

# **Student Conduct Office Virtual Student Conduct Conferences 2020-2021**

## **Purpose of Assessment**

The Student Conduct Office (SCO) wanted to assess students' experience with and the learning from their conduct conferences to continue to improve how their office works with students in the future. The Student Conduct Office previously used a national survey to assess students' experience, but the questions did not focus on the priorities identified by the unit. While Student Conduct has assessed students' experience with their office in the past, this is the first year Student Life Studies has assisted SCO in assessing the conduct conferences.

## **Key Findings with Recommendations**

Student Life Studies identified several key findings and developed actionable recommendations that Student Conduct Office (SCO) staff may take based on the results. However, SCO staff may identify other findings using their knowledge and understanding of the conferences and its participants. Staff members are strongly encouraged to read all the results and qualitative comments to gain a fuller understanding of students' experiences.

- Generally, students were positive about their experience interacting with the Student Conduct Office with 85% or higher reporting they strongly agreed or agreed with each aspect of engaging with the office. Furthermore, students self-reported growth in all outcomes the Student Conduct Office identified.
  - While students rated receiving sufficient information about the conduct process to prepare for their conference positively, it was the lowest rated item. SCO staff may want to examine the information shared with students in their charge letter, as well as on the Student Conduct website. It may be beneficial to talk with students outside of the Student Conduct Office who are not familiar with the process to see what questions, if any, they have after reading the materials provided to students for a potential student rule violation.
  - While unsure if this was an isolated event or a more common occurrence, one student commented on receiving an email to their personal account for something serious enough that it could lead to being suspended or expelled. SCO staff may want to look at the initial communication with students to ensure the charge letter is being received.
- The Student Conduct Office is encouraged to share the results with stakeholders, such as all staff and student employees in the office, conduct panel members, and the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs.

## **Method and Sample**

The electronic evaluation was developed in Qualtrics®, a software program that creates web-based surveys. Of the 37 questions, 34 were quantitative, two were qualitative, and one was demographic. Due to branching technology, not all students received all questions. Student Life Studies evaluated the quantitative data using SPSS®, a statistical software program, and the qualitative data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel®.

Staff in the Student Conduct Office administered the survey by providing the survey link to students at the end of their student conduct conference. It is unknown how many students received the survey; therefore, a response rate cannot be determined. While the survey was being administered between November 2020 through July 2021, 76 students responded to at least one question.

## Results

Results include frequency percentages, means, and standard deviations (sd) for the number of people (n) who responded to the question. For ease of reading, frequency percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole percent, so totals may not add up to exactly 100%. In addition, summary themes for the qualitative questions are contained within this report, while the full qualitative responses can be found in a separate document.

The first question asked students to provide their University Identification Number (UIN). The valid UINs enabled demographics to be retrieved through the university student database. Table 1, in descending order for each category, provides the demographics for the survey respondents. Participants most frequently were sophomore or freshman, male, white, and not first-generation students.

Demographic Data	Survey Respondents Percentage [n=66]
<b>Classification</b>	
Sophomore	38%
Freshman	36%
Junior	14%
Senior	9%
Masters	3%
<b>Sex</b>	
Male	71%
Female	29%
<b>Ethnicity</b>	
White	70%
Hispanic or Latino of any race	24%
Asian	3%
Multi-racial excluding Black	3%
<b>First Generation Status</b>	
Not First Generation	86%
First Generation	11%
Unknown	3%
<b>College</b>	
Engineering	26%
Mays Business School	18%
Liberal Arts	17%
General Studies	15%
Education and Human Development	8%
Veterinary Medicine	5%
Agriculture and Life Sciences	3%
Architecture	3%
Science	3%
Geosciences	2%
Public Health	2%
<b>Top Ten Percent Status</b>	
Not Top 10%	67%
Top 10%	33%

Table 1: Demographics

Students were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement on a series of questions about their experience with the Student Conduct Office. Table 2 shows students were in agreement with all statements. Being admitted within 5-minutes and the SCO staff being clear and professional in their communication were rated the highest. While still positive, students rated receiving sufficient information to prepare for their conference the lowest. In looking at the disaggregated data, males, Hispanics, and first generation students were slightly less in agreement regarding their overall satisfaction with the Student Conduct Office. All disaggregated data can be found in a separate document.

