



Reflections
ASCA EDUCATIONAL MAGAZINE

**Addressing Bias and
Oppression in the
Student Conduct
Process**

***Revising Your Way
to Justice***
**Code Revision as a
Tool for Equality**

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**DISRUPTING MASCULINITY
AND PATRIARCHY IN
STUDENT CONDUCT**

Upcoming Events

Oct. 25: Minnesota Fall Meeting

Nov. 6: Drive-In Strategies for Safety: Threat Assessment in 2019

Nov. 8: Indiana Drive-In

Nov. 8: North Carolina Drive-In

Feb. 5 -8: 2020 ASCA Annual Conference

Note to Our Readers

I am particularly proud of this issue of Reflections. For the past several years, the ASCA Board of Directors has been committed to advancing diversity, inclusion, and equity both within the organization. We have worked to remove barriers to involvement in our signature events such as the Annual Conference and the Donald D. Gehring Academy. I personally have worked to learn more by attending the White Privilege Conference and reading about implicit bias to better understand my own experiences, find my voice to stand up to systemic oppression and work to change the world we live in. I hope that you read this issue and is spurs you to want to learn more and work to make the experiences of the students we work with inclusive and equitable.

Jennifer Waller
ASCA Executive Director

Job Postings

INSTITUTIONS	JOB TITLE	LOCATION
The University of Alabama at Birmingham	Title IX Investigator II	Birmingham, AL
University of Illinois at Chicago	Associate Director for Community Standards	Chicago, IL
University of Alaska Anchorage	Student CONduct Administrator and CLery Act Coordinator	Anchorage, AK
Florida International University	Assistant DEad of Student Conduct and Acadmic Integrity	Miami, FL

Introduction

Fundamentally, codes of conduct in post-secondary education is to provide a standard corrective or disciplinary response to guilty behavior (Taylor & Varner, 2009). However, as institutions of higher education become more representative of the general population, University conduct systems must adapt to changing cultures. Currently, the message surrounding social justice in campus discipline is to listen and appreciate the stories of our students, individual or collective, pretty or messy (Hight & Holmes, 2013). What happens when students from different cultures clash with the standard behavior outlined in Student Conduct Codes? What happens when the processes we created perpetuate systems of oppression? Is listening and appreciating a student's story enough to combat systemic inequality? It is well documented that black students, boys, and students with disabilities are disproportionately discipline in K-12 schools (Nowicki, 2018). This disparity is also documented within the justice system where black Americans are incarcerated at more than 5 times the rate of white Americans and more specifically, black women are imprisoned at twice the rate of white women (Criminal Justice Fact Sheet). While the purpose of the student conduct process differs from the justice systems, it is imperative to critically evaluate our processes to ensure they do not replicate these disparities. The purpose of this edition of Reflections is to explore the methods institutions use to incorporate social justice concepts into policies, systems, and processes of student conduct.



Lucas Graff
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Issue Editor

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Addressing Bias and Oppression in the Student Conduct Process

Student conduct professionals work within systems that were not built with the needs of all students in mind. We navigate laws and policies which disproportionately impact underrepresented groups, especially students of color. A 2014 Dear Colleague Letter indicated that K-12 schools in the US are disproportionately applying out of school suspensions to students of color. Juvenile justice programs are also plagued by racial disparities; the U.S. Department of Justice reports that between 2006 and 2015, black youth were detained at a rate six times higher than white youth (Hockenberry, 2018). Inherently, our student conduct systems are built upon the same fundamentals, research, and theories as school discipline and juvenile justice. While we have not received the same national attention as our colleagues in K-12 education, the systems utilized in Higher Education are not immune to racial disparities and injustice.

Our students have grown up in an era of fear and violence. Traditional aged college students were born after 9/11; they have never known a world without Homeland Security and mass-shootings. They have experienced police violence, whether personally or by watching the videos of Eric Garner, Sandra Bland, Tamir Rice, and others. They have witnessed political leaders use hateful rhetoric in our increasingly polarized national climate. When they come to us, we expect them to follow our rules and to trust that we know what is best. We need to explain our processes and expectations. It is okay if our students question our

intentions and methods. If we want our students to trust that we have their best interests at heart, we need to show them we can be trusted by using our capital to fight oppression and breakdown barriers to students' success. We need to show students that we care.

It can be overwhelming to think about what we can do to reduce the impacts of institutional bias and systematic oppression, however dedicating time and resources to reviewing our conduct processes is critical to impacting change. This can be a difficult ask, as most of us are facing increasing demand from our communities with stagnant or decreasing funding and staff-levels. It is easier to say that we don't have the resources to focus on change. It is

“reviewing our conduct processes is critical to impacting change...”

easier to say we don't have control over the overarching issues. It is easier to ignore the problem. We, collectively as a profession, need to stop ignoring the bias and oppression that exists in our conduct processes. It is okay to start small; to focus on what is within our control. It's

okay to take one step at a time.

Identifying an Issue

Last year, a new supervisor challenged us to consider topics of oppression, inclusion, and bias in relation to our conduct process during our first staff meeting. I realized that while I had participated in more diversity trainings

than I could count, I had never had a directive to address social justice issues within the conduct process.

We started slowly, taking turns presenting and leading discussions on ableism, identity development, and cultural humility during our unit meetings. Each staff person was able to choose something that was important, or of interest, to them and share that with the rest of the group. It did not always go well. This work is uncomfortable; it's meant to be. Taking a closer look at how your work may be harming the very students you set out to help does not feel good in the moment. There were times that staff were upset and frustrated, but providing opportunities to explore why the work was upsetting was very important moving forward. We kept with it and over time it began to feel more natural.

As our meetings progressed, the topics became more specific and relevant to our daily work. We started having conversations about our ability to make changes in our own process. We began to identify areas for improvement within our procedures and our Code. A discussion issue that stood out to us, was the use of the word marihuana (anglicized: marijuana) in relation to law and policy enforcement in the United States. We learned about the origins of the term and how it is deeply rooted in the oppression of black and brown communities in the United States. We decided we needed to stop using the term marijuana and replace it with cannabis.

Developing a Solution

In a perfect world, we would have stopped everything we were doing to create a strategic action plan to address this issue and develop a solution. In our real world, we simply do not have the capacity. That does not mean nothing can be done, it just means things happen over time. We committed to staying flexible and open to change throughout our process.

We agreed to start our process slowly; at first, we just replaced “marijuana” with “cannabis” during our daily communications with colleagues and students. We agreed

to hold each other accountable when we slipped up by gently calling each other out in front of others, we were able to reinforce our goal and also share information about what we were up to with our colleagues. We checked in about how things were going, informally and during staff meetings. When we felt ready to take the next step, we did.

We knew to be effective, our language change would need to be consistent with other units on campus, so we made a list of campus partners we needed to loop in to the conversation. Our list included our General Counsel, our Prevention Services Staff in the Office of the Dean of Students, and our partners in Residence Life. Together, we developed language we felt was technically correct, met legal requirements, and was readable for our students. Along the way, we realized there were other units, such as Parent and Family Programs, which needed to be included in our efforts. Within a few weeks, our websites were updated and the policy revision process had begun.

Revisions to our Code require approval from our Board of Trustees. The process takes about a year and any recommendations must first clear our Student Conduct Committee; a committee comprised of students and staff. It is always a little contentious when we present recommendations to our Committee because there is some underlying distrust about our motives and some fear that we are out to get students. So, when we faced skepticism and allegations of being the “PC Police” – I believe the quote started with “Back in my day...” – I was pleasantly surprised that our students on the Committee were the first ones to back our efforts. The Committee ultimately supported our recommended changes and we went on to present the changes to the Board of Trustees.

We knew we had to explain our desired change in a way which made sense to a variety of stakeholders. We stayed true to our underlying concerns regarding historical oppression, but also provided information which held additional weight – such as calling out potential issues about transparency and compliance. In a state where

recreational cannabis use is legal, and CBD can be found in food products at the corner store, it is important that our students and staff clearly understand what is and is not allowed on campus. We also highlighted that prevention science and other research units are using the term cannabis instead of marijuana. Our institution is prioritizing research and innovation, so it is important that we are reflecting that within our policies. After a lot of hard work, the Board passed our recommendations in June of this year.

