanctions appropriate to their violation(s).

These learning outcomes were addressed by specific questions in the assessment.

**Relationship to Student Affairs Learning Outcomes:** Think Critically and Solve Problems, Promote Social Justice and Community Responsibility

**Assessment Project Start:** 9/15/2014

**Assessment Project End:** 6/30/2015

**Population/Sample:** The assessment was included in the resolution letters for all students participating in Administrative Resolution meetings through the UC San Diego Non-Academic Student Conduct Process. During the 2014-15 academic year, 911 students responded to the assessment, which represents 35.1% of all students (2597) who received resolution letters.

**Type of Assessment:** Student learning outcomes and/or behavioral outcomes, Satisfaction study, Measuring effectiveness relative to professional standards (e.g., CAS standards)

**Other Assessment Type(s):**

**Assessment Methods:** Surveys

**Other Assessment Method(s):**

**Data Collection Tools:** The assessment was distributed to students via student conduct resolution letters emailed to them after their meeting with a Student Conduct Officer.

**Data Analysis Methods:** We compiled the survey results from Student Voice and reviewed the statistics from each question to determine any significant trends.

**How Your Results Will Be Presented:** Electronic copies of the findings will be shared with key constituencies, including the Vice Chancellor - Student Affairs, the Council of Deans of Student Affairs, Council of Resident Deans, Council of Assistant Resident Deans, the Council of Provosts, Council of Assistant Deans of Student Affairs, Associated Students Office of Student Advocacy, and the Assessment Coalition. Additionally, we will discuss the findings with selected groups. We will post the final results of the assessment via our annual report on the Office of Student Conduct website.

**Progress:** 100%

**Link Assessment Project in Campus Labs Baseline :**

**Name**

**Source**

No items to display.

**Summary of Findings:** This is the third year we have conducted this assessment and it marks the third year since we implemented an improved and fully revised *Student Conduct Code*. As we saw last year, there continues to be an increase in student responses that 'strongly agreed' with the statements they were asked to answer about their experience with the student conduct process. This increase was seen for most every question asking for the respondent's level of agreement.

For example, over the past two years, we have seen a 14.4 percentage point increase of responses indicating 'strongly agree' for the statement, "I was given the opportunity to explain my perspective about what happened in my incident." Similarly, we have seen a 13.8 percentage point increase of 'strongly agree' responses for the statement, "The Student Conduct Officer with whom I met demonstrated fairness in handling and resolving my case." Positive comments about the

process include:

- "I have learned that we are given a fair chance to speak out and represent ourselves. The Student Conduct Officer listens to our point of view as well as the other side's story and makes a fair decision. I was told the logic behind his decision as well."
- "I think the student conduct meeting provided a fair opportunity, and the result issued by the officer was fair as well. It wasn't an intimidating meeting, and I appreciate her methods and empathy for the situation."
- "Initially, I felt we were going to be treated like misbehaving children. However, upon attending my resolution meeting, I was pleasantly greeted, spoken to, and fairly treated. I greatly value this and it, more than anything else, has changed my perspective of hosting these types of parties, because now I hold a personal sense of respect for those making sure we as students maintain a responsible and wholesome lifestyle."
- "The process was surprisingly smooth, efficient, and clear. The Student Conduct Officer created a comfortable environment in which I felt safe to explain my perspective of the situation honestly and in detail, without feelings of anxiety or nervousness. He also did an excellent job of responding to and clarifying any questions or concerns I had about my Code of Conduct violation and the resolution process."
- "The role of student conduct discipline is not necessarily focused on discipline, but education. I feel that I have come out of the process more educated in regard to the upholding of community standards."

We believe these results show that students generally feel confident they are treated fairly in our process, which seems to create more satisfaction with their overall experience. The comments illustrate why structuring our process as relational rather than adversarial benefits everyone involved. When students are comfortable meeting with the Student Conduct Officer, they are more likely to feel their perspective is being heard and they're being treated "like adults" rather than merely "children".

About 41 percent of the students responding to the survey identified themselves as first year students, down five percentage points from the results the past two years. About 30 percent of the respondents identified themselves as second year students, about 18 percent identified as third year students, and seven and a half percent identified as fourth year students. The percentages for second year and third year students increased this year from the past two years while fourth year student percentage decreased. Part of this decrease may have occurred because we added in an option for students to identify themselves as "fifth year" students. Additionally, more than four fifths of respondents (83.8%) reported that they live on campus, similar to 2013-14. The results also showed that 85 percent of all respondents are from the state of California, including half of them hailing from Southern California.

