CHOOSE YOUR OWN PATHWAY: HOW LETTING STUDENTS CHOOSE THEIR SANCTIONS REVOLUTIONIZED THE STUDENT CONDUCT PROCESS

Evelyn L. Ashley
University of Massachusetts Amherst

Tony Miller Jr.
University of Montevallo

Abstract

The students at Southern Methodist University (SMU) did not have a favorable view of the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards. To change this connotation, the staff members developed a new innovative sanctioning model to allow students to select their educational sanctions. The model is inspired by restorative justice and is in line with student development theory. After the first year of implementation, the office saw an immediate change in perception. Students feeling respected and listened to in the process increased by 24% and 20%, respectively. The model worked so well that a colleague implemented it at another university and experienced similar positive results. This article details the impact and shows how other student conduct offices can revolutionize their process and serve students in an impactful way.

Keywords: student conduct, process, restorative, model code, change

Please direct inquires about this manuscript to: Evelyn L. Ashley, eashley@umass.edu

College Student Affairs Journal, Volume 40(2), pp. 62 - 73
ISSN 2381-2338

This article will provide insights into the processes staff at two different institutions, a private, mid-sized, urban institution and a public, small, rural institution took to utilize student development theory to reimagine the student conduct review process on their campuses. Due to student perceptions of the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards and the student conduct review process, the reimagined processes were necessary. At both institutions, students went from believing the student conduct process was designed to get students in trouble to understanding the goal of the process as educational opportunities to reflect on their behavior and develop the skills, habits, and behaviors required to avoid future violations. Students began to understand that staff in the student conduct office were not out to get them but there to help them.

We hope to encourage student conduct professionals to evaluate their current practices for adjudicating student conduct cases to determine if there may be room for the student's voice to assist in determining the outcomes of student cases. We provide insight into the steps taken to review the process and implement revisions focused on incorporating the student's voice into the process along with information about student and staff feedback after the implementation of the Pathways Sanctioning Model.

Student Conduct Background

Many institutions utilize a Model Student Code as a template for their code of conduct and adjudication process (Karp & Sacks, 2014). The student conduct process generally follows a basic outline; a potential violation of the student code of conduct is reported, there is an investigation, followed by a meeting or hearing, and if the student is found responsible, sanctions are assigned (Karp & Sacks, 2014). Usually, the only input a respondent student might have in the process is sharing their perspective of the events leading to the adjudication of their case with their conduct officer. Gehring (2001) stated, "the disciplinary process on campuses have been too procedural and mirrors an adversarial proceeding that precludes student development" (p. 466). Often sanctions are viewed as punishments for violating policies within the student code of conduct. Many students believe conduct officers have predetermined the case's outcome before the student walks into the office.

In 2015, the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards (SCCS) at Southern Methodist University (SMU), a private, mid-sized, urban institution, chose to focus on the perception students held of the office. The staff chose to pursue intentional student outreach and engagement to change the connotation of their office and control the narrative. The staff found it was rare for a student to acknowledge the sanctions assigned to them were helpful in any way, especially from an educational standpoint. Students did not see the office as a place where they could be connected to resources. In a survey conducted by the staff, one student, when asked to comment on their overall experience of the process, responded, "The sanctions that I was given did less to educate me and only made me resentful toward the process" (SCCS, 2015). King (2012) conducted a study of 1,884 students from three large western 4-year public universities to learn about their perception of educational value and fairness of the student conduct process. Approximately half of the participants reported that either their hearing was not fair or their hearing had no educational value (King, 2012). Howell (2005) also conducted a study with 10 participants from three doctoral research universities in the southeast to capture students' perceived learning experience and impact on future behaviors by participating in the student conduct process. Howell discovered some ~~students felt they did not learn anything by par~~ticipating in the student conduct process. The results King (2012) discovered were indeed similar results to those found by Howell (2005) because some students reported no perceived education-

al value due to their participation in the student conduct process. The data from these studies can be disheartening to a student conduct professional because the conduct process is designed to be fair and encompass student development and learning (Baladizan, 1998; Gehring, 2001). However, King (2012) also found that more educational value was placed on the experience if the student found the process to be fair. Moreover, Howell (2005) found a positive experience impacted future behaviors of students, and King (2012) found students were more likely to refrain from participation in future policy violations after a positive experience. King (2012) believed if student conduct professionals are fair, reflective, respectful, efficient, and understand what impacts students' experiences in the process, it will increase a student's ability to learn during the process.