Outcomes

In addition to accomplishing our goal, our work has influenced campus partners to make changes. Most significantly, Prevention staff updated all their websites, presentations, and materials to reflect the switch to cannabis. The Prevention staff has started reaching

out to our contracted vendors about resolving language inconsistencies for our prevention and intervention modules. Our police chief heard why we had moved away from “marijuana” and started using cannabis during orientation presentations to parents. We have also started to hear from our partners at other institutions about how they can update their language.

At the end of last year, I reflected back on all of our challenges and success, all of the cases we heard, and all of the students we worked with. I was most proud of our work in this area. We have successfully eliminated marijuana from our Code, letters, and websites. This is important because words matter. Typically a student is first introduced to our office through a letter, or a website and it is important to us to align our values with our outward facing presence. This year reminded us that we can make a difference, one step at a time.

A Snapshot in History: Cannabis to “Marihuana”

Cannabis has been used for cultural, medicinal, and agricultural purposes for thousands of years. In America, cannabis cultivation predates the establishment of our country. Hemp fiber, which is extracted from the cannabis stem and does not contain more than trace amounts of THC, was commonly used for rope and textiles (Johnson, 2019). In fact, some colonies considered the crop so essential that they required it to be grown by every farmer (Sloman, 1998). While it was not widely used for recreational purposes until the 20th century, it was readily available over the counter for medicinal use – right next to the cocaine and morphine (Sloman, 1998).

In the early 1900s, prohibitionists began to target cannabis along with other mind altering substances (Sloman, 1998). It was not until the 1930s, however, that criminalization became widespread (“Marijuana Timeline,” n.d.). It is no coincidence

that this national shift in ideology coincides with the mass immigration of Mexicans during the Mexican Revolution. These Mexican immigrants introduced the recreational use of “marihuana” – a Mexican term for cannabis – to the United State (Sloman, 1998). Prohibitionists, eager to stoke anti-Mexican xenophobia and public fear to promote their political agendas, began using the term “marihuana” exclusively.

Perhaps feeling the need to remain relevant, Harry Anslinger, the Commissioner of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, took a hard anti-cannabis stance following the end alcohol prohibition in the early 1930s (Sloman, 1998). He promoted anti-cannabis propaganda, tied the use of “evil weed” to other brown and black communities, and made claims that it caused violence, suicide, and sexual promiscuity (Schlosser, 1994). In his co-authored article “Marihuana, Assassin of Youth,” Anslinger wrote that cannabis was “as dangerous as a coiled rattlesnake” and claimed that marihuana had caused dozens of murders

and “degenerate sex attacks” (Cooper & Anslinger, 1937). Generally, his gore stories involved people of color committing horrendous crimes or selling cannabis to impressionable white schoolchildren (Sloman, 1998).

In 1937, Congress passed the Marihuana Tax Act, effectively outlawing the recreational use of cannabis and

cementing the anti-Mexican sentiment into cannabis-related law and policy enforcement in the United States (“Marijuana Timeline,” n.d.). The Marihuana Tax Act was foundational for the “war on drugs” and the resulting mass incarceration of non-violent offenders who are disproportionately from brown and black communities (Schlosser, 1994).

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Katy Larkin

Director of Student Conduct and Community Standards
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SEASON 3 COMING SOON!

Meet ASCA Viewpoints
Podcast Host
Alexandra Hughes

Ms. Alexandra Hughes, M. Ed., is the current Assistant Director for Student Rights and Responsibilities, at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. As a member of the university's administration, in this role she works to manage student conduct and ensure the safety and security of all students, staff, and faculty at the institution. Ms. Hughes also serves UTRGV's campus as a part time faculty adjunct for master's students, teaching classes on cultural humility and competencies.





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5-8, 2020**

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Disrupting Masculinity and Patriarchy in Student Conduct

In the Summer of 2010, as a graduate student and aspiring student affairs professional at Appalachian State University, my supervisor asked me if I wanted to take on the task of leading a newly formed all male community. The residence hall was to transition to a newer and shinier building on the east side of campus, away from its former home which consisted of carpeted hallway walls, no air-conditioning and the stench of locker rooms from years past. The goal of this community was to remove some of the negative stereotypes of all male communities, such as high rates of conduct violations and smelly rooms, by promoting more positive behavior. I was excited for the opportunity to do something meaningful with my work and dove head first into creating some sort of community development model for these young men. I hoped to create a vibrant community where we could challenge men to think differently than they had been socialized to as men in our culture.

During that year of graduate school, what I discovered was a group of men navigating a complex world of hyper-masculinity, and for me a disruption of my own identity as a man. I realized I had never thought of myself as a gendered being. I had never contemplated what it meant to “be a man.” The community we created during that year was founded on the value of “brotherhood.” This is a value I now realize was problematic in many ways. Sure, we created a bond among many of the men in that hall, and somewhat disrupted some forms of hyper masculinity, but we also left some folks outside of our bond, and continued to uphold the tenets of hyper masculinity. Yet it was my initial work with the young men in the all-male community, and specifically the relationships I developed with the men who resided within those halls, that drew me to this work. Through working and living so closely together, I was able to see firsthand the impacts of socialization on these young men’s lives.

Activists and educators have recognized a number of problematic behaviors in men and recently have done much work to describe these behaviors as part of the

growing scholarship in the area of masculinity studies (Harper & Harris III, 2010). In the past, most men have not thought of themselves as “gendered beings” due to the power and privilege they hold in patriarchal society. This silence and lack of reflection on identity has allowed men to adopt forms of masculinity that, when left unchallenged, can lead to harm for both self and others. Disrupting the status quo of hyper-masculinity and patriarchy may allow men to understand and perform their identities differently in ways that can result in benefits for all members of society.

Statistics show that men commit the overwhelming majority of sexual assaults, and regularly engage in risky behaviors, such as binge drinking, driving under the influence, and getting involved in violent altercations (Harris III, 2008). Our conduct numbers show Men are more likely to commit violent crimes and are more likely to die by suicide than women (O’Neil, 2011). Approximately 32% of college men have reported watching pornography 3-5 times per week, and 93% of boys have had at least one experience with pornography by the age of 18 (Chisholm & Gall, 2015). Studies on pornography have shown significant negative effects on interpersonal relationships, sexual satisfaction, and attitudes of violence towards women (Chisholm & Gall, 2015). One study found that 10% of college men admit to at least one occasion of interpersonal aggression towards a partner (Gallagher & Parrott, 2011). At one university, 63% of men self-reported acts that qualified as rape or attempted rape, while men in general are perpetrators of sexual assault 98% of the time (Lisak, Gardinier, Nicksa & Cote, 2010). College men are likely to be binge drinkers and associate the ability to consume large amounts of alcohol with their masculinity (Iwamoto, Corbin, Lejuez, & MacPherson, 2014, Capraro, 2000). These negative behaviors and outcomes have led some researchers to identify college men as a group in crisis (Shen-Miller, Isacco, Davies, Jean & Phan, 2012).

In regards to Student Conduct, we see this same data

evidenced on our own campuses (Dannells 1997, Harper, Harris III, & Mmje, 2005, Edwards & Jones 2009, and Shepard 2013). At my current institution 91% of the suspensions in the last 5 years have been students who identify as men. Traditionally aged first and second year men are disproportionately entering our conduct processes and have been since before Danells' 1997 work. Yet we still have not been able to address this issue effectively on a large scale. Laker (2005) suggested we move beyond a "bad dogs" mentality in addressing male misbehavior. The "bad dog" approach is to rebuke or shame men for their misbehavior. It's important that behavior not be condoned or tolerated but we can't expect real change to take place if we treat men as "bad dogs". Some of our conduct processes may do us a disservice here by not allowing for educational liberty in sanctioning instead using legalistic prescribed systems which don't go beyond surface level interactions. Harper, Harris III, & Mmje (2005) addressed the overrepresentation of college men in student conduct processes head on, presenting a theoretical model for campus administrators. They suggest six variables of male misbehavior, precollege socialization, Male gender role conflict, social construction of masculinities, developing competency and self-efficacy, context-bound gendered social norms, and environmental ethos and corresponding behaviors. We could choose any one of these variables and attempt to address them through program or individual conversations with students. Harper, Harris III, & Mmje (2005) suggested we use these variable in helping to "develop programmatic interventions that are designed to redefine traditional male behavior" (pg. 580).

