COS/OAC 2020-2021 Annual Report

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Introduction

The Committee on Standards (COS) is charged with upholding Dartmouth College’s [Standards of Conduct](http://student-affairs.dartmouth.edu/resources/student-handbook/standards.html) and the [Academic Honor Principle](https://www.dartmouth.edu/judicialaffairs/honor/index.html) (AHP) for undergraduate students and student organizations. This report is intended to:

* Share a broad overview of undergraduate conduct at the College from Summer 2020 - Spring 2021;
* Promote transparency of and knowledge about our systems of holding undergraduate students and student organizations accountable; and,
* Engage the community in the prevention of conduct that harms or has the potential to harm individuals, our learning community, and the integrity of the degrees that we award.

Respect for Privacy

This report is publicly available; families, alumni, and other stakeholders are vested in the well-being and success of undergraduate students, have interest in this data, and may influence choices of undergraduate students.

Our investment in the transparency of our process does not eclipse our regard for the privacy of the individuals involved. The data in this report is purposefully presented in the aggregate. This report is not intended as a forum for discussion of individual cases, and we discourage speculation about the identity of the students who met with the committees or with a hearing officer.

Conduct Process

When a report is forwarded to the Office of Community Standards & Accountability about student or organizational conduct that, if true, would be a violation of our standards, we consider the type of behavior alleged, and the harm or threat of harm that may have occurred in deciding the appropriate mode of investigation and/or resolution. Possibilities include:

* A referral to the Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention for College Students (BASICS) or other intervention recommended by Dartmouth’s Alcohol and Other Drug Awareness Program (DAODAP) for first violations of the alcohol policy and most Good Samaritan calls.
* An administrative level hearing with a designated hearing officer for minor misconduct. Outcomes can include restitution, educational or community restoration efforts, completion of a substance use or other medical assessment, Warning, Reprimand, or a period of College Probation, or Alcohol Probation for an Organization.
* A COS hearing for more serious misconduct or where there is a history of repeated misconduct. Examples of misconduct referred to the COS include violations of the Academic Honor Principle, dating violence, stalking, harassment, driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, trafficking or distribution of drugs, service of hard alcohol, physical assaults, arson, and bomb threats. The COS can impose any of the outcomes described above. They can also assign a Deferred Suspension, Suspension, or Separate (expel) an undergraduate student from the College or Derecognize an organization.

As per our memo of understanding with the Hanover Police Department, the Department of Safety & Security must also report certain allegations to local police. Reports of drug trafficking, confiscated drugs, false identification cards, aggravated assault, reports of sexual assault involving a minor, reports involving use of a weapon, arson, burglary, robbery, theft (value greater than $1,000), fraud, domestic violence, and homicide must be reported. The College also forwards reports of sexual assault, which may be anonymized at the request of the reporting person, if no minors are involved.

## Sexual Assault Investigations The Unified Disciplinary Procedures for Sexual Assault (UDP) applied to investigations conducted on or after June 18, 2014, through August 31, 2019. Beginning on September 1, 2019, the Dartmouth College Sexual and Gender-Based Misconduct Policy (SMP) was adopted and any new cases referred to an Independent Investigator were processed through the Title IX Office. Those cases that were initiated prior to September 1, 2019, were resolved under the UDP and remained within the Community Standards & Accountability Office through their resolution.

Prior to academic year 2019-2020 statistics involving hearing and outcomes for gender-based violence cases were reported on the Community Standards Annual Reports. Starting in 2019-2020 and moving forward these statistics will be available in Dartmouth’s [Annual Security Report](https://www.dartmouth.edu/security/clery_act/annual_security_report.html) available on Dartmouth’s Department of Safety and Security website.

## Other COS Functions

The Committee on Standards also acts as the appellate body for academic suspensions and separations and for certain registrarial appeals.

When an undergraduate student has been suspended or separated for unsatisfactory academic progress[[1]](#footnote-1), they can request that a subcommittee of the COS consisting of two faculty and one staff member review that action. In a request for review, the student may ask for the action to be converted to Academic Probation (or Suspension if the action was Separation) or, in rare cases, to take a Medical Withdrawal in lieu of the action.[[2]](#footnote-2) The COS considers evidence of significant extenuating circumstances which would warrant a different action. Students requesting review of an academic action are encouraged to address their efforts throughout the term to respond to these circumstances, evaluate their academic effort and attendance throughout the term, and explain what other decisions they considered (i.e. withdrawal from the course or term).