We know from the assessment that about half of the respondents said they learned about the *Student Conduct Code* prior to starting classes at UC San Diego, either through materials in their admissions packet or through a new student orientation/transfer program. As in previous years, one third of all students responding to the survey indicated they became aware of the *Code* at their new student orientation program. Interestingly, we saw a three and a half percentage point increase of students stating they received this information from meeting with a Student Conduct Officer about the alleged violations. Based on this, the data continues to show that a majority of respondents knew about the *Code* prior to arriving on campus *and* before the incident occurred.

Even though a majority of the respondents stated they knew about the *Code* prior to arriving on campus, only 38 percent of the respondents "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that if they were more aware of the *Student Conduct Code*, the incident would not have occurred. An additional 38 percent of respondents said they "neither agreed nor disagreed" with this statement. These numbers are consistent with previous year's surveys.

In a follow up question, we asked, "why did you disagree that if you had been better aware of the Student Conduct Code, this incident may not have occurred?" Almost half of the responses stated that they knew about the Code but still engaged in the behavior. Specific comments included:

- "I was aware of my actions, but didn't consider the full implications of it at the time."
- "I'm a dumb kid. Dumb kids make mistakes. I violated the actual law, let alone the Student Conduct Code, and of course, I know there are laws in place that handle actions like my own."
- "My greater knowledge of the Student Conduct Code isn't going to inform my suitemates."
- "The rules in the Student Conduct Code are unreasonable; incidents like this are bound to occur. By making us afraid of the campus security and other campus officials that are meant to help us, you are only conditioning us to be more secretive and deceptive while breaking such rules."
- "...underage college students who understand the ramifications for underage drinking still break the Code of Conduct and the law. However, the incident may not have occurred if I had thoroughly understood the process which follows a Conduct violation as well as the likelihood of being written up for violating the Conduct Code."

We find it significant that three fifths of all students answering this question basically stated that knowing about the *Student Conduct Code* in advance would not have kept the incident from occurring. These results continue to run counter to widely held assumptions that if students knew more about the relevant policies, they would have acted differently. While preventative education is important, this assessment continues to show that actually being documented and going through the student conduct process makes the most impact on student decision-making and behavior. However, it may be helpful for students to have greater awareness of the potential consequences for violating the Code and how the process overall works. Several students commented in survey responses that having additional information about the consequences prior to their incidents might have changed their behavior.

An area that we see the need for continued improvement is the timeliness of the process. About 74 percent of respondents 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that their incident was resolved within a reasonable amount of time, a four-percentage point decline from 2013-14. There are many variables with administering the student conduct process, especially with the submission of reports. Sometimes, it takes a week or two after an incident to send a meeting letter to a student because the accompanying police report has yet to arrive. Other times, the delay is due to issues with administrative backlog. Timeliness has been the one frequent answer to in the question asking, "if you have any further comments or suggestions about the student conduct process..." Some comments we received from students about timeliness included:

- "I believe it should be done in a more timely manner...I wish I would have known something was going to happen earlier. I was very lost and did not know if I was going to get in trouble."
- "It took two months for the actual meeting with the Assistant Dean to happen so it was harder to recall the incident."
- "Sometimes the "help"/sanctions given to us don't have as much meaning later when the incident happened a long time ago."

Additionally, we continue to monitor the rate of agreement for whether students were informed of their rights to a sanction reduction request during the resolution meeting. Seventy-nine percent of respondents 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' they were informed of their right to request a reduction in sanctions, a four-percentage point increase from 2013-14. Along the same lines, about 54 percent of students answering this question chose "strongly agree", an eight percentage point increase over the past two years. Given the importance of students knowing and understanding their rights and responsibilities, we will continue to remind Student Conduct Officers about the importance of this information for the upcoming academic year.

One of our main goals is for students to learn more about the importance of community standards. About 76 percent of respondents 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that the student conduct process helped them learn about the importance of community standards. This number increased two percentage points from 2013-14. Similar to 2012-13, 76 percent of respondents stated that as a result meeting with the Student Conduct Officer, they gained a greater understanding of the impact of their behavior on others. Similarly, 75 percent of respondents agreed that, as a result of the process, they have changed their behavior positively. These answers show that the vast majority of students who go through the student conduct process are learning about campus standards, gaining a greater understanding of how their behavior impacts others, and by virtue of participating in our process, changing their behavior in a positive way.