When it comes to combating issues related to masculinity on college campuses, programs exist to support men fighting against violence (specifically violence against women), but few appear to fully address the root of inequities: hyper masculinity and patriarchy (Harper & Harris III, 2010). Some programs support the social justice ally development of men (Davis & Wagner, 2005; Edwards, 2006). Research also exists on bystander intervention, recovery models, transformative learning and more general social justice programming, but few

studies focus on addressing male identity to influence change in behavior (Degue, 2014). Others point to the use of positive masculinity in intervening in the lives of young men to create a more socially just society (Englar-Carlson & Kiselica, 2013). Despite some of these efforts to disrupt hyper-masculinity and patriarchy, both are still significant problems on college campuses. One of the most promising ways to begin to disrupt these is through education, particularly helping men to understand and perform their identities differently.

Performance of Masculinity

Before getting deeply into the research I want to give a very brief overview of some literature on the performance of masculinity. This is not by any means all-encompassing but is meant to give an introductory lens into the socialization and performance of masculinity discussed throughout the rest of this article. I will by no means touch on all of the literature that exists in this field but

will at least give a slight overview. I do not speak to or address all ways of thinking about "masculinity." For example, while important, I don't explore the areas of female masculinity and queer masculinity which are part of conversations about "masculinity" (Halberstam, 1998). The premise of female and queer masculinity is that masculinity is not simply the social and cultural expression of maleness and can indeed be separated from the male body (Halberstam, 1998). I agree with

this premise even as I am only studying performances of masculinity among cisgender men in this study. These are often the most hyper masculine men on our college campuses, and work to transform those individuals' understandings of the world around them is important.

Masculine traits are taught and reinforced from birth by the large majority of individuals in society. The initial reaction to a young boy crying is often "stop crying," while girls often receive a much different response. Socialization occurs in every facet of culture from media and movies to schooling and life at home.

Men are taught to do whatever they must to not be perceived as feminine or "like women." Edwards and

"Masculine traits are taught and reinforced from birth..."

Jones (2009), in their study of college men, called this “putting their man face on” in which men conform to the patriarchal standards established by our culture – also known as the “man box.” Edwards and Jones (2009) found that the college men in their study went through three phases of performance. First, they felt the need to put on a mask because of society’s expectations of them, which happened consciously and unconsciously. Second, they proceeded to wear the mask, this included “partying” as college men and performing masculine norms. In phase three, they experienced and recognized the consequences of wearing the mask. Harris III (2008) found similar performances occurring among the college-aged men participating in his study as well. These men and others put on a performance of masculinity or risk being seen as unmanly. Being deemed unmanly can come with consequences of alienation, marginalization, and even violence.

The intersection of identities in the development of masculinity is also important to consider when discussing the performance of masculinity. There is growing research on men of marginalized identities, along with a call to better understand the intersectional identities that men hold (Davis & Laker, 2011; Harper & Harris III, 2010; Harris III, Palmer & Struve, 2011; Stewart, 2008; Tillapaugh & Nicolazzo, 2015). Research on men of color suggests the influence of whiteness and white supremacy in the construction of manhood and masculinity (Harper & Harris III, 2010). Specifically, African American men are groomed to devalue educational achievement, which is seen as white, and to avoid being associated with feminine qualities at all costs (hooks, 2004). Men of color can sometimes perform more enhanced hyper masculine norms because of internalized racism and other factors influencing their identity development. Because of the intersections of racism and sexism, targeted support is needed for our young men of color in regards to their socially constructed ideas of gender and the ways it intersects with whiteness (Harris III, Palmer & Struve, 2011).

The performance of masculinity must be challenged to create change. One place to start is through inquiry and reflection about the system, as these are part of developing an understanding and possibilities for performing identities differently. Understanding the socially constructed and damaging nature of patriarchy and hyper

masculinity can lead to healthy change for both systemic problems of sexism and problems recently termed as “men’s issues.”

Methods

The research described is based on data from a larger qualitative study in which I use a critical qualitative approach to explore the stories of men and analyze the way in which they create new knowledge and meaning when their masculine identity is disrupted. I also used auto ethnography to reflect on my own experiences coming to understand masculinity and individual interviews to study college-aged men who participated in Men on the Mountain, a reflection program at Appalachian State University designed to help these men understand how they have been socialized to be as men, and to disrupt problematic elements of this socialization. In this article I will share one of my auto ethnographic narratives and also some of the stories of the men related to misbehavior and social influence.

Research Purpose and Significance

The literature on masculinity, patriarchy, and gender socialization point to the problems of hyper-masculinity and patriarchy, which create harmful effects for all members of society, including men. Scholars point to statistics of problematic behaviors and suggest that hyper-masculinity may play a role in behaviors, but limited information points to patriarchy as a core of the problem. We know from the research that men are engaging in problematic high-risk behaviors, suicidal ideation, binge-drinking, and pornography use. We also know that other alarming statistics about men have concerning impacts on women and others in society as men commit the majority of violent crimes and account for the overwhelming majority of sexual assaults. While the existing research gives us an understanding of masculinity and patriarchy, it often fails to provide routes or strategies to disrupt the status quo. Much research still operates within and for the status quo by failing to address patriarchy as a root of the issue. While men may be facing cultural challenges, they also hold large amounts of power and privilege because of patriarchy.

The goal of this larger study is to help men to create

lives in which they live beyond the constraints of hyper-masculinity and patriarchy, to be better men for themselves and others.

Research Questions

Three research questions guide this qualitative study:

- 1** How have college men experienced masculine and patriarchal norms?
- 2** What changes occur emotionally, interpersonally, and socially for men when they work to disrupt hyper-masculine and patriarchal norms?
- 3** How do men make meaning of their experiences in a college masculinity program and how does this meaning making influence possibilities for transformation and social change?

Research Participants and Setting

The participants of this study were 8 cisgender, traditional college-aged men (18-26 years old) who attended at mid-sized public university in the Southeast. The men range from current undergraduates to a few who have recently graduated or entered graduate school. The University is a predominately white, midsize university in a rural college town in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina. For the full study I conducted an auto ethnography of my story and interviews with the participants.

The men interviewed for this study participated in a program called Men on the Mountain between 2014 and 2018 that actively engages individuals who identify as male in discussions and learning opportunities around gender, violence, power, privilege, and media. The programming involves a 4-6 week long curriculum, which asks men to explore their own history of masculine identity development during weekly meetings. The program begins by exploring the social construction of masculinity by examining the “man box.” Additional sessions ask participants to explore their childhood history in terms of masculinity, unpack terms such as privilege and sexism, and eventually explore masculinity and patriarchy’s larger role in systems of oppression and violence. Men are then challenged to think about how they might combat these

systems with individual and collective action. Each week the men are asked to think about how new knowledge gained in these sessions influenced their thoughts and actions during the previous week. The program can be structured in a number of ways depending on the type of group. Most often groups meet 4-6 times for 1.5 hours per session covering a variety of topics. Men involved in the program are often recruited from fraternities on campus, since such all-male groups often seek development activities for their members. This program was also used as a conduct sanction with individuals found responsible for sexual harassment behavior and was suggested to other men in the conduct process as a potential outlet to learn more about themselves.

For the sake of brevity for the article I won’t go into further detail about methodology but would be happy to provide additional information. I feel it is most important to understand the stories of the men as we inform our practice and attempt to address male misbehavior on our campuses.

