



Dear Palo Alto College Community,

Over the past two years, I have been fortunate to serve as the Vice President of Student Success at this College. During my time, the Division of Student Success has developed many innovative, research based, and best practices in relation to student programming and student services.

There are three areas in particular that have either grown tremendously or been developed for the first time at Palo Alto College. These three areas are the Ray Ellison Family Center, Counseling Services, and the Office of Student Conduct.

The Office of Student Conduct was developed in Spring 2015 with a dedicated Conduct Officer. Prior to 2015, all cases were overseen by the Dean and Vice President. This Office ensures that students are learning through the conduct process and implements innovative approaches such as Restorative Justice where students must give back to the community they have harmed in the form of community service or mediated conciliatory conferences.

The following Research Brief provides an overview, research based practices used, and how the Division of Student Success assesses services and learning so that we can ensure students and families are receiving the best education possible.

Sincerely,

Gilberto Becerra, Jr.

Vice President of Student Success

**Research Brief:**  
**Office of Student Conduct**  
**2015-2017**

**BACKGROUND**

Restorative Justice has existed since the 1970s, originally used in the criminal justice systems before being adapted and utilized in higher education in the 1990s (Goldblum, 2009). Howard Zehr (2002) defines Restorative Justice as “a process to involve, to the extent possible, those who are most involved in or have a stake in a specific offense and to collectively identify and address harms, needs and obligations, in order to heal and put things as right as possible.” The [Association of Student Conduct Administrators](#) (ASCA) supports Restorative Justice as a best practice, incorporating it into its’ “Foundations of Professional Practice” and “Conflict Resolution” certifications.

There are several options for how to implement Restorative Justice – conferences, circles, and boards. Each type of Restorative Justice practice has the same goals of identifying and repairing harm, but different practices can be more beneficial depending on the type of incident or event (Karp, 2013). Reduced recidivism, or instances where students violate the code of conduct more than once, is not the goal of Restorative Justice, but it is typically a positive outcome because the student has repaired the harm to the community, understands the damage that can be done by harming the community, and has learned through the process (Zehr, 2002).

Before the Restorative Justice process can begin all participants must agree to Restorative Justice. Individual conferences are held with all perspective participants where they are given a brief summary of Restorative Justice, how the Restorative Justice meeting would go, and what the outcomes of the meeting could be (Karp, 2013).

The Office of Student Conduct at Palo Alto College has adapted the Restorative Justice techniques when working to educate students who have violated the code of conduct. The Office primarily utilizes Restorative Justice Conferences which include a facilitator, offender, and harmed parties. Restorative Justice Conferences utilize both structured dialogue from the facilitator and unstructured dialogue opportunities for the involved parties.

**OFFICE OF STUDENT CONDUCT MISSION**

The mission of the Palo Alto College Office of Student Conduct is to protect and foster the learning environment, through meetings with students both in and out of the classroom, to reach our goal of student success by upholding the Student Code of Conduct.

The mission of the Office of Student Conduct and its’ goals are directly linked to Palo Alto College’s Strategic Directions and Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs). In particular, the goals align with Strategic Direction 1: Empowering Students for Success, and the Institutional Learning Outcomes of Communication Skills, Critical Thinking, Personal Responsibility. The Restorative Justice techniques, when used, directly align with the Institutional Learning Outcome of Social Responsibility.

## **OFFICE OF STUDENT CONDUCT PURPOSE/GOALS**

In a traditional student conduct process, a student is disciplined without input or feedback from the harmed party. A student is usually sanctioned without gaining an understanding of why what they did was harmful with little care given to their personal growth and education.

As stated in Alamo Colleges District Board Policy F.4.2, the disciplinary process is not intended to punish but to help challenge a student's moral and ethical decision-making. The best way to challenge a student's thinking is to show him or her how actions affect the community. Through this learning, a student will be able to accept responsibility for his or her actions, repair damage to the community, and make amends.

At Palo Alto College the purpose of Restorative Justice is to meet the following three goals:

### *Active Accountability*

(a) Accept and acknowledge responsibility for their offenses;

### *Repairing Harm*

(b) To the best of their ability, repair the harm they caused to victims and communities;  
and

### *Rebuilding Trust*

(c) Work to reduce the risk of re-offense by building positive social ties to the community.