Finally, we asked respondents, "Specifically, what have you learned while going through the process?" About 81% of respondents (out of 911 total) responded to this question, which provided us with additional data, albeit anecdotal, to describe what students learned from the process. In evaluating the comments, the most common were from students about being more aware, careful, or responsible with their actions and gaining a better understanding of the student conduct process and policies. Specifically, 31% of the total comments related to these two areas. Specific responses included:

- "Even if you think you are not engaging in anything that might be wrong you need to think twice and understand what the possible consequences of such actions might be. Your actions not only affect yourself but the community as a whole."
- "I also learned that something that seems harmless to me can get me into a lot of trouble. I need to consider my actions from multiple perspectives."
- "I have learned that being completely honest and forthright is the best policy. While it's difficult to admit one's mistakes and one's follies, they are merely learning opportunities that one must accept, even if they come with consequences."
- "I learned that I need to distance myself from bad influences in my life. I was caught up in this process not because I broke any rules, but because I had bad people around me. I also learned that I need to do a better job of standing up for myself from certain people, then none of this would have happened."
- "I learned that there are a lot of student conduct regulations that us students may not necessarily know about and I should pay more attention to them."

While the majority of comments were positive, we took note those criticizing the timeliness of the process, the way in which Residential Security Officers (RSO) or Resident Advisors/House Advisors (RA/HA) handled certain parts of the

process, and the process itself. These comments are a continued reminder that the student conduct process is predicated on fairness and treating students with respect. They illustrate that the initial interactions students have with RSOs or RAs/HAs directly impacts the student perceptions of the process. Specific comments included:

- "Officers are rude. They need to be more understanding when it comes to students who have been drinking. Not everyone is "stupid" because they drank."
- "I learned that RSOs are not very friendly and are accusatory. They don't make it a comforting environment to release your personal information, which is problematic since that could lead to further violations."
- "In all honesty, I felt victimized in this case by the RSO involved, and as a result, avoid him now in fear of being given a hard time. The RSO didn't care to look into the detail of my case and gave no opportunity to reason. This isn't the case for all RSOs."
- "The RAs were not that respectful to those involved in the situation. They came off as a "kid in a candy store" which did not settle well for a lot of people."
- "... it takes months for them to even get to the case, which happens to be a noise complaint. Maybe it would be more effective if they got to the problem when it happens so students actually remember the night rather than waiting months to do so."

**Impact of Assessment:** The most positive aspect of this assessment is getting another robust set of data about the student conduct process. We now have five years of student conduct statistical data in addition to three years of results from this assessment. We definitively know the number of cases, types of sanctions, and demographic data along with a strong sense of what the students gain from the process and how it affects them in their experience as a student. This data allows us to identify trends, tell the "story" of student conduct at UC San Diego, erase myths, and more effectively plan for each academic year. For us, this assessment is a significant part of our annual planning and evaluation process.

We continue to be reminded that the timeliness of the process needs to improve during the upcoming academic year. As a result of the findings from the past two assessments, we will provide more extensive assistance, training, and support to the college and residential life offices to assist with engendering increased timeliness. We have put a staff member as the point person for follow-up on outstanding cases, including compiling an open cases list to facilitate follow-up. Beginning in Fall Quarter 2015, we will send the list out to Dean's Assistants and Residential Life Assistants (staff who manage caseloads for Student Conduct Officers) every two weeks to help facilitate quicker case turnaround. We will also attempt to develop useful metrics to statistically evaluate case turnaround time, such as compiling the number of business days it takes to handle a case from the date of the incident to the date the resolution letter is sent to the student.

We also took notice of comments from students wanting to know more about potential consequences for violations and information about the process prior to being documents. This summer we will be discussing how best to address this need.

**Lessons Learned:** We will make a couple of small tweaks that should give us more accurate information in the future. For the question asking about where the respondent is from, we will add an option capturing the Orange County and Riverside/San Bernardino metropolitan areas. We are starting to see more students from these areas and given their distinct natures, we want to have them as separate options apart from Los Angeles and San Diego. These additions for next year's survey will provide more accurate demographic data about the students completing the survey.

Finally, each year we read the comments provided by students to the more open ended questions in the survey. We get a better sense of how the process affects them, how they perceive it, and what they get out of it. This was the first year that we "coded" the comments for some of the questions into general categories to identify trends. By doing so we are able to not only get narrative data but specific trends for use in our planning. We're planning to incorporate "coding" into future evaluations of this assessment.

### **Supplemental Information:**

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