Student Development Theories

Two theories serve as the foundation of this scholarly practice to enhance students' growth, development, and experience participating in the student conduct process. The two theories directly relate to the students' internal cognitive learning processes and how they choose to move forward. Baxter-Magolda's (2008) theory of self-authorship and Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory consider what students know about themselves and how they can use what they learn to make better decisions in the future.

Kolb (1984) explained that "learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (p. 38). The Pathway Plan sanctioning model allows the student conduct professional and student to work together to find solutions. Working with the student, the conduct officer can assist in the student's understanding of how their chosen actions have impacted them as an individual and how said actions violated university policy and impacted the larger community. This practice aligns nicely with Baxter-Magolda's (2008) theory of self-authorship. Baxter-Magolda (2008) posited that,

> Learning partnerships rely on the intersection of the voices of both partners. Thus, they cultivate learners' internal voices and allow educators to frame their participation in the context of the learner's voice. This avoids using a standard practice that does not acknowledge differences among learners. (p. 283)

The conduct officer serves as the voice of the university and helps to outline the expectations set for students. The student brings their own voice and understanding of themselves to the process. By working together, the student and the conduct officer can build on the student's knowledge of self to create an experience that may transform the way the student approaches future situations. This method also acknowledges that one approach when determining the outcome of student conduct proceedings does not work for every student. To assist every student, their individual needs and voice should be considered in the process.

Purpose of the Pathway Plan Sanctioning Model

Student conduct programs are most often designed to enforce the rules outlined for students in the student handbook or student code of conduct (Wilson, 2017). At the forefront of most student conduct process, conduct professionals work to ensure the process is both developmental and educational. Stoner and Lowery (2004) stated,

> Colleges and universities also desire to use a student discipline process that, itself, will help to educate students about their responsibilities as members of an academic community and to impose educational sanctions when student conduct is beyond the limit of the community's indulgence. (p. 5)

Assigning educational sanctions is part of the conduct process. Those familiar with student conduct work, know that it is common practice that conduct administrators assign opportunities for students to reflect on their behavior through talking with another student affairs professional or pro-

viding prompts for students to write a reflective essay. The goals of these methods are to encourage a student to think about their previous behavior(s) and hopefully determine alternative behaviors for the future to avoid additional violations.

Students learn in different ways. When considering accountability and positive decision-making, many institutions default to what has been deemed standard sanctions such as alcohol or drug education (online or an in-person class), a reflection paper, a monetary fine, and/or other prescribed sanctions that are based on what the institution believes may be impactful for student learning, depending on the type of violation committed. Based on survey responses from students who went through the hearing process with this standardized approach to sanctioning, students did not feel a part of the educational process, often did not feel heard, and expressed frustration with a one-size-fits-all process.

While the Pathway Plan sanctioning model can be used to incorporate the student's voice, it may not always be appropriate to include students in the determination of outcomes. Only students who accept responsibility for their alleged violation(s) were afforded the opportunity to participate in the Pathway sanctioning model with their conduct educator. Additionally, students faced with possible separation from the institution were not allowed to participate in the model and the model was not used in the adjudication of cases involving violations related to academic misconduct.

Based on student feedback and a desire to connect theory to practice, we reimagined the sanction process to include student input resulting in the Pathway Plan sanctioning model. In alignment with the literature (Baxter-Magolda 2008; Kolb, 1984), the foundation of the Pathway Plan sanctioning model is fairness, respect, and understanding the student's experience while also incorporating the student's knowledge of self. The model provides an opportunity for the student to select their learning outcomes and foster a positive collaborative experience with their conduct officer. This allows the student some control within their disciplinary situation. The Pathway Plan sanctioning model allows students to change their narratives by working with them when they accept responsibility for violating a policy. A menu of educational sanctions (pathway projects) is provided to students, allowing them to participate in their learning experience. Rather than feeling like an administrator is conspiring against them, the student is a primary contributor in making the incident a transformational experience in their college journey.