A subcommittee of the COS consisting of one student, one faculty, and one staff member can hear appeals of certain registrarial decisions and actions. Such appeals are infrequent. The COS considers if there is new information that wasn’t reasonably available to the student at the time of the original decision and/or if there was a procedural error that prejudiced the original decision. Examples of the types of decisions that can be appealed to the COS are late additions or withdrawals from a course, request for exemption of the sophomore summer residency requirement, and requests for partial exemption from the senior year requirement.

## Family Notification

During the 2020-2021 academic year, the Office of Community Standards & Accountability provided notice to parents and/or guardians if a student was responding to COS level allegations, when a COS case was resolved, and when an administrative hearing resulted in a serious outcome involving alcohol. Parents and guardians may have been contacted by a staff member, usually an undergraduate dean, in a health or safety emergency, such as in situations where the College was aware of admission to the hospital or if a student were arrested and transported to jail.

## COVID Pandemic

The online academic environment, limited number of students on campus, and social prohibitions intended to keep the Dartmouth community healthy and safe significantly impacted number of conduct cases for the 2020-2021 academic year. Comparisons to previous or future years will be difficult given the unique circumstances of the 2020-2021 academic year.

# Academic Actions

During the 2020-2021 academic year, 29 students petitioned for review of an academic suspension or separation from the College. The COS approved 72% (this includes medical withdrawals approved and regular approvals) of these petitions either allowing the student to continue with a status of Academic Probation with a defined academic recovery plan or to take a medical withdrawal in lieu of a suspension or separation.

# Registrarial Appeals

The COS heard one Registrarial Appeal during the 2020-2021 academic year. The COS upheld the decision of the Registrar in that case.

# Overview of Academic Honor Principle and Conduct Cases

During the 2020-2021 academic year, 118 students were referred to the Committee on Standards (COS) for resolution and/or sanctioning. Eight resulted in either rescinded allegations or no action due to lack of information. 110 were resolved by the Committee on Standards. Major misconduct includes any type of case in which Deferred Suspension, Suspension, or Separation from the College are possible outcomes.

Figure 1 shows the number of cases by type for the past 10 years. Prior to the Summer 2014 term, all sexual misconduct cases would have been referred to the COS.In June 2014, the College adopted a disciplinary procedure in which allegations of sexual misconduct were referred to an Independent Investigator for investigation and resolution. To reflect this change, the third category of cases labeled “Title IX” begins with the 2014-2015 academic year. Due to subsequent policy and procedure changes, starting in 2019-2020 these cases are no longer resolved by the Committee on Standards and so will not appear in the Community Standards Annual Report.

Figure

0

In 2014-2015, 65 students were alleged with Academic Honor Principle (AHP) violations in the same course. The 10-year average for AHP cases, factoring out the single case with 65 students in 2014-2015, is 38.

The average for other conduct cases (factoring out sexual misconduct cases) is 22.

This year, AHP cases and conduct cases made up 99 and 11 cases respectively. The 99 AHP cases stemmed largely from a few reports (each involving ten or more students) of inappropriate accessing of online resources or collaborating outside the scope. These reports resulted in a much higher than average rate.

All cases were resolved by a COS hearing.

# Academic Honor Principle

During the 2020-2021 academic year, 99 cases of alleged violations of the Academic Honor Principle were resolved by the COS. In these cases, 79 (80%) students admitted responsibility for the violation prior to their hearing. Students who admit responsibility may request to have their case heard in a one-on-one hearing by a COS Chair rather than by a full Committee. 72 students who admitted requested a one-on-one hearing.

20 students denied responsibility and were referred to a COS Committee. Of those 20, 11 students were found responsible for the alleged violation.