These three goals must be met in order to have a successful Restorative Justice process. At the end of Restorative Justice, all involved parties should be satisfied and whole.

## **RESULTS**

***2017-2018 Student Learning Outcomes: To educate the Palo Alto College community on the Student Code of Conduct, Strategies of Behavioral Intervention, and Title IX***

***2017-2018 Student Learning Outcomes: To promote student development and learning through the conduct process***

The Student Learning Outcomes will be assessed as part of the Office of Student Conduct Assessment Plan for the 2017-2018 academic year.

## **Review of Student Conduct Cases 2016-2017**

The Conduct Officer has received national certifications for conduct and other related areas in order to be able to provide support to students and adjudicate cases appropriately. Specifically, the Conduct Officer has been certified in professional practices, conflict resolution, and bias response by the Gehring Academy of the Association of Student Conduct Administrators. Additionally, the Conduct Officer holds certifications with the National Association for Behavioral Intervention Teams in campus threat management and as a Title IX Coordinator by

the Association for Title IX Administrators. Palo Alto College, the Office of Student Conduct adjudicates a limited number of cases that are specifically categorized as conduct. Most cases are in the *Disruptive Behavior* category with the majority of these cases ending in a warning and changed behavior. Each semester, a report of all cases is shared with the College Leadership Team to outline the overall number of cases received including the number of conduct cases.

Fall 2016	Spring 2017
16 Total Cases	30 Total Cases
3 Conduct Cases	6 Conduct Cases
Total: 9 Student Conduct Cases	

During Fall 2016, the Office had one case that was eligible for a Restorative Justice Conference. Throughout the process, the student understood what she had done and how it directly impacted the campus. The student was then asked to write a letter of apology to the area that was affected by her decision. All parties involved came to a resolution regarding the case, and the student was able to learn through the process.

## NEXT STEPS

In Spring 2018, an advisory group of both internal and external partners will meet to discuss campus safety, student conduct, preventative measures, and resources available for students. The advisory group will consist of representatives from Family Services Association, Family Violence Prevention, Campus Police, Counseling Services, Gordon Hartman Foundation, Palo Alto College student representation, and the Office of Student Conduct.

As the Office of Student Conduct continues to adjudicate cases, each individual case will be evaluated for appropriateness before utilizing Restorative Justice techniques. The goal is to be able to use Restorative Justice with as many students as possible with the understanding that not all cases are suitable. With the use of Restorative Justice techniques, the intent is to share with the college community the benefits of Restorative Justice for both the offenders and harmed parties.

## References

Association for Student Conduct Administration. (2017, November 2). Retrieved from <http://www.theasca.org/>

Goldblum, A. (2009). Restorative Justice from Theory to Practice. In J. M. Schrage, & N. G. Giacomini, *Reframing Campus Conflict: Student Conduct Practice Through a Social Justice Lens* (pp. 140-154).

Karp, David R. (2013). *The Little Book of Restorative Justice for Colleges and Universities*.

Zehr, Howard (2002). *Little Book of Restorative Justice*.

## **F.4.2 (Policy) Student Code of Conduct - Non-Academic Misconduct, Academic Integrity**

Responsible Departments: Vice Chancellor for Student Success

Board Adoption: 5-19-09

Last Board Action: 2-17-15

Reviewed: 2-22-16

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### **Purpose**

The Alamo Colleges is committed to fostering an environment of thoughtful study and discourse. Shared values that guide the Alamo Colleges in fulfillment of its vision and mission also guide the systematic accumulation of standards of behavior that students must uphold as well as the responsibilities that they must accept according to policy. Thus, the principles set forth in our Values: Students First, Respect for All, Community-Engaged, Collaboration, Can-Do Spirit and Data-Informed Decision Making are the hallmarks of our Student Code of Conduct.

The Chancellor or designee(s) shall develop and promulgate a Student Code of Conduct that cites both standards of conduct and consequences (sanctions) for violations as well as procedures for the determination and appeal of violations and procedures for disciplinary hearings. The Student Code of Conduct applies to non-academic misconduct and conduct involving academic integrity. The Student Code of Conduct is published in its entirety among the Board of Trustees policies and in whole or in part in each college's catalog, and student handbook.