Within the Pathway Plan sanctioning model, the educational sanctions are grouped into specific categories called pathways. The pathways were determined by analyzing sanctions assigned to students in the past and determining themes. All sanctions are categorized within one of five pathways. Those pathways are understanding, perspective, well-being, restorative, and accountability. The title of the pathways reflects the learning or experience a student may have when engaging with that particular pathway. The *understanding* pathway allows the student to delve deeper into how they understand themselves and others. *Perspective* encourages students to reflect on their point of view while also considering the point of view others may hold and comparing how they may be similar or different. Students focused on their mental, physical, or spiritual well-being might select the *well-being* pathway. While the *restorative* pathway focuses on working with others to restore or repair the harm that may have been done. The projects within the *accountability* pathway are selected by the conduct officer, such as determining conduct status (e.g., warning, conduct probation, deferred suspension), issuing monetary fines, notifying parents or guardians, and referring students to other campus partners as deemed necessary and appropriate.

In addition to incorporating student voice, the implementation of the Pathways Plan sanctioning model encouraged the involvement of uni-

versity offices within the division of student affairs and beyond. The model served as an opportunity for conduct staff to engage with campus partners in Community Health Promotions, Chaplain/Religious Life office, Campus Recreational Services, Student Activities, Career Services, the library, the Learning Center, and other campus offices.

Campus Context

The impetus for the creation of the Pathways Plan sanctioning model was twofold. Staff wanted to address the fact that students felt the conduct review process was designed to get them in trouble and the issue that students felt sanctions assigned to them were predetermined and prescribed. One of the goals in the office was to ensure every student going through the process felt respected and heard by their conduct officer. To determine if this goal was being met, staff in the office regularly conducted surveys of students who had participated in the conduct process to understand their perceptions better. Prior to the implementation of the Pathway Plan sanctioning model, the Student Conduct and Community Standards process surveys from 2014 and 2015 revealed a mix of student responses such as:

- "It was very clear that my conduct officer had her mind made up about my case from the beginning."
- "Sanctions for worthless rules don't make me question my actions."
- "I feel that I have received an excessive amount of sanctions for my violation."
- "Out to get kids."
- "No sympathy for student mistakes."
- "They were only here to get us in trouble and take our money."

The survey results made staff think about the experience students were having as participants in the conduct process. Staff began to ask questions about whether or not it was fair for each student involved in a situation to receive the same outcome. When they determined an approach might have been fair because each student involved received sanctions, they questioned if the approach truly addressed the developmental needs of each student. This process of reflection by the staff did not account for what the student might be hoping to gain through accepting responsibility for the violation and working on completing their sanction, nor did it consider what the student knew about themselves.

Additionally, staff desired to incorporate the principles and practices of restorative justice into the conduct review process. As Zehr (2002) explained, restorative justice requires the wrongdoer to admit their wrongdoing and seek to repair the wrong that has been done to the community. Karp (2004) stated, "Restorative processes help educate community members about the need for civic commitment and build student capacity for evaluating the impact of their behavior on the community" (p. 7). It was important to staff that students enter into a process where they could meaningfully reflect on the behavior or decision that led to a violation and then determine positive alternatives for the future.

The staff hoped students involved in a routine alcohol violation by an underage student might be able to see the impact their decisions and behavior had not only on them as a student but on those around them such as their roommate, close friends, faculty, or others. Through an analysis of the students who were taking responsibility for violating the student code of conduct, the staff determined that students developmentally may not be able to truly see the impact of their actions on others in order to participate in a true restorative justice process. With an understanding that students may not be able to see the impact of their actions on others, staff began to envision a process that allowed students to have a voice in their process.

Restorative circles require that both the complainant and respondent are willing to participate (Zehr, 2002). There must be an acknowledgment of wrongdoing or harm and a willingness

to repair the wrong. Considering this requirement of restorative justice we determined that only students who accepted responsibility would be permitted to participate in the revised process. Students would be assigned the accountability pathway by their conduct officer. The accountability pathway included the assigning of the student's standing with the university (formal warning, conduct probation, or deferred suspension), parental notification and a fine (if the violation involved the alcohol or drug policy), and a referral to other campus offices such as the substance abuse counselor.