Of the students who were found responsible (including those who admitted responsibility prior to their hearing), one student was placed on College Probation, 55 students were issued a Deferred Suspension, and 34 were suspended between 2-6 terms.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **AHP Cases by Type of Allegation** | **Quantity** | **Percent** |
| Cheating on exam/quiz | 86 | 33% |
| Unauthorized Collab | 30 | 11% |
| Plagiarism | 8 | 3% |
| Cheating on homework | 12 | 5% |
| Unauthorized use of internet study aid | 54 | 21% |
| Math | 24 | 9% |
| Chemistry | 31 | 12% |
| Earth Science | 4 | 2% |
| Computer Science  Figure 2 | 12 | 5% |

## Types of Violations (AHP)

3%

This year, allegations of the Academic Honor Principle broadly fell into five categories (see Figure 2): cheating on a test or exam, unauthorized collaboration, plagiarism, cheating on homework, and unauthorized use of internet study aid. The most common departments cases were reported from in this year include Math, Chemistry, Earth Science and Computer Science. The number of allegations is greater than the number of cases because some students received multiple AHP allegations in a single case.

# COS-Level Conduct Cases

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Conduct Cases by Allegation** | **Quantity** | **Percent** |
| Disorderly Conduct | 6 | 15% |
| DUI | 2 | 5% |
| Coercion, Harassment or Hazing | 1 | 3% |
| Threatening Health and Safety | 5 | 13% |
| Weapons | 1 | 3% |
| Misappropriation or Damage | 2 | 5% |
| Disruption, Interference, or Obstruction | 3 | 8% |
| Misrepresentation | 1 | 3% |
| Alcohol (consumption, distribution, public intoxication) | 6 | 15% |
| Threatens or Causes Physical Harm | 1 | 3% |
| Unauthorized Access | 1 | 3% |
| Violation of Local, State or Federal Laws | 7 | 18% |
| Failure to Comply with College Official | 1 | 3% |
| Game Table for Drinking Game  Figure 3 | 2 | 5% |

Figure 1 indicates that 11 students were alleged to have engaged in conduct violations at the COS level. Students who are responding to conduct violation allegations at the COS-Level are often alleged to have engaged in more than one violation, and Figure 3 categorizes the cases by allegation frequency. The number of allegations is greater than the number of cases because some students received multiple allegations in a single case.

Two students denied at least one of the alleged violations of the Standards of Conduct prior to their hearing; nine students admitted to all the allegations made against them. In total, seven students had a full COS hearing while four had one-on-one hearings with COS Chairs.

Of the students found responsible, one received College Probation, nine were suspended for a period between 1-4 terms, and one student was separated.

# Organizational Misconduct

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Organizational Conduct Case Sanctions** | |
| Sanction | Frequency of Sanction |
| Org. College Warning | 0 |
| Org. College Reprimand | 1 |
| Org. College Probation | 0 |
| Alcohol Probation | 0 |
| Organizational Suspension + Deferred Suspension | 1 |
| Fine | 1 |
| Additional Sanctions | 0 |
| Alcohol Ed Referral | 0 |
| Organizational First Alcohol | 0 |
| Figure 5 |  |

At their best, student organizations present avenues for students to develop leadership skills, explore shared interests, and enrich our campus culture. As stated in the Group Accountability Policy[[3]](#footnote-3), the conduct of individuals functioning as members or leaders of a student organization may have consequences for that organization. The most common organizational allegations are service of alcohol to underage students and other violations of the Alcohol Management Procedures.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Organizational Conduct by Allegations and Findings** | | |
| Policy Violation | Frequency of Allegations | Findings of Responsibility |
| Disorderly conduct | 1 | 100% |
| Unauthorized Entry | 1 | 100% |
| State and Federal Laws | 1 | No Action |
| Misrepresentation | 1 | 100% |
| College Polices – COVID Regulations | 1 | 100% |
| Fire Safety | 1 | 0% |
| Smoking | 1 | 100% |
| Figure 4 |  |  |

The organizational conduct process mirrors the undergraduate student conduct process. Cases which could result in suspension or de-recognition are heard by the Organizational Adjudication Committee (OAC) while cases that would result in a lower sanction (including probation or alcohol probation) are resolved through administrative hearings.

During the 2020-2021 academic year, the global pandemic, and changes to where and how students were allowed to gather, greatly impacted social life for organizations. As a result, there were fewer organizational issues than in previous years. In 2020-2021 there were two conduct cases involving organizations, and in both cases the organization was found responsible. One of the cases was an administrative hearing and resulted in an organizational College Reprimand. One case was heard by the OAC and resulted in an organizational Suspension. Both cases involved Greek-letter organizations. Figure 4 shows the frequency of each allegation received by an organization. The number of allegations is greater than the number of cases because some organizations received allegations for multiple violations of a policy in a single case.