Stories of the Men

Similar to my own experience during college many of the participants had conflicting experiences with masculinity before having their identity disrupted in some type of way, either through programming such as Men on the Mountain or through a variety of academic and social experiences. It is worth reminding the reader here that the men I interviewed for this study are unique in that they have gone through a masculinity program where they reflected on the issues they discussed in our interviews. Because of this, participants are perhaps unusually thoughtful about how their identity changed over time, as did their orientation toward masculine norms. While the men continued to experience heightened peer pressure through their college career, adherence to the norms was disrupted for them at some point along the way. Nonetheless, the norms of having sex with women and drinking lots of beer were prominent for several of the participants. Adherence to hypermasculine norms depended entirely on their self-selected social group.

Getting laid and drinking beer

The men who continued to find ways to fit in socially in college attempted to fit in through engaging in hyper



Photo by Quentin Dr on Unsplash

masculine norms with their peers. Some were involved in fraternities while others were engaging with a variety of other groups around them. As a typical example, David became involved in a fraternity in an attempt to make friends and be involved socially in college. Sex with women, drinking alcohol, and making fun of others seemed to be mainstays in the norms of masculinity. David described that he would feel a tug to not want to be involved in specific things, but in the end peer pressure would win out. In describing this experience David shared

There were times where I'm like, "I don't wanna go to this event and get hammered." And they're arguing, "You're gonna sleep with..." So many times, some guys would come up, be like, "Alright, I'm getting laid tonight," or, "Hey, we're gonna get you laid tonight," and its like, "What if I don't wanna do that right now?" [chuckle] And people would say all the stereotypes [of fraternity guys], people are like, "What, are you gay?" and like, "Oh, don't be a faggot man." Stuff like that was so common.

David further described a chapter meeting in the group in which someone would always become a butt of the jokes:

Purely, you were judged based on how much you can drink, no getting around it. And I just remember thinking... I don't know why, but I could

drink [chuckle] enough to get by, but I remember observing people. One of my friends, Jordan, He's 100 pounds, he's tiny, he's a really small guy. And three beers in he'd be down for the count or at least couldn't drink anymore, and people would make fun of him all the time, the next morning... We would do something at Chapter where it was like... I don't even remember what it stood for, but basically it was supposed to be like here's something positive that happened this week, or here's something we're gonna work on. And everybody goes around at the end of chapter and says something. And some people would just say nothing, but that would be the time where people would make fun of him. They'd be like, "Hey, y'all remember when Jordan puked all over himself? What a bitch!" And that's what it turned into. And I remember always thinking, "God, I have to not eff up ever around these guys, because if I screw up around one guy it's gonna be told to the entire chapter the next morning, or the next Monday night or whatever." And I always felt bad when that happened.

In describing his complacency in these masculine norms of bullying others, David also described the incredible bond this created with other brothers in his fraternity. David shared that though they made fun of each other, he knew that just about any of the fifty men in the fraternity would answer the phone if his car broke down or if he needed help.

Pete had similar experiences as a fraternity member in college and described that the entirety of his freshman and sophomore year were about "getting drunk and getting laid, that's what really mattered." Doing those things meant you were a man. In describing his reasoning to join a fraternity Pete shared, "That's a part of being masculine right? Joining a fraternity. You got to, or you're not a man, you know? It was a prominent, suburban white boy thing to do." The mentality started to change as he realized he had to grow up, take care of himself, and get a job after graduation.

Both Derek and George described experiences with women (or attempting to have experiences) as being a central part of their masculine identity in college. Derek described his entire four years of college as a "gradual identity crisis." In this identity crisis he struggled with his

inability to be successful with women. He described this identity crisis:

So, I had never really dated anyone. And just around my friends, I started to feel really different. Because I'd never had experiences with women. And that was like an... It wasn't really a spoken thing, but it was like, you're successful if you're with... If you get with a lot of women. And I'd never even been with one woman. So I was like, "Oh, fuck." I'm like... [chuckle], the loser I guess. I started to feel like that more consistently throughout college. It's like well, I'm almost through with college, this has never happened to me. And what's wrong with me? And a lot of that was through friends. Just feeling that pressure, but a lot of it was just everywhere you look like tv, movies, everything, it's all successful men are good with women. And I just wasn't very good with women. But yeah, that was sort of... That was probably a big part of my masculine identity in college specifically, was just feeling like I was kind of a loser because I didn't date around, I didn't sleep around, I didn't do any of that stuff.

George described that he left a controlling relationship after coming to college, and immediately after his sole focus seemed to be on "getting women." He would constantly think that every girl he spoke to was into him. He wasn't talking to women just for the conversation, but in hopes that it might lead to something else later. His main goals in the beginning of college were to party and hook up with someone. George shared that he just felt a pressure to do this, but couldn't place where it was from. He didn't stop this "get women" mentality until one day Lou (his friend and fellow participant in the study) called him out on it, and disrupted his identity. This caused him to start thinking more deeply about his behavior and start making some changes.

"You wanna shotgun some beers?" or "You wanna go to the library?"

Many of the men continued to adhere to the strict masculine norms and peer pressure while in college. Whether they did so or not depended entirely on the friend groups with which the men were associated. Some participants like Robert, Lou and Chris found themselves disrupting their masculine identities in college through their social involvement with different organizations and clubs. They already knew they didn't fit in with a hypermasculine group, so were looking for other social groups to be members of. As others like David, Nate, Derek, George and Pete attempted to develop new relationships in college, they experienced greater peer pressure to fit in with their new groups. They also experienced conflict with the norms of masculinity from other men who didn't quite adhere to the group norms. As one of the participants shared, it was someone inviting you to the library vs inviting you to shotgun a few beers.

For most of the men, college was a pivotal moment for coming to understand and take ownership over their masculine identities. Their previously held beliefs were disrupted in some way and this disruption resulted in them making changes moving forward. Many of these disruptions took place through one on one interactions with others or through their involvement in programs like Men on the Mountain. These disruptions created changes emotionally, socially, and interpersonally.



Social awareness and accountability

Much of the men's social awareness was gained in the area of understanding the objectification of women, including how they participated in this without realizing it. As described in earlier analysis, seeking women and bragging about sex were predominant hypermasculine norms for many of the men. As their identities were disrupted, they began to move away from this thinking. They realized they were objectifying women and moved away from a "get women" mentality.

George found that he was obsessed with finding women and getting with women during his first years of college.

George left his “get women” mentality after this experience with his friend Lou:

Honestly when I got to college, like Lou, he was a pretty big help. I roomed with him, hung out with him and everything, we talked about a lot of things. We were very open to each other about our feelings. When I came to college I had a girlfriend. It was a controlling relationship. It was tough. We ended things. Then I met Lou. I was like, “Yo, man, this one girl, she was totally into me...” Lou was like, “Dude, why don’t you settle down? Not every girl you talk to is trying to hit on you.” It just dawned on me, I don’t have to hit on girls now that I’m single. I can just be myself. I don’t have to be after girls. That was a huge change for me. Lou, he’s a straight up guy. He just told me like it was. I don’t know. My mindset flopped right away after he told me that. I just started talking to people and having conversations. I think my mind was in the wrong place.

This challenging conversation was enough for George to change his behavior and refocus his goals.

Nate shared that his involvement in Men on the Mountain gave him a lot of self-realization about things he didn’t normally think about, including objectifying women. Nate shared that he realized

Wow, actually, I do that a lot,” and trying to catch myself. I think one of the huge things that... Or I guess it’s not that it’s huge, but one that now I really don’t do anymore, and I’ll even call people on it, is when people refer to women as bitches, they’re like, “Oh, dude, I was chilling with these bitches.” And I’m like, “Dude, just call ‘em women. You don’t have to refer to them as bitches.” That’s one thing that kinda gets me at this point.

He shared that he now holds others around him accountable for behavior like this because he sees that there is no reason for it, and that it reproduces and reinforces problematic hyper masculine norms.

Pete shared similarly that he realized that the way he was talking about and treating women needed to change, specifically his use of language like “slut” or “whore.” He

used these terms regularly and freely without any thought to their impact on others or their real meaning. He shared that he prided himself on respecting women, and he realized his use of those terms went against this value.