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Agree (5)</b>	<b>Agree (4)</b>	<b>Neutral (3)</b>	<b>Disagree (2)</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree (1)</b>	<b>Mean (sd) [n]</b>
<b>Within 5 minutes of my appointment time, my administrator(s) admitted me to the Zoom meeting.</b>	81%	16%	2%	--	2%	4.75 (.65) [63]
<b>The Student Conduct Office staff were clear and professional in their communication with me.</b>	82%	15%	--	2%	2%	4.74 (.71) [61]
<b>The administrator(s) in my meeting listened to my perspective on the incident(s).</b>	81%	13%	3%	2%	2%	4.70 (.75) [63]
<b>The Student Conduct Office staff treated me with respect.</b>	81%	11%	5%	2%	2%	4.68 (.78) [63]
<b>I understand how the administrator(s) arrived at their decision and the rationale for that decision. This does not necessarily indicate an agreement with the decision.</b>	78%	14%	5%	--	3%	4.63 (.85) [63]
<b>Overall, I am satisfied with my interactions with the Student Conduct Office staff.</b>	79%	6%	10%	3%	2%	4.59 (.91) [63]
<b>I received sufficient information about the conduct process to prepare for my conference.</b>	64%	27%	2%	6%	2%	4.44 (.93) [63]

Table 2: Experience with the Student Conduct Office

Students who disagreed or strongly disagreed with any of the statements from Table 2 were asked a follow-up question to explain what they disagreed with or provide an example of why they disagreed. Five students provided comments with a wide range of explanations. In addition to not receiving sufficient information to prepare for their conference, students stated that the letter did not explain what would happen, to just to show up, the letter was sent to a personal email address and not their Texas A&M email address, and that there was no place to not admit fault due to criminal charges. Students shared that they were told to pause or be quiet many times when explaining their perspective of the case, that they were asked irrelevant questions, that the panel jumped to conclusions and did not listen to what the student explicitly said, and that the decision was only based on the officers report without any evidence.

When asked if they requested an appointment to review their file remotely before their conduct conference, 88% of the 66 students responding said no and 12% reported that they did request an appointment. Those who requested an appointment (n=8) were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with three statements about their experience. As seen in Table 3 on the following page, students were extremely positive about the process for reviewing their files.

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Agree (5)</b>	<b>Agree (4)</b>	<b>Neutral (3)</b>	<b>Disagree (2)</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree (1)</b>	<b>Mean (sd) [n=7]</b>
<b>I received a response to my request for a file review appointment within one business day.</b>	100%	--	--	--	--	5.00 (.00)
<b>At the beginning of my meeting, the staff member assisting me informed me of the procedures for reviewing my file and answered any follow up questions I had.</b>	100%	--	--	--	--	5.00 (.00)
<b>I was provided sufficient time to review my file.</b>	100%	--	--	--	--	5.00 (.00)

Table 3: Experience Reviewing their File

All respondents were asked if they contacted the Student Conduct Office with questions before their conference. A vast majority of the 66 responding students (83%) said that they did not and 17% indicated that they did contact the office. Students who did contact the Student Conduct Office (n=11) were asked two follow-up questions. Table 4 demonstrates students generally felt they received a response within one business day and that their question(s) were answered adequately.