Several pathways were presented to students for their selection. The *perspective* pathway focuses on allowing the student to reflect on their decision-making to gain insight and also encourage the student to consider the perspective of others. The *restorative* pathway is designed to encourage students to renew or repair any harm their actions may have caused to individuals, the SMU community, or the larger Dallas community. The *understanding* pathway encouraged students to develop insight to influence good judgement in their future decisions. It was also designed to help students better understand certain policies, rules, and philosophies within the SMU community. Lastly, the *well-being* pathway provided an opportunity for students to focus on their well-being which might include a focus on spiritual, mental, or physical health. Students were encouraged to explore resources that focused on healthy lifestyles, positivity, and being productive members of the campus and larger community.

Power of a Change in Terminology

An old saying declared, "it is not what you say, but how you say it." In the student conduct world, this adage rings true. Student conduct professionals tend to meet students at the lowest point in their life or at least in a time of embarrassment or anxiety. Building rapport with students when the job is to determine if the student violated policy and hold them accountable is a skill many people do not possess. As a result, student conduct professionals must be mindful of the words they say to students so as not to offend or make students feel worse about their situation. For example, suppose a student says they made a "dumb" or "stupid" decision. In that case, an astute conduct officer will not reiterate or reinforce the student's negative perception but will rephrase the term as a "poor" decision. The student will appreciate not being called dumb or stupid and hopefully see the conduct officer's efforts to try and build them up instead of tearing them down. There may also be times when a student is not being truthful or forthcoming with their conduct officer. In that instance, a conduct officer who is skilled in understanding the need to incorporate emotional intelligence in the administration of student conduct will not call the student a "liar" or say the student is "lying." The conduct officer may approach the issue of the student being dishonest by stating something like, "I believe you are telling me a portion of what happened, can we start over and you tell me the whole story?" In this case, the conduct officer acknowledges that the student may not be being truthful, but they say it in a way that will not provoke the student and upset them. The Pathway Plan terminology works in the same manner.

The student conduct process is designed to be an educational process, not a criminal or legal process. Therefore, the language used within the student conduct process should not be the same as that used in a criminal process. There are no trials in the student conduct process. Instead, there are hearings. Students are not found guilty of policy violations; they are found responsible. Likewise, there are differences in terminology between the criminal and student conduct processes, and there are slight differences in terminology within the Pathway Plan sanctioning model. Table 1 displays the differences between all three models. The terms contribute to students experiencing the process differently. In the traditional model, the term *sanction* describes how a student will be held accountable. Conversely, the term *pathway proj-*

ect is used in the Pathway Plan sanctioning model. The word project conveys a different connotation and signals to the student that they will be working to improve on a specific issue. Another significant difference in terminology is conduct officer versus conduct educator. The word officer carries a negative connotation; in contrast, the word educator has a more optimistic tone and tells the student the staff members are here to assist them in learning from their experience. The work of student conduct professionals is challenging, and what they say matters. The Pathway Plan sanctioning model helps make their job easier.

Major Takeaways

Better Overall Experience for Students

The Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (SCCS) at SMU first implemented the Pathway Plan sanctioning model during the 2017-2018 academic school year. The data from students who participated in the student conduct process (n=242) shows students had a much better overall experience with the new sanctioning model. This includes the students who did not accept responsibility and were sanctioned by their conduct officer. The feedback from students was a stark contrast compared to the previous year's feedback. Students responding about their experience in the Pathway Plan sanctioning model shared the following:

- "The Pathway Plan is extremely helpful, and I felt like I got a say."
- "I believe that the pathway plan is very strong as is. Instead of focusing heavily on the stupidity of my actions, the meeting and words of my Conduct Officer were more directed towards the importance of learning from and moving past my actions which helped greatly in my self-evaluation."
- "Mr. Miller was very fair and interested in what I had to say. It felt like I was talking to a mentor rather than a conduct officer. He completely changed my perception of the Office of Conduct and Community Standards because I went in with the preconception that the meeting was going to be harsh and impersonal while it was actually the opposite."
- "Most definitely. Initially, I was upset that SMU got involved in any way - considering the incident happened off campus. I was more comfortable with the process after my Conduct Officer explained to me the goals of the hearing and the vested interest the university has in my academic success and overall success in life."