Lou shared that he “just started thinking more about his gender and others gender” once he got to college. He shared that “seeing strong female professors” was something that got him to start to think differently. He was never exposed to women in positions of power prior to attending college. Once he started hearing about the gender wage gap, among other discriminatory practices, it irritated him and made him feel like he needed to do something. He shared that his “exposure to a lot of information” helped disrupt his previous understanding of masculine identity.

This disruption led several participants to intervene in particular situation in their lives to address behavior of other men around them. George shared an example of a scary situation that took place at a party recently in which he was trying to coach his brother on how to intervene:

I was at a get together with my brother and one of our friends, Joseph. And him and his fiancé got back together. And I think he just had a little too much to drink. And out of nowhere he just started getting really pumped up and started like yelling at her and got in her face and everything. It was a really rough situation. No one was really stepping up. I mean, that’s when I had to step in and say like, “Dude, you’re being way too aggressive. You need to settle down.” He’s like, “I’m not being aggressive.” And he was just ... I was like, “You had too much. You just need to ... you’re good. You’re good.” You know? But he just kept yelling at her and hitting things. And it was just awful. And I mean, he’s closer to my brother than he is to me. And at the end of the night, he calmed down eventually, but it wasn’t until he broke down. And I just told him like, “You’re okay. You’re fine. You’re fired up and stuff.”

George felt he needed to intervene in this situation as it was clear no one else was going to do so. Even though this individual was someone he wasn’t that close with, he felt it was important that someone diffuse the situation. The next day he received a text from the friend thanking him for intervening. George tried to get his brother to text

him since they are best friends and talk to him about what was going on but he refused. His brother still doesn't feel comfortable going against the norm and stepping outside the box. George didn't feel like it was his place to continue to follow up with his brother's friend but felt like there was a lot to unpack and support that Joseph needed. He shared that he is continuing to work on supporting his brother and helping him to unpack his masculinity to try and get him to a different place but it is often an uphill battle.

Experiences such as these made the men more socially aware in understanding what masculinity meant for themselves and others. They began to challenge their traditional understanding of gender roles and challenge others.



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Discussion and Implications

All of these stories are not unique to myself or the men in this study. They exist on all of our college campuses and have already been written about before. In terms of working with men in Student Conduct it is important to remind ourselves of the everyday peer interactions of our students. Masculinity is built upon socialization and the influence of others around us. Therefore it is a formidable opponent when attempts are made to address male misbehavior, and help men be more successful in our communities. Both intentional (through participation in Men on the Mountain) and unplanned disruption (through coursework and organic relationships they developed over time) occurred for the men who participated in this study, most often in the college setting as they were transitioning into adulthood and learning

to take more responsibilities for their actions, thoughts, behaviors, and identity. In college, many of them were able to engage in experiences that disrupted their learned hyper masculine and patriarchal norms. The bulk of the changes that seemed to occur for the men were in terms of their awareness of behavior and norms. In some, but not all cases, the men could point to incidents when they were able to act on their newfound awareness, even though they articulated this action as challenging. At times the men were able to think more critically about the world around them but failed to act on this critical awareness.

Social change

Most social change for the men took place in their understanding of treatment of women, and in recognizing and working to disrupt their own objectification of women. Several of the participants addressed personal issues in which they realized they were objectifying women through a “get together with as many women as possible” mentality or simply through their language. My participants shared several examples when they used this new information and actively held themselves accountable for objectification or confronted others around them about their problematic behavior. The participants’ discussions around this topic reminded me a lot of active bystander intervention training. I found it interesting that even though the program Men on the Mountain was not dedicated to sexual assault awareness, many of the men addressed the underlying issues of “rape culture.” The men were addressing predatory type behavior in themselves or others and realized that this was an underlying component of hyper masculinity. A common theme in the research and among the men in my study is that they often lied about prior history with women to prove that they were manlier or to fit in. The men connected this behavior to a social awareness about the treatment of women, and their own role in promoting sexism and objectification. The men were able to see that this behavior (lying about how far they made it sexually) was connected to their own objectification of women and thus a contribution to the patriarchal system. They connected their individual behaviors to the larger system at work.

While all the men in the study changed some because of their participation in Men on the Mountain, a clear difference existed between some of the participants as to how deep this critical reflection and awareness went. Pete

and Nate both shared about their realization of language use and how they needed to address this, but it is unclear to me if they were simply censoring themselves yet still thinking in the same frame of mind about objectification of women and “getting women.” Other participants such as Lou and George were able to share examples of changes they made in their own lives to address sexist behavior on a deeper level, instead of at the surface with only language. The latter examples of real change are contrary to much of the bystander intervention research which only suggests an increase in the confidence levels of men to address issues of violence (Labhardt, Holdsworth, Brown, & Howat, 2017). Much of the bystander intervention research does not show real examples of men intervening in situations, it simply suggests that men feel more confident to address future situations. The men in the study such as George, appear ready to take action to address issues as evidenced in examples shared above. The men in the study are also able to connect and intervene on a wider range of actions instead of simply violent altercations at parties. They instead address everyday behavior which contributes to sexism and patriarchal culture. The men in the study were able to see the larger picture of the operation of patriarchy and masculinity and its effect on others socially, and they were able to thoughtfully discuss these effects in our interviews. A central aspect of male privilege is that men almost never think of themselves as gendered beings. The participants in my study have begun to address this issue through their involvement in Men on the Mountain and through other experiences they had in college that helped them to become more reflective about their gendered identity (Davis & Wagner, 2005).

Implications

By doing this study I have realized the value of a program such as Men on the Mountain. I intentionally created Men on the Mountain with a critical, pro feminist lens in its curriculum and the results have shown from the interviews of the men. The men who participated in the program have changed the way they view the world, and many are taking actual steps to create change for

themselves and those around them. Programs such as Men on the Mountain have the potential to create lasting change in a campus community, and in the lives of participants even after graduation. This study continues to contribute to a larger body of work which shows how men have experienced these masculine and patriarchal norms

in their lives. It is clear that men are experiencing masculine and patriarchal norms in similar ways before college, during college, and after college.

This study also highlights the continued importance of our individual relationships and mentorships of male students. We have a unique power in student conduct to have dedicated time to connect with students. How are we building bridges and creating change in individuals?

The answer may not be creating a group for the men to be a part of but instead investing in one on one learning relationships with our students. Let's be educators who can influence men to think deeply about their identities and the influence these identities have on their misbehavior. Taking the “Bad dogs” approach described by Laker (2005) won't create change. Gender cannot remain invisible in our conduct processes. We can see it in the data, now perhaps we can continue to work towards addressing an issue that has always been right in front of us. We need to build a community of individuals working to disrupt the norms of masculinity and patriarchy, being vulnerable with one another, and working together to transform their lives and the lives of those around them.

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Revising Your Way to Justice: Code Revision as a Tool for Equality

Traditionally, code revision was prompted every few years by outside pressures and was written by one or two university administrators. However, in an effort to affect change and encourage socially just policies and procedures, Shippensburg University recently underwent a massive code of conduct revision that allowed for multiple voices to shape the policies and procedures that govern our student population. A campus-wide committee was created of faculty, staff, and students who had been adjudicated through the conduct process to perform a systematic review of every code and process outlined in the Code of Conduct. Using current literature, student feedback, best practices, and other university's codes, a new code of conduct was created from a diverse group of stakeholders. Included in the review was the elimination of gendered language, addition of multiple resolution pathways to accommodate more students' developmental needs, and revision of policies and procedures for potentially biased language or practices.

As a relative newcomer to the field of student conduct, I approached the first code revision process in the spring of 2018 the way the university had traditionally handled

it; a few administrators suggested small changes to the code and sent it to legal counsel for review. From there, it went through the traditional review process to include our Student Affairs Committee, University Forum, University President, and Council of Trustees. However, by the time the next annual code review and revision process began in the spring of 2019, I had an additional 12 months of experience to bring to the process and decided to do things differently.

Having had the chance to attend the Mary Beth Mackin Foundations of Professional Practice track at the 2018 Gehring Institute, I gained significant exposure to best practices in the field of student conduct. The Gehring Institute also helped me network with other professionals who recommended several texts for further exploration: *Reframing Campus Conflict: Student Conduct Practice Through a Social Justice Lens*, *Student Conduct Practice: The Complete Guide for Student Affairs Professionals*, and *The State of Student Conduct: Current Forces and Future Challenges: Revisited*. Additionally, I started my doctoral coursework in fall 2018 and through various class

assignments I had the chance to read current scholarly literature regarding student conduct administration.