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Agree (5)</b>	<b>Agree (4)</b>	<b>Neutral (3)</b>	<b>Disagree (2)</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree (1)</b>	<b>Mean (sd) [n=9]</b>
<b>I received a response to my question(s) within one business day.</b>	56%	33%	11%	--	--	4.44 (.73)
<b>My question(s) was answered adequately.</b>	56%	33%	11%	--	--	4.44 (.73)

Table 4: Asking Questions to the Student Conduct Office

The last section asked students to rate a series of statements related to the learning outcomes the Student Conduct Office identified. Students were asked to rate all statements on how they felt before attending their conference and after completing the conduct conference. Table 5, in descending “after” mean order on the following two pages, demonstrates students reported growth in all areas listed from before to after their conduct conference. Note that a lower mean for the two statements about the likelihood of engaging in a student rule violation or the same behavior in the future indicates growth. The statement about students’ likelihood to reflect on their personal values before making future decisions the rated the highest both before and after their conduct conference; however, after the conference, this was rated higher than before. Overall, students noted the most growth in their awareness of the University’s expectations regarding student conduct and their understanding of the impacts of the behaviors on themselves. Males, Hispanic, freshmen, and junior students rated lower for many statements both before and after. All disaggregated data can be found in a separate document.

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Very High (5)</b>	<b>High (4)</b>	<b>Moderate (3)</b>	<b>Low (2)</b>	<b>Very Low (1)</b>	<b>Mean (sd) [n]</b>
<b>The likelihood that I will reflect on my personal values before making future decisions. (BEFORE)</b>	53%	32%	11%	3%	--	4.35 (.81) [62]
<b>The likelihood that I will reflect on my personal values before making future decisions. (AFTER)</b>	80%	17%	4%	--	--	4.76 (.51) [54]
<b>My sense of responsibility to consider the potential impacts of my behavior on myself and others before making decisions. (BEFORE)</b>	42%	36%	16%	5%	2%	4.11 (.96) [62]
<b>My sense of responsibility to consider the potential impacts of my behavior on myself and others before making decisions. (AFTER)</b>	81%	15%	--	4%	--	4.74 (.65) [54]
<b>My understanding of the potential impacts of the behavior on others. (BEFORE)</b>	39%	26%	26%	8%	2%	3.92 (1.06) [62]
<b>My understanding of the potential impacts of the behavior on others. (AFTER)</b>	78%	17%	2%	4%	--	4.69 (.70) [54]
<b>My awareness of the University's expectations regarding student conduct. (BEFORE)</b>	26%	37%	27%	8%	2%	3.77 (.98) [62]
<b>My awareness of the University's expectations regarding student conduct. (AFTER)</b>	72%	24%	4%	--	--	4.69 (.54) [54]
<b>My understanding of the actual or potential impacts (academic, professional, physical, emotional, legal, and/or financial) of the behaviors on myself. (BEFORE)</b>	31%	34%	18%	13%	3%	3.77 (1.13) [61]
<b>My understanding of the actual or potential impacts (academic, professional, physical, emotional, legal, and/or financial) of the behaviors on myself. (AFTER)</b>	72%	22%	6%	--	--	4.67 (.58) [54]
<b>My understanding of the University's concerns regarding the behavior involved in my incident(s). (BEFORE)</b>	28%	38%	26%	7%	2%	3.84 (.97) [61]
<b>My understanding of the University's concerns regarding the behavior involved in my incident(s). (AFTER)</b>	74%	15%	11%	--	--	4.63 (.68) [54]
<b>The likelihood that I will reflect on the University's Core Values before making future decisions. (BEFORE)</b>	47%	29%	18%	7%	--	4.16 (.94) [62]
<b>The likelihood that I will reflect on the University's Core Values before making future decisions. (AFTER)</b>	74%	16%	11%	--	--	4.62 (.69) [53]
<b>My knowledge of one or more strategies to help me avoid engaging in any potential student rule violation in the future. (BEFORE)</b>	36%	39%	23%	3%	--	4.06 (.85) [62]