Howell (2005) and King (2012) found in their studies that positive experiences in the student conduct process led to a reduction of future policy violations and an increase in educational value. The implementation of this sanctioning model positively and significantly impacted the experience of students. Karp and Sacks (2014) study found that restorative-oriented administrative hearings ranked second behind full restorative practices in student learning. However, as Karp and Sacks (2014) stated, restorative justice practices are subject to selection bias when conduct officers feel a respondent student may be remorseful and more willing to participate in restorative practices. However, there was no statistical significance in any area of their study between restorative-oriented administrative hearings and full restorative justice practices. The Pathway Plan sanctioning model is a restorative-oriented model and Karp and Sacks (2014) findings suggest that all students may benefit from restorative practices. Five categories stood out that evidenced students had a better overall experience. The most significant changes were that students felt (a) respected, (b) listened to, (c) allowed to share their perspective of the incident, (d) had the process explained to them, and (e) their conduct officer was personally invested in them.

Better Overall Experience for Staff Members

The pathway plan sanctioning model provides a better overall experience for students and

for the conduct officers. We asked staff members through personal communication how the model impacted them and how it impacted their experience with students and they shared the following information:

- "It's something new – before the Pathway Plan approach, conduct outcomes seemed very generic, almost rinse and repeat. Students could predict that there would be a fine and a reflection. The Pathway Plan has opened new possibilities for a creative outlet"
- "As a conduct officer, I've appreciated seeing students take charge of their education. This has typically resulted in more substantial submissions (more thorough and thought out) than previous submissions."
- "I am not necessarily the "bad guy," but instead someone hoping they will learn from the experience and encouraging them to find a way they can develop as an individual."
- "I really think it helps with getting to know students better. They choose interesting and sometimes surprising projects that allow deeper conversation and better rapport building."
- "I really like it! I think it's unique and puts a positive perspective on the conduct process."

When the staff members feel good about their work and believe in the process, it makes their job more enjoyable. It also impacts how they interact with students so the student's experience can be pleasant, although a difficult conversation might occur. As stated earlier, when students feel respected, feel the process is fair, and are allowed to share their perspectives, their experience is positive.

Respected

Based on survey data collected in 2014-2015 (193 student responses), only 75% of students reported feeling respected while participating in the student conduct process. This model infuses respect into the process. After implementing the Pathway Plan model (2017-2018), 93% (156 student responses) of students reported feeling respected while participating in the student conduct process.

Listened To

The same survey from 2014-2015 showed that only 81% of students felt listened to during their hearing. However, in 2017-2018, those results rose to 96%. We believe if someone feels respected and listened to, they might also deem their treatment as fair. Howell (2005), Karp and Sacks (2014), and King's (2012) research showed that students who feel the process is fair learn more and are much more likely not to violate policy again.

Perspective of Incident

As stated earlier, students at SMU felt their sanctions were predetermined punishments for policy violations and regardless of what they said, they would receive cookie-cutter sanctions. Some students felt their perspective was not considered at all and the conduct officer's mind was already made up. The Pathway Plan sanctioning model was created to ensure that students participated in the sanctioning step of the process and their perspective of the incident was considered and how they were held accountable was a collaborative effort. In 2014-2015, 89% of students felt they could share their perspectives of the incident. However, in 2017-2018, 100% of students reported they had the opportunity to share their view of the incident.

Process Explained to Them

In general, the unknown can be scary. The outcome of a student's conduct hearing is unknown and can cause anxiety. However, if information about what to expect is shared upfront, it can reduce some stress by providing insight into the unknown. In 2014-2015, 86% of students reported having the process explained to them compared to 96% in 2017-2018. A small explanation of what to expect can significantly impact how students view the process and their treatment in the process.

Conduct Officer Personal Investment

Gehring (2001) posited that the student conduct

process has become too procedural and adversarial. If students view the process as adversarial or unfair, it may be difficult for students to feel their conduct officer is invested in them. If students feel like they are a part of an assembly line, how can they feel like their conduct officer is invested in their success and development? Conduct officers hear multiple cases a day and throughout the week. The process may be tedious and mundane, but for every student meeting with them, that is their only meeting with them. That student should get the full attention of their conduct officer and their experience should not be cheated. The Pathway Plan model strives to ensure that rapport is built and the students know their conduct officer is personally invested in them. In 2014-2015, 86% of students felt their conduct officer was personally invested in them, but in 2017-2018, that number rose to 96%. Figure 1 displays the yearly comparison of quantitative student feedback dating back to the 2014-2015 academic year.