These experiences better prepared me to advocate for a different code review process in 2019; a code review process that would bolster the university's efforts to provide a fundamentally fair process that focused on both individual and community growth and development. This year's review would be holistic and collaborative, meaning multiple voices and viewpoints would help our office understand how policies and procedures affect the campus community, especially in terms of creating a fair environment and a process designed to handle the complexity that comes with student conflict. Current literature in the field demonstrates that student perception of student conduct processes matters; the perception of fairness of a process, the perception of efficiency of a process, and even the perception of educational value of the process all impact student learning (Janosik & Stimpson, 2017; Karp & Sacks, 2014; King, 2012; Stimpson & Janosik, 2011, 2015). Additionally, we know students bring intersecting identities, past experiences with conflict, and perceptions of trust and distrust with them to campus; our conduct systems must reflect these multifaceted issues and be designed to handle them in a socially just manner (Giacomini & Schrage, 2009).

For the 2019 review process, we wanted to affect change by revising our policies and procedures to be socially just, fundamentally fair, and focused on student learning. We achieved this through deliberative and thoughtful revision committee formation, creating buy-in across campus, supporting revision with peer-reviewed and credible evidence, and championing student voice and student learning in the process.

Deliberate and Thoughtful Committee Formation

The easiest way to start a code revision committee is to think about individuals most affected by the code and individuals that work with the code most often; these

are the people to start recruiting for the committee. At Shippensburg University, this meant faculty and staff that referred students to our student conduct process, individuals who served on university disciplinary boards, and students who had been adjudicated through our process. Our code revision committee included representation from residence life, campus police, drug and alcohol education, academic deans, dean of students, office of equity, inclusion, and compliance, multi-cultural student affairs, fraternity and sorority life, students, and faculty from each college. Each individual invited had a committed interest in the conduct process; this made the committee motivated to work consistently through multiple revisions. When possible, student conduct professionals should look for allies and advocates for their programs to serve on the code revision committee.

To ensure that our new code was grounded in equitable policies and practices, it was important that the individuals helping revise it came from diverse backgrounds and perspectives. The committee we formed at Shippensburg University was robust; members with multiple voices, experiences, and opinions were empowered to share throughout the revision process in varied ways. To honor varied learning styles, feedback from the committee was gathered in-person during meetings and in writing through editing drafts via email. While we strove for all committee members to feel comfortable sharing in the larger group, we still made space and time available for members to voice feedback or concerns privately or in writing. Perhaps most important, this committee gave critical voice to students who had experienced our conduct process. These students were candid and forthright in their suggestions on how to improve the code and the process, pointing out areas that were confusing, unfair, or possibly biased. Without student voices, we would have lost an essential perspective on the actual impact of the policies and procedures in our code of conduct.

"Without student voices, we would have lost an essential perspective on the actual impact of the policies and procedures in our code of conduct. "

Creating Buy-In Across Campus

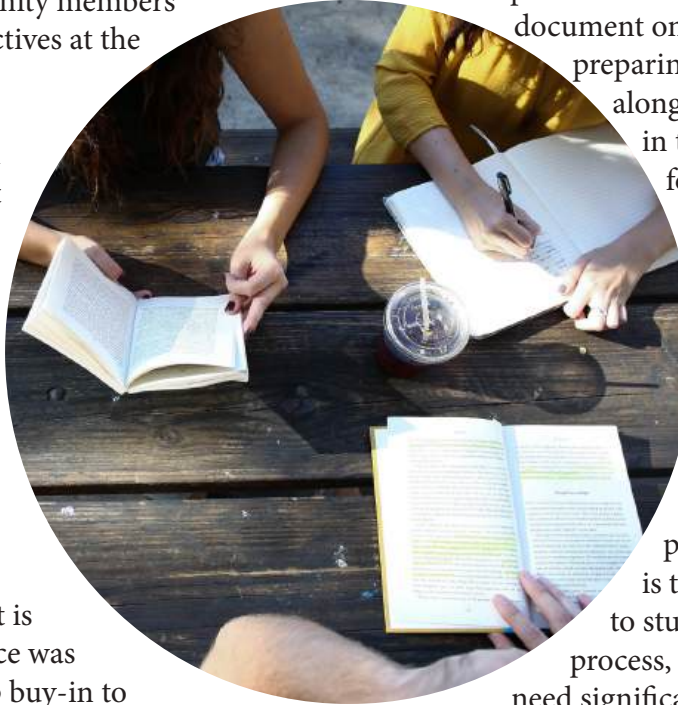
Depending on your revision approval process, you may want to consider inviting other colleagues to sit on the committee that have very little experience with student conduct. Building allies and buy-in across campus from the beginning paid dividends later in the approval process; the more people on campus that believed in the code revision process, the more people were likely to view the committee's work as credible and necessary. By including people not familiar with the process, we built buy-in among university community members and expanded the perspectives at the revision table.

Building allies began with identifying audiences that would be most affected by the code changes we wanted to implement. At Shippensburg University, this meant having early conversations with senior-level administrators, faculty leaders and academic administrators, students, and staff. Identifying what is important to each audience was critical in helping develop buy-in to the process.

For students, this meant emphasizing the fairness of the process, the rights of students and student organizations, and the ways in which students could get involved in the disciplinary process. For staff, we focused on ensuring the code would give them a way to hold students accountable for their behavior, especially the behaviors that greatly impact the campus community. For faculty, we considered this question: is the code evidence-based? Does this code protect student and faculty rights with a fair process? How do we know it does and what evidence do we have for it? Remember, you are the student conduct expert on your campus; you must relay your expertise to multiple audiences with varying levels of interest and understanding.

Another part of creating campus buy-in is preparing

the voting bodies that will decide if your code revision moves forward. I created a few one-page documents that organized the changes based on sections and included rationale for each change. In this document, I also included a reference list of recent scholarly literature, ASCA statements, and other seminal texts to illustrate the “why” behind the changes. I emailed this document and presented it in-person to some of the committees that were part of the approval process. By sending this information to the voting committees ahead of the vote to approve, they were able to review the information, ask questions, and provide feedback before we asked them to move the document on to the next phase of the process. By preparing them with the rationale for the changes along the way, essentially helping them buy-in to the code and the revision process, we found the actual approval process moved efficiently with no major hiccups.



Supporting Revisions with Peer-Reviewed and Credible Evidence

If there is anything I have learned in my professional career in higher education, it is that evidence-based practice is paramount to student success. During the code revision process, I knew that campus stakeholders would need significant evidence as to why we were making the changes we did; the recommendation of the committee would not be enough to sway voting bodies to approve the new code. Additionally, I also had to educate the committee. As mentioned earlier, you are the student conduct expert on your campus and relaying that expertise through experience is only one part of the equation; supporting your efforts with peer-reviewed and credible sources helps establish your knowledge authority.

Before the first meeting, I sent the code revision committee current research studies and selected chapters of seminal texts to help ground our review in evidence-based practices. At the first meeting, I essentially gave a short presentation on the current literature in the field including best practices in student conduct, practices supported by research, and thoughts on how we can incorporate these ideas into our code. One of the biggest procedural changes we made was the addition of multiple

resolution pathways to resolve campus conflict.

We knew that we wanted to change our procedures to better reflect the varying needs and identities of our students. The previous code used administrative hearings exclusively which did not serve all students equally. Giacomini & Schrage (2009) explained that students' multiple and intersecting social identities are further impacted based on the students' lived experiences and in turn, impact students' ideas about conduct and conflict. Adding to those experiences, the level of self-awareness and personal development that individual students possess can directly affect "how a student will experience, respect, comply with, engage or not engage in an adjudication process" (Giacomini & Schrage, 2009, p. 16). For these reasons, they recommend a broader spectrum of adjudication paths that can take into account the complex conflicts and cultures that occur on a college campus and help to restore community after a conflict has happened (Giacomini & Schrage, 2009). Using this chapter as a guide, we expanded our resolution options to include informal resolution conferences, student conduct meetings, mediation, and administrative hearings. Using *Reframing Campus Conflict: Student Conduct Practice Through a Social Justice Lens* as a source of rationale for changing the procedure helped lend credibility to the changes we made to the code.