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Very High (5)</b>	<b>High (4)</b>	<b>Moderate (3)</b>	<b>Low (2)</b>	<b>Very Low (1)</b>	<b>Mean (sd) [n]</b>
<b>My knowledge of one or more strategies to help me avoid engaging in any potential student rule violation in the future. (AFTER)</b>	63%	30%	6%	2%	--	4.54 (.69) [54]
<b>The likelihood that I will engage in any potential student rule violation in the future. (BEFORE)</b>	5%	3%	8%	24%	60%	1.69 (1.08) [62]
<b>The likelihood that I will engage in any potential student rule violation in the future. (AFTER)</b>	11%	--	2%	13%	74%	1.61 (1.28) [54]
<b>The likelihood that I will engage in the same behavior(s) involved in my incident(s) again. (BEFORE)</b>	7%	2%	5%	31%	56%	1.72 (1.10) [61]
<b>The likelihood that I will engage in the same behavior(s) involved in my incident(s) again. (AFTER)</b>	9%	--	--	17%	74%	1.55 (1.19) [53]

Table 5: Learning Before and After Conduct Conferences

Students who responded to both the before and after their conduct conference statements were analyzed to determine how many students reported growth for individual statements. Table 6, in descending order by the increased column on the next page, presents the level of growth the students indicated through their rating before and after attending their conduct conference. Students who did not rate themselves in both the before and after statements were not included. One note is that a decrease in the rating for the two statements about the likelihood of engaging in a student rule violation or the same behavior in the future indicates growth. It is also worth noting that some items in Table 6 with a smaller percent of students reporting an increase is partly because those items were rated very high on the “before” statement so it was not possible for a large number to improve in that category by the “after” statement. Furthermore, mean values were compared for the before and after of each statement. The difference in means was statistically significant between the before and after for each statement except the likelihood students will engage in the same behavior(s) and the likelihood students will engage in any potential student rule violation.

<b>Before and After Attending Conduct Conference Rating Change</b>	<b>Increased</b>	<b>Stayed the Same</b>	<b>Decreased</b>
<b>My awareness of the University's expectations regarding student conduct.</b>	66%	34%	--
<b>My understanding of the University's concerns regarding the behavior involved in my incident(s).</b>	56%	44%	--
<b>My understanding of the actual or potential impacts (academic, professional, physical, emotional, legal, and/or financial) of the behaviors on myself.</b>	56%	44%	--
<b>My understanding of the potential impacts of the behavior on others.</b>	55%	42%	4%
<b>My sense of responsibility to consider the potential impacts of my behavior on myself and others before making decisions.</b>	45%	53%	2%
<b>The likelihood that I will reflect on the University's Core Values before making future decisions.</b>	40%	60%	--
<b>The likelihood that I will reflect on my personal values before making future decisions.</b>	38%	60%	2%
<b>My knowledge of one or more strategies to help me avoid engaging in any potential student rule violation in the future.</b>	36%	62%	2%
<b>The likelihood that I will engage in the same behavior(s) involved in my incident(s) again.</b>	8%	66%	26%
<b>The likelihood that I will engage in any potential student rule violation in the future.</b>	8%	72%	21%

Table 6: Learning Before and After Growth

The last question provided students the opportunity to share any additional comments they had regarding their experience. Most of the 12 comments were positive. Students indicated they felt listened to and felt heard through the process. They also describe the office staff or panel as respectful, professional, and informative. Some felt it was an insightful experience and that it was used as a lesson. One student expressed concern about only using email notification to inform a student they could be at risk of something as serious as being suspended or expelled from Texas A&M. One student felt that how questions were asked caused responses to be skewed.

## Background

According to its website (<https://studentlife.tamu.edu/sco/>), the Student Conduct Office “encourages the development and well-being of all students. This is accomplished by promoting reflection, fostering accountability, and educating students and campus partners on individual rights and responsibilities within the University community.” The student conduct process is designed to be an educational experience with a focus to determine whether University standards of conduct have been violated.

## Project Details

The Department of Student Life Studies provides quality assessment services, resources, and assessment training for departments in the Texas A&M University Division of Student Affairs and student organizations. Services by Student Life Studies are funded, in part, by the Texas A&M University Advancement Fee. Results of this project and other assessment projects done through Student Life Studies can be found at

<https://studentlifestudies.tamu.edu/results/>. Additionally, anyone can follow Student Life Studies on Facebook.

To work with Student Life Studies for future assessment projects, please fill out the Assessment Questionnaire at <https://studentlifestudies.tamu.edu/aqform/>.

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