Transferability to other Institutions

One question about the Pathway Plan sanctioning model is whether it can be duplicated at different institutions and institutional types; in short, yes, it can. The Pathway Plan sanctioning model may not be the best model for every campus and student population, but it has worked at more than one institution. The University of Montevallo (UM) and SMU are opposites in many aspects. SMU is a private university, and UM is public. SMU is located in a large city, UM is located in a rural town. Eleven percent of SMU's students are Pell grant eligible and UM has 44% of their students who Pell grant eligible. The Pathway Plan sanctioning model was implemented at UM in 2018-2019. It was well-received by the student population. The survey data at UM mirrored the data collected at SMU, displayed a significant change in the student experience. In the 2017-2018 year at UM, 85% (59 student responses) of students reported they felt respected by their conduct officer, but in 2018-2019, that number rose to 94% (34 student responses). As it pertains to a student having the opportunity to share their perspective of the incident, 80% reported they could do so in 2017-2018, but 100% said they could in 2018-2019. Since the implementation of this model, over 24 institutions have inquired about implementing or bringing components of the model into their process.

Generation Z currently makes up the population of traditionally-aged college students, and their presence on campuses influences how universities address policy violations. Generation Z is focused on technology, wants to be challenged, prefers independence, wants to be heard, is entrepreneurial-minded, and craves human interaction (Miller, 2018; Sladek & Miller, 2018). This sanctioning model melds well with the characteristics of Generation Z students who want to have a voice and be in control. This sanctioning model provides the student conduct profession an innovative way to meet students where they are and hold them accountable fairly and equitably. It is also another alternative to restorative justice, as it allows the student to acknowledge their wrongdoing and take steps to make the appropriate repairs by working with a conduct officer.

Discussion

Recidivism

The Pathway Plan sanctioning model was created to achieve two things: change the negative perception of the SCCS office and allow students to be a part of their learning experience to foster meaningful growth in their decision-making. However, after analyzing the data, staff members found the recidivism rate of 2 out of 3 most frequently violated policies (alcohol and drugs) was reduced. In the previous 3 school years, the average recidivism rate for alcohol was 8.8%. After the implementation of the Pathway Plan sanctioning model, the rate dropped to 6.8% (19 out of 276). Drugs were the second policy violation that saw a slight reduction in repeat offenders. During the

same amount of time, the rate was 4.9% (9 out of 181), but in 2017-2018 (0 out of 41), there were no repeat offenders. Another observation made about recidivism is that the overall recidivism rate from 2016-2017 to 2017-2018 was cut in half (7.6% [90 of 1,186] vs. 4.2% [45 of 1,073]). There is a clear relationship between implementing the Pathway Plan model and the recidivism rate; however, we cannot say there is a causal relationship. The evidence of the reduced recidivism rate supports Howell's (2005) and King's (2012) findings that students are less likely to re-offend when they have a positive experience.

Appeals

The number of appeals submitted by students dropped in 2017-2018. Again, the goal of the Pathway Plan model was not to reduce the number of appeals, but unlike the recidivism rate, it was not surprising to see the number of appeals decrease. Due to students having the opportunity to choose their pathway projects, it is improbable they would appeal what they chose for themselves. The typical appeal would be related to the conduct status assigned by the conduct educator, in which the student does not have a say. Some students may appeal the status of conduct probation if they felt a formal warning was more appropriate. The same would occur if they were assigned deferred suspension and felt conduct probation or formal warning were fair. For offices that have multiple parts in their appeal process, the reduction of appeals can save time and the use of appellate personnel around campus.

Better Sanctions, Even Better Process

Nelson (2017) questioned the educational value of the student conduct process and whether learning actually occurred. The most substantial limitation of this study is that only two universities have implemented it and seen its benefits. However, the stark contrast of the two universities speaks to the model's diversity, applicability, and reliability. More than 25 innovative and creative pathway projects have been created or added to enhance students' experience, growth, and learning. While the new pathway projects have been beneficial for students, the new sanctioning model is more than that. However, it is not just about better sanctions; it is about a better process. Karp and Sacks (2014) found that the value of the traditional approach is limited and lags far behind restorative practices and restorative-oriented hearings. The Pathway Plan sanctioning model is a better process for the student and the student conduct professional. Adapting to this model will take limited training if any for student conduct professionals with any experience hearing cases. The process for hearing the case is essentially the same. The changes are the behavior, phrases, and level of care shown by the Conduct Officer and the participation in the process of the student.