In addition to creating multiple pathways to resolution, we wanted to bolster our efforts to provide a fair and timely process for students. Current literature makes evident the link between perception of fairness, efficacy, and educational value; the higher the perception of those ideals, the more students report learning and decreased likelihood to commit the same offense (Janosik & Stimpson, 2017; Karp & Sacks, 2014; King, 2012; Stimpson & Janosik, 2011; 2015). By using these studies as a guide for the changes we made, we were able to provide sound rationale to anyone who questioned the reasoning behind the changes. As we presented the code to various voting bodies, we made sure to also provide a reference list of books and published articles so they could feel confident that the changes being made were based in evidence-based best practices.

"...ensure its fairness and you can ensure student learning and development."

Championing Student Voice and Student Learning

Nearly every week there seems to be another university in the headlines, often due to student conduct issues or the university's response to those conduct issues. Many times, conduct officers will get an email from a campus administrator with a link to one of those headlined stories with some questions about how our process is or is not protecting students' rights and university interests.

It is imperative that student conduct administrators ensure that student rights are preserved through the code and its processes. However, it is equally imperative that student conduct administrators keep student learning at the forefront of their practice: "the fundamental purpose of student conduct work is to promote growth and development in students while protecting the interests of the larger campus community" (Waryold & Lancaster, 2008, p. 8).

During the systematic review of the code, we kept asking the question, "Does this code or process help students grow and develop while still protecting the university's interests?" Every rule, policy, and procedure went through the same treatment and was revised or eliminated based on its propensity to help students learn and grow.

Additionally, each code and process was reviewed for potential bias in language or application. Another question that came up repeatedly in the revision process was: "How would I interpret this code/process if I were part of a marginalized group?" The students on the revision committee were instrumental in advocating for their peers. They were the first to

suggest that we remove all gendered language from the code using "student" or "individual" instead.

Eliminating biased codes, processes, and language is the beginning of creating a fair and ethical conduct environment. Student conduct literature has demonstrated that the more fair students interpret a process to be, the more likely they are to self-report learning and educational value (Janosik & Stimpson, 2017; Stimpson & Janosik,

2011, 2015; King, 2012). A fair environment starts with the code; ensure its fairness and you can ensure student learning and development.

While no process is perfect, this year's code revision allowed us to be more inclusive, collaborative, and holistic in our approach to our annual review of policies. Deliberate and thoughtful committee formation, creating buy-in across campus, supporting revisions with peer-reviewed and credible evidence, and championing student voice and student learning are all important factors that greatly impact the code revision process. Ultimately, the entire campus community benefits from policies and procedures that are fair, free from bias, and ever-evolving through collaborative revision to meet the unique needs of each institution.

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Combating Implicit Bias: Training Conduct Administrator and Student Paraprofessional Staff

Every person holds implicit bias due to their values, beliefs, environment, and culture. Student conduct professionals and reporting staff members at institutions of higher education are not immune to this phenomenon. This unconscious thought process can affect any part of the process from how an incident is reported to when decisions of responsibility are being made. This leads to an unfair, unjust, and inconsistent conduct process. Stallman (2015) found that student conduct professionals held similar levels of implicit bias to those found in the general public, and these biases impacted their decision-making. Furthermore, it was shown that implicit biases were reduced when participants were made aware of the bias.

To make an effective change, it is necessary to provide a comprehensive, ongoing training to every staff member who is involved with the process, from undergraduate staff to university leadership. Payne and Vuletich (2018) found that implicit biases are not stagnant attitudes and, bias can be intentionally changed over time. Student conduct professionals should continuously reflect upon their biases. More specifically, staff members can intentionally practice their skills while attempting to negate implicit bias. While this ongoing training should not be the sole solution, it is a valuable place to start in creating a more socially just conduct system.

Smith (2015) discovered that engaging diversity in a meaningful way can prove advantageous for universities and colleges in a more interconnected and global society. With institutions of higher education becoming more focused on diversity and social justice, it is imperative for student conduct professionals and reporting staff members to be trained on how implicit bias can manifest itself within the conduct process. This article will provide a framework for an ongoing training for professional, graduate, and undergraduate staff members to help them reduce implicit bias when working with students navigating the conduct process.

Definition of Implicit Bias

It is important to define implicit bias prior to discussing how to combat this in the field of student conduct in higher education. Staats (2016) defines implicit bias as a pattern of unconscious attitudes or stereotypes that affect behaviors, understanding, and actions. Furthermore, a person's culture, environment, and lived experiences influence how their unconscious bias manifests even though an individual's bias may not align with their explicit beliefs and values. It is important to remember that implicit biases persists at both an individual and societal level. Vuletich and Payne (2019) found that at the individual level, implicit bias is fluid and can be changed. However, these biases are pervasive at a systemic level, and these biases can be found in groups of people. Implicit biases are human nature found within all groups of people.

Implicit Bias in Education

Similarly, to other professions, implicit bias is found within universities and colleges. There is no doubt that educators want to help students succeed by graduating from institutions of higher education; however, implicit biases live in a part of the brain outside of the conscious awareness. With this drive to support students, administrators, practitioners, and educators need to make themselves knowledgeable on implicit bias to best support their students.

Implicit bias finds itself in all disciplines and fields. Staats (2016) mentions several cases where implicit bias may arise, "These include situations that involve ambiguous or incomplete information; the presence of time constraints; and circumstances in which our cognitive control may be compromised, such as through fatigue or having a lot on our minds" (p. 30). Educators can fall into all of these categories. The conduct process is an ambiguous process where the administrator is attempting to find the complete

information. Student conduct professionals experience time constraints placed upon the process to adjudicate cases in a timely manner. Finally, there are multiple cases of fatigue, especially for student staff who may be writing reports about potential policy violations in the early hours of the morning.

Subjectivity of Student Conduct

Subjectivity and human nature allow for implicit bias to find itself frequently in the conduct process, and this can happen anywhere from reporting policy violations to making decisions on responsibility.

Student conduct administrators and student paraprofessional staff make decisions with a subjective component. Student paraprofessional staff make decisions on what they are reporting and how they are reporting that information. While student conduct administrators make decisions based upon a number of factors.

Student paraprofessional staff make decisions every single time they interact with a potential policy violation. There are a number of university policies that are subjective (noise, harassment, bullying, hazing, etc.). Most of the time, it is up to the staff member to decide on what threshold warrants a report. While many departments and institutions try to operationalize these policies, it still falls on human decision, which allows for potential error. Additionally, these student staff members may have pre-existing relationships, positive or negative, with the students they are reporting. This could lead the staff member to make decisions based upon relationships such as a lack of reporting if there is a positive relationship or over-reporting for those students who may have a negative relationship. Student paraprofessional staff members have a lot of responsibility in their position, and it is important for them to go through intentional trainings to help curb these biases.

Student conduct practitioners (graduate and professional) are often deemed as experts in their field and discipline, but these administrators can still make decisions based in bias, despite the right to an impartial hearing officer. As described above, Staats (2016) stated that implicit

bias is more likely to arise when there is incomplete or ambiguous information. Conduct hearings are meant for students to share their side of the story through intentional questioning from the conduct hearing officer. This means that the process is in the hands of the administrator and how forthcoming the student wants to be in that situation. The conduct officer is the person that deems what questions are necessary to ask of the student to fully understand the situation, remembering that the hearing officer has one side of the story prior to this hearing. This leaves a lot of room for implicit bias to find itself within the decision-making process.

“Implicit bias is more likely to arise when there is incomplete information.”