Figure 5 lists the frequency of sanctions organizations received during the 2020-2021 academic year. Organizations are often given a certain number of terms of suspension or Alcohol Probation followed by a period of College Probation. As such, the number of sanctions is greater than the number of findings of responsibility.

The Office of Community Standards & Accountability shared organizational conduct histories with incoming Greek leadership in the spring of 2021.

# Administrative Hearings and Educational Referrals

Violations of the *Standards of Conduct* which do not reach the threshold for a suspension-level hearing are resolved through an administrative hearing. Administrative hearings are conducted by designated Hearing Officers which include Community Standards & Accountability staff and Assistant Directors from Residential Education. Assistant Directors primarily hear cases involving conduct that occurred within residence halls.

If a Good Samaritan call is placed for a student, the student is expected to complete the Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention for College Students (BASICS) and does not receive any conduct sanctions if other College policies were not also violated. Students who violate the alcohol policy for the first time are also given the same opportunity (this does not include first time violations of the Hard Alcohol Policy).

Alleged violations of the alcohol policy made up 66% of administrative hearings. This includes Good Samaritan and First Alcohol incidents, some of which resulted in a follow-up educational conversation but not in a formal hearing. Any student found to have violated the Alcohol and Other Drug Policy is required to complete BASICS as part of their sanction.

In total, there were 155 administrative-level conduct cases this academic year and 205 total interventions (including Good Samaritan and First Alcohol incidents). The allegations used most frequently are shown in Figure 6. “Other College Policies” include some Residential Education Policies (such as room care policies).

Students may receive more than one allegation in each case. Therefore, the total number of allegations is greater than the number of cases. The percentages are rounded and reflect the percentage of total allegations across all categories.

The number of cases at this level was lower during the 2020-2021 academic year than the previous year (from 257 to 155). This difference is mainly accounted for by the impact of the College’s response to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Summer term 2020 through spring term 2021 there was limited residential capacity and policies that restricted most social gatherings.

First-year students typically make up a large percentage of administrative cases and this year it was approximately half of the cases, 104 out of 205 cases (51% of all cases, including first-time alcohol violations without any other policy violations and Good Samaritan cases).

Sanctions for administrative hearings range from a College Warning to College Probation. Educational only outcomes are largely referrals to BASICS for non-conduct alcohol violations (Good Samaritan calls and first-time alcohol violations without any other policy violations, 24% combined). The distribution of allegations for administrative hearings can be found in Figure 6 and the outcomes for these hearings are shown in Figure 7 (both found on the following page).

Figure 6

Figure 7

# Acknowledgement

Members of the Committee on Standards are Dartmouth students, faculty, and staff who represent our community by election or appointment. We wish to thank our graduating seniors and faculty whose terms of service are complete.

# Feedback

This report aimed to:

* Share a broad overview of undergraduate conduct at the College from Summer 2020 - Spring 2021;
* Promote transparency in and knowledge about our systems of holding undergraduate students and student organizations accountable; and,
* Engage the community in the prevention of conduct that harms or has the potential to harm individuals, our learning community, and the integrity of the degrees that we award.

We welcome your feedback and suggestions via e-mail to Community.Standards@Dartmouth.edu. In your email, please let us know if you are a current student, parent/guardian, alum, faculty, or staff member and how future reports can better meet the described objectives.

1. Academic Progress requirements are described here: <http://student-affairs.dartmouth.edu/policy/academic-regulations-and-actions> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Students requesting a Medical Withdrawal in lieu of Academic Suspension or Separation will need Counseling and Human Development to confirm their request and are advised that the nature of medical withdrawals may necessitate a period of time away from campus that is longer than a three-term academic suspension. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The Group Accountability Statement (https://students.dartmouth.edu/student-life/policy/group-accountability-statement) presents the College’s position on the responsibility for the conduct of officers and members of undergraduate student organizations. Newly elected presidents are encouraged to speak with their advisor or The Office of Community Standards & Accountability to learn if their organization has a recent history of misconduct. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)