Conclusion

By incorporating the student's voice, the conduct administrator is able to provide the student with agency within their process. Allowing for student voice to be incorporated into the determination of their educational sanctions acknowledges the student may have insight into their own development and what will assist them in avoiding future violations. When a student is able to accept responsibility for their violations they are acknowledging their role in the violation; that acknowledgment can be used as an opportunity to further assist the student in their understanding of how to move beyond the violation.

In addition to students benefiting from the implementation of a reimagined conduct process, staff serving as conduct officers were able to have deeper and meaningful conversations with their students which led to the staff being seen as a resource and not just as a disciplinarian. Overall, both the student and the staff experience were enhanced to allow students to reflect and feel supported in a process that can induce anxiety and is often seen as adversarial. The changes in the

process allow the office to move from disciplinary transactions to working toward helping student have transformational experiences.

References

Baldizan, E. M. (1998). Development, due process, and reduction: Student conduct in the 1990s. *New Directions for Student Services, 1998*(82), 29–37. http://doi.org/10.1002/ss.8203

Gehring, D. D. (2001). The objectives of student discipline and the process that's due: Are they compatible? *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice, 38*(4), 466–481. http://doi.org/10.2202/1949-6605.1155

Howell, M. T. (2005). Students perceived learning and anticipated future behaviors as a result of participation in the student judicial process. *Journal of College Student Development, 46*(4), 374–392. doi: 10.1353/csd.2005.0035

Karp, D. R., & Sacks, C. (2014). Student conduct, restorative justice, and student development: Findings from the starr project: A student accountability and restorative research project." *Contemporary Justice Review, 17*, 154–172. http://doi.org/10.1080/10282580.2014.915140

King, R. H. (2012). Student conduct administration: How students perceive the educational value and procedural fairness of their disciplinary experiences. *Journal of College Student Development, 53*(4), 563–580. doi: 10.1353/csd.2012.0058

Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development* (Vol. 1). Prentice-Hall.

Magolda, M. B. B. (2008). Three elements of self-authorship. *Journal of College Student Development, 49*(4), 269-284.

Miller, J. (2018). A 16-year-old explains 10 things you need to know about generation z. https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-magazine/1118/pages/a-16-year-old-explains-10-things-you-need-to-know-about-generation-z.aspx

Nelson, A. R. (2017). *Learning and development as a result of student conduct administration* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Wisconsin at Madison]. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards (SCCS) (2014). *Conduct Review Process Survey* [Unpublished raw data]. Southern Methodist University (SMU).

Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards (SCCS) (2015). *Conduct Review Process Survey* [Unpublished raw data]. Southern Methodist University (SMU).

Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards (SCCS) (2018). *Post Conduct Educator Hearing Survey* [Unpublished raw data]. Southern Methodist University (SMU).

Sladek, S., & Miller, J. (2018). *Ready or not, here comes z.* XYZ University. https://xyzuniversity.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Ready-or-Not-Here-Comes-Z-Final.pdf

Stoner, E. N., & Lowery, J. W. (2004). Navigating past the "Spirit of insubordination": A twenty-first century model student conduct code with a model hearing script. *Journal of College and University Law, 31*(1), 1 – 78.

Wilson, M. E. (2017). Organizational structures and functions. In Schuh, J. H., Jones, S. R. & Torres, V. (Eds)., *Student services: A handbook for the profession*. (6th ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Zehr, H. (2002). *The little book of restorative justice*. Good Books.

Evelyn L. Ashley (she/her) serves as the dean of students at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Tony Miller, Jr. (he/him) is the director of Student Conduct and Title IX Coordinator at the University of Montevallo.

Table 1

Student Conduct Terminology Table

Criminal Process	Educational Process/Traditional Model	Pathway Plan Model
Trial	Hearing	Hearing
Defendant	Respondent	Respondent
Plaintiff	Complainant	Complainant
Guilty	Responsible	Responsible
Not Guilty	Not Responsible	Not Responsible
Verdict	Decision/Outcome	Decision/Outcome
Penalty/Sentence	Sanction	Pathway Project
Judge/Jury	Conduct Officer/Board Members	Conduct Educator
NA	Outcome Letter	Pathway Plan

Figure 1

SMU Survey Responses