Recommendations

The purpose of this article is to provide recommendations for an ongoing training for staff members (undergraduate, graduate, and professional) whose role influences the student conduct process. There are a number of trainings that can be offered to staff members at all levels of the conduct process that work against these implicit biases. I present three recommendations; implicit bias assessment and self-reflection, semantics in report writing, and policy workshopping. It is important to remain cognizant that each of these should not be a singular training, but rather each strategy must be part of a larger ongoing series of trainings or professional development.

Implicit Bias Assessment and Self-Reflection

Staff members should start by examining their own personal implicit biases. Staats (2016) describes the Implicit Association Test set in place by Harvard University,

“this free online test measures the relative strength of associations between pairs of concepts. Designed to tap into unconscious System 1 associations, the IAT is a response latency (i.e., reaction time) measure that assesses implicit associations through this key idea: when two concepts are highly associated, test takers will be faster at pairing those concepts (and make fewer mistakes doing so) than they will when two concepts are not as highly

associated" (p. 32).

For example, a white person may struggle associating words of negativity with white people as this is something that is less associated for them. This would cause them to have a slight bias towards those who are white. Currently, there exists 14 tests within the Implicit Association Test, and those tests are: disability, weapons, age, gender-science, race, Asian, religion, weight, sexuality, presidents, Native American, Skin-tone, Arab-Muslim, and gender-career. This test would prove useful in an ongoing training for conduct hearing officers to identify specifically what implicit biases they may have.

However, with this test, individuals will need to self-reflect on what this truly means for them to help change their unconscious biases. Holroyd (2015) explains that these tests may cause a sense of holding people morally responsible, and there may exist notions of reward, praise, blame, and punishment. These self-reflections need to tap into these specific emotions to find the root of these biases. The following questions should be thought about and expanded upon by the person taking the test:

- 1** Did I know this implicit bias existed?
- 2** Have there been instances where this has shown in my interactions with others?
- 3** How does knowing this bias make me feel?
- 4** What factors are influencing this specific bias?
- 5** How does this bias show up in meetings with students or reporting potential policy violations?
- 6** What action steps am I going to take in order to work against this bias?
- 7** When is the next time I am going to take this same Implicit Association Test?

By working through the questions above, staff members are able to address their own personal biases in a reflective and intentional way. As mentioned previously, it is

important that people truly think hard about these biases and their origin. Additionally, it is necessary to set the next training date to address the bias to see if anything has changed since the original test was taken. Through this training, it is possible to change one's personal biases.

Semantics and Objectivity in Reporting

Words have a significant importance when it comes to reporting incidents that contain potential policy violation. The words that the reporter chooses may have influence on the person reading them. For a process to be fair and consistent reports must be written from a place of objectivity. It is up to the reporter to convey their observations in a way that limits their own personal opinions and interpretations. This is why multiple training sessions for staff who are writing reports are necessary. The place to start is talking about the words and how those are perceived by the reader. This encourages the reporter to think intentionally about the words they choose to best support the conduct hearing officer.

When thinking about what words to utilize when typing a report, it is very important to be cognizant of the hidden meaning behind words. For example:

Student A claimed that she was not aware of the alcohol being consumed by others within the room.

At face value, this sentence seems to cover what Student A said to the person reporting the incident. However, there is a better, more impartial, way to write this sentence.

Student A stated that she was not aware of the alcohol being consumed by others within the room.

In the initial sentence, it could be interpreted that there was a sense of disbelief by the reporter when they utilized the word 'claimed.' Whereas, the second sentence objectively informs the person reading the report of what Student A said to the reporter in the situation. Additionally, this allows for the conduct administrator reading the report to objectively understand the situation prior to the hearing. If the first sentence was utilized, then the administrator may also believe the student is lying to

the reporter. Other words similar to this could be: yelled, shouted, disputed, argued, and explained. Incident reports are not a creative story, aimed at keeping the attention of the reader, but rather they are intended to convey facts and observations. While these words can be used in the report, the individual context should be clarified for the reader.

It is necessary to walk through writing reports in a detailed and informative manner with those who write incident reports.

This is something that should not be run through quickly or in an online module. When discussing semantics with those who report, it is necessary to point out these specific distinctions. Undergraduate paraprofessional staff need to be fully aware of the conduct process as they are the staff members referring the most individuals through the process. This is something that is often left out of student staff training as it is not their specific job; however, they are the front facing person of this process so it is necessary for them to fully be aware of student rights and the process. This will help curb the use of words containing a hidden meaning, and student staff will report with objectivity.

Policy Workshopping

Similarly, to semantics in incident reporting, student conduct practitioners need to be consistent about how they are interpreting the meaning of a policy. The student conduct office is responsible for creating the philosophy and setting the tone for the conduct administrative process. These policies were written for a reason, and each conduct hearing officer needs to fully understand the scope of the policy. Student conduct offices need to educate new conduct hearing officers on policies students are being held accountable for.

At least once a semester, conduct hearing officers should be in a training together with the student conduct office to go through each of the policies implemented. In these trainings, it is necessary to walk through each policy word for word, dissecting the true meaning of

the policy. Student conduct officers should be able to articulate and demonstrate what cases a policy applies to, and they should be able to convey when a student may be found responsible for that policy violation. This should be consistent amongst all people hearing cases to create a fair and consistent process without implicit bias.

Additionally, these are the perfect times to go through each policy to see if it is meeting the intended purpose for the students. If a policy is confusing or wordy, it may be easier for implicit biases to show up within the student conduct officer.

Limitations

There are a few limitations when it comes implicit bias, specifically related to student conduct and incident reporting. There is a lack of research on this topic and trainings on implicit bias, specifically regarding the student conduct reporting and hearing process. While this is a beneficial place to start, there is a lot of room to grow in the future around this specific subject. Researchers and practitioners need to partner together to truly find what practices are effective for supporting students.

The first limitation is the sheer amount of implicit biases that exist within a person. While the Implicit Association Test specifically allows for individuals to be tested amongst 14 different categories, there are many other biases that can exist (i.e. Latinx/Hispanic, Transgender, Socioeconomic status, etc.). Additionally, intersectionality is an important factor to be cognizant of when testing for implicit biases. All of the tests presented within the Implicit Association Test factor in one specific identity or belief. There is a lack of layers within this type of testing that would help it align closer with how a human understands the world around them.

Another limitation is the lack of research around reporting student conduct and the student conduct process within the universities and colleges. There is more research currently done with early childhood education to secondary education. Very little currently exists about the process itself within higher education. It would be beneficial to research who is being reported through the conduct process and the decisions of responsibility at the end, especially in relation to demographic data (i.e. race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexuality, etc.).



Additionally, it could prove valuable if you contrast that data with the demographics of the hearing officer. This could find important information around implicit bias within the conduct process.

Finally, implicit bias is a relatively new concept, and it is hard to find research about causation and change amongst individuals and groups. In this type of research, it is next to impossible to control for variables, and it is impossible to have a control group to compare. The one thing that could be valuable is creating a longitudinal study that follows a group of students through education all the way to higher education. It would be necessary to put a focus on implicit bias. The questions asked throughout the research could focus on their values, beliefs, and lived experience. A component of this research could also focus on the Implicit Association Test to see if there are any changes over time.

Conclusion

Implicit biases are pervasive within human nature, and the student conduct reporting and hearing process are no different than the rest of the world. It is absolutely necessary for staff members involved in these processes to fully understand the scope of their implicit bias, and these individuals need to put in the work to create a more impartial process. This article provides three strategies on how departments at universities and college can help their staff members become more impartial. The first strategy mentioned is identifying implicit bias of

the individual and providing avenues of self-reflection to help them process through that. This strategy needs to be ongoing throughout their career to be effective. The second strategy provided focuses on those who report incidents. Semantics affect how the reader (conduct hearing officer) may interpret the situation prior to meeting the student. The last strategy suggested is creating a policy workshop so conduct hearing officers can fully understand the scope of institutional policies. Consistency and fairness are at the root of the conduct process, and people misinterpreting policy can be based in implicit bias. When it comes to the trainings and developments presented, it is necessary for departments to provide these as ongoing and continuous to work against implicit bias. Through these three strategies, practitioners and educators can begin understand their implicit bias, and these trainings will help create an impartial student conduct process.

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