All students are charged with notice and knowledge of the contents and provisions of the Student Code of Conduct. The act of applying to be an Alamo Colleges student is an explicit acceptance of the Alamo Colleges' policies, procedures, regulations, and administrative rules. All students shall obey the law, show respect for properly constituted authority, and observe and comply with the Student Code of Conduct and College District policies, procedures, regulations, and administrative rules. The Student Code of Conduct is a Board policy and procedure, and its violation is a violation of Board policy and procedures.

### **Structure**

The Student Code of Conduct disciplinary process is not intended to punish students, but rather to protect and foster the learning environment, to protect interests of the Alamo Colleges' community, and to challenge those whose behavior is not in accordance with the code. When warranted, based on a preponderance of evidence obtained in an investigation of a violation, disciplinary sanctions are imposed and may include prescribed expectations of improvement in terms of various aspects of personal development, academic success, civility, and other measures of relevant success. Sanctions are intended to challenge a student's moral and ethical decision-making and help them bring their behavior into accord with our community expectations.

The Student Code of Conduct Disciplinary Process is not a criminal or civil court proceeding but an internal administrative proceeding. Student conduct disciplinary proceedings are based on a fair assessment of facts and adjudicated on a preponderance of evidence. The procedure for the non-academic misconduct disciplinary process and the procedure for the academic integrity disciplinary process are set forth at [F.4.2.1](#) and [F.4.2.2](#) respectively.

Unless otherwise indicated, the Student Code of Conduct applies to offenses and violations on campus, on College District owned or controlled Property, and at College District Sponsored

#### **F.4.2 (Policy) Student Code of Conduct - Non-Academic Misconduct, Academic Integrity**

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Activities. The definition of “College District Property” contemplates that the use of College District information technology resources such as internet/intranet access (including WiFi, ACES, Learning Management System) and telecommunications devices (including telephones), and the electronic mail system in the commission of any offense require the offense to be considered to have occurred while physically on or using College District Property regardless of where the offense occurs.

Some violations of the Student Code of Conduct also may constitute violations of the Civil Rights Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation Policy at [H.1.2](#). If such violations have also been reported to Campus Police and the Title IX/Title VII/ADA/504 Coordinator, separate investigations may occur.

Legal Reference – TACC Policy Reference Manual

FLB(LEGAL) – Student Rights and Responsibilities: Student Conduct

FLBA(LEGAL) – Student Conduct: Student Dress

FLBC(LEGAL) – Student Conduct: Prohibited Organizations and Hazing

FLBE(LEGAL) – Student Conduct: Alcohol and Drug Use

FLBF(LEGAL) – Student Conduct: Weapons

## Palo Alto College Student Success SLO/SAO Assessment Cycle Template

DEPARTMENT NAME: Office of Student Conduct

Academic Year: 2017-2018

Department Mission: The mission of the Palo Alto College Office of Student Conduct is to protect and foster the learning environment, through meetings with students both in and out of the classroom, to reach our goal of student success by upholding the Student Code of Conduct.

Student Learning Outcome (SLO)	PAC Strat. Direction and ILOs*	Means of Assessment	Assessment Timeline	Dissemination/ Communication of Results
1. To educate the Palo Alto College community on the Student Code of Conduct, Strategies of Behavioral Intervention, and Title IX	Strategic Direction 1: Empowering Students for Success  ILO 3: Critical Thinking	1. Post presentation assessment 2. Student conduct and SOBI meetings 3. By maintaining and updating Haven: Understanding Sexual Assault training, monitoring student completion rates, reviewing survey and reporting data. 4. End of year reports for Conduct, SOBI, and Title IX	Within one week of presentation  Semester Haven completion dates (November 1 and April 1)  End of semester report	Student Success Leads Fall and Spring semesters; End of semester report is shared with College Leadership Team
2. To promote student development and learning through the conduct process	Strategic Direction 1: Empowering Students for Success  ILO 3: Critical Thinking	1. By utilizing restorative justice techniques for student conduct cases and tracking recidivism 2. By using Conduct/SOBI meetings as educational opportunities for student growth and development	30-day post conference follow up  Maxient report to track recidivism	Student Success Leads Fall and Spring semesters; End of semester report is shared with College Leadership Team

Additional Information/How will you use results to improve services?:

Additional information in these areas will inform if the training/presentations have been effective in communicating what the office does, what SOBI, Title IX, and Conduct policies are, and where more information is needed.

Tips for Assessment of Outcomes: Who? What? How? When?

1. Identify who will be evaluated and who will be doing the evaluation – **students, faculty and staff who attended training, EDUC classes, IR Survey Monkey assessment**
2. Identify how the outcomes will be assessed. It is recommended that multiple assessment measures take place
  - a. **Post presentation assessment through Survey Monkey**
  - b. **End of semester report**
  - c. **HAVEN report**
3. Identify when the assessment will occur and identify when the results will be reviewed **Throughout the semester, surveys will be completed at the end of training or within one week; End of semester reports will be created at the end of each semester.**
4. Develop a timeline for when the results will be communicated to faculty, staff, and students and what communication venues will be used **Reports will be shared with CLT at the end of each semester and Student Success Leads.**
5. Identify when SLOs/SAOs will be reviewed and changed/updated as needed **SLOs will be reviewed and updated each semester as the needs and methods change as well as current trends and policies change.**

\*ILOS are [Institutional Learning Outcomes \(Gen Ed/Core Curriculum Assessment\)](#):

1. Communication Skills	2. Teamwork
3. Critical Thinking	4. Social Responsibility
5. Empirical and Quantitative Analysis	6. Personal Responsibility

#### [PAC Strategic Plan](#)

Strategic Direction 1: Empowering Students for Success

Strategic Direction 2: Creating and Sustaining a Culture of Inclusiveness

Strategic Direction 3: Celebrate and Share PAC Excellence

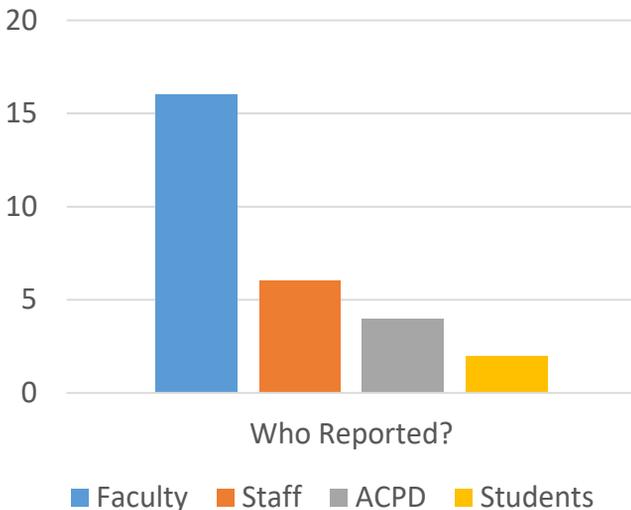
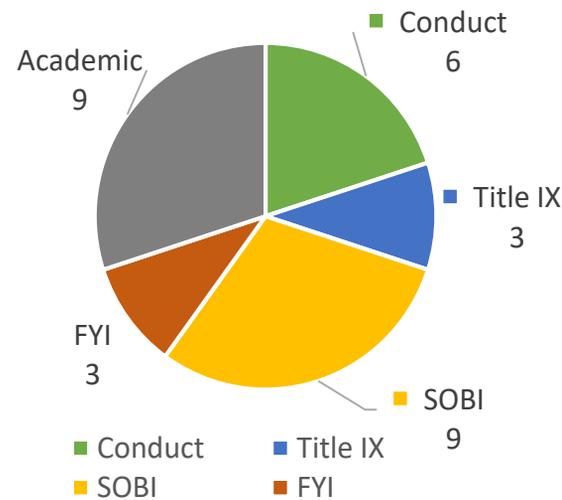
Strategic Direction 4: Targeting Our Resources for Success

# Office of Student Conduct Executive Summary Spring 2017

## Summary:

- 30 reports filed; 37 students involved
- 11 reports made in February
- Majority of reports filed by faculty members
- Majority of reports classified as SOBI and Academic Integrity
- 3 students had a prior incident report associated with him/her
- All Title IX reports regard incidents that happened off campus
- Majority of Academic Integrity cases were plagiarism
- Average NaBITA Tool Risk Level 2 (Mild)

Incident Report Breakdown



**Office of Student Conduct**  
Student Center 101 (inside SHARE Center)  
Online Incident Reporting Form  
<http://alamo.edu/pac/cares>