

Senate Discipline Committee (SDC)

2016-2017 Annual Report

The Senate Discipline Committee (SDC) submits the following annual report for 2016-2017.

1. Membership

The following persons served on the SDC between July 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017:

Faculty members:

Susan Holmes (Chair)	College of Continuing Education (from May 2006)
Andrew Warkentin	Faculty of Engineering (from March 2014)
Jim Power	Faculty of Management (from July 2012)
Robin Parker	Faculty / University Libraries (from July 2015)
Yulia Kotlyarova	Faculty of Science (from Sept 2016)
Allen Finley	Faculty of Medicine (from Sept 2016)
Erna Snelgrove-Clarke	Faculty of Health Professions (from July 2015)
Matthew Herder	Schulich School of Law (from July 2015)

Dalhousie Student Union members:

Sarah Dobson	from May 1, 2016
Liam Hunt	from May 1, 2016
Nick Gear	from May 1, 2016
Lisa Hackett	from Jan 1, 2017

King's Student Union members:

Liam Compton	from May 1, 2016
Curran McConnell	from May 1, 2016

Susan Holmes and Erna Snelgrove-Clarke were on sabbatical for the 2016-17 term. Sarah Dobson, Liam Hunt, Curran McConnell and Liam Compton have moved on and will no longer serve on the SDC. Nick Gear and Lisa Hackett will continue to serve for the next academic term. We thank all faculty and student representatives for their outstanding support this past year.

2. Activities of the SDC

The Committee considers all allegations of academic offences that are not resolved by Faculty Academic Integrity Officers and all breaches of the Code of Student Conduct that are not resolved informally through the Office of the Vice-President, Student Services. In addition to conducting hearings, the SDC meets annually, or as frequently as required, to discuss relevant issues and to provide training to its members.

The current year, 2016-2017, saw continued development regarding enforcement of penalties ordered by the SDC and Faculty AIOs. It has been a long-standing practice of the SDC to recommend, where appropriate, that offending students undergo some remedial training in order to learn best practices and avoid committing offences in the future. This often takes the form of a recommendation that a student attends a Writing Centre workshop on writing a research paper or on intellectual honesty, and study skills and time management workshops offered by Student Academic Success Services have also been utilized. There has been an increase in use of these workshops.

The SDC also heard four Code of Student Conduct cases this year, three of which involved allegations of offences against others in the Dalhousie community. The fourth case was a property offence/ use of unauthorized facilities/equipment and services. These were challenging cases to hear, but were handled professionally and fairly for all involved. With the possibility of increased reporting of offences against persons at Dalhousie, the SDC will be seeking better resources so that it can be increasingly better equipped to handle such cases in the future.

Caseload

The overall caseload (by student) of the Senate Discipline Committee saw a decrease in the number of cases from 47 cases in 2015-2016 academic year to 36 in 2016-2017, as outlined below. This is a direct result of a change to the Faculty Discipline Procedures implemented this year, giving Academic Integrity Officers the right to request permission from the Senate Vice-Chair (Student Affairs) to deal with students with prior offences in appropriate circumstances. This resulted in 15 fewer hearings than would have been held had this amendment not been approved.

3. Students with Allegations¹ heard by SDC between July 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017

Number of Students with Allegations Heard: **36**
Number of Students with Pending Allegations: **10**
Number of alleged first time offenders: **15**
Number of alleged repeat offenders: **21**

4. Cases² heard by SDC between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016

Number of Cases Heard: **34**
Number of Pending Cases: **4**

5. Allegations Received and /or Heard by SDC over last 3 years

Allegations received in 2014-2015 and heard in 2014-2015: 39
Allegations received in 2014-2015 pending a hearing as of July 1, 2015: 11
Total allegations heard in 2014-2015: 39
Total allegations received in 2014-2015: 50

¹ An **allegation** refers to an alleged offence against a specific student, including code of student conduct offences.

² A **case** encompasses the entire number of students involved in an alleged offence whose allegations are proceeding before one SDC hearing panel, e.g. a group project involving 4 students would be considered 4 allegations, but **one** case with **one** hearing.

Allegations received in 2015-2016 and heard in 2015-2016: 47
 Allegations received in 2015-2016 pending a hearing as of July 1, 2016: 11
Total allegations heard in 2015-2016: 47
Total allegations received in 2015-2016: 58

Allegations received in 2016-2017 and heard in 2016-2017: 36
 Allegations received in 2016-2017 pending a hearing as of July 1, 2017: 10
Total allegations heard in 2016-2017: 36
Total allegations received in 2016-2017: 46

6. Distribution of Students with Allegations Heard by SDC over last 5 years – By Faculty or Administrative Unit

The following chart identifies the number of students with allegations attributable to each Faculty or Administrative Department that were heard by the SDC in the applicable academic year. The numbers relate to classes which are part of a specific Faculty and may not be the home Faculty of the instructor or the student.

Faculty or Unit	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
Agriculture	0	0	1	2	1
Architecture and Planning	0	1	0	1	0
Arts and Social Sciences	7	8	7	11	11
Computer Science	0	2	3	1	4
Dentistry	0	0	0	0	0
Engineering	5	3	3	3	0
Graduate Studies	0	0	1	0	0
Health Professions	4	1	4	4	3
Law	0	1	1	0	0
Management	10	8	7	10	5
Medicine	0	1	0	0	0
Science	1	7	10	8	6
King's College	4	1	1	4	2
Office of the Vice-President, Student Services (Code of Student Conduct)	0	0	1	3	4
Total	31	33	39	47	36

NOTE: Over the past five years, the number of Code of Student Conduct cases heard by the SDC has increased. These are difficult cases with challenging facts for the SDC to consider. They typically feature higher stakes and students who are considerably more vulnerable than the SDC is asked to handle in cases involving allegations of academic misconduct. Frequently there is a complainant involved who has been victimized. Understandably, this makes for an emotionally taxing exercise for the faculty members and students who serve on these hearing panels. For this reason, and a variety of others, the Manager of Discipline and Appeals has asked the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee to strike a work group to consider whether a different judicial process might be more appropriate for non-academic misconduct cases.

7. Number of Students with Allegations Heard by SDC between July 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017 – By Outcome

Proven:	33
Not Proven:	3
Total:	36

The standard of proof is the balance of probabilities. When an allegation has been proven, this means that the SDC hearing panel has determined that the alleged academic offence is more likely than not to have been committed by the student.

8. Distribution of Students with Allegations Heard by SDC between July 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017 – By Level of Class

Level of class	Distribution of students with allegations heard by SDC 2016-2017
First year	16
Second year	7
Third year	3
Fourth year	2
Fifth year	2
Sixth year & higher	0
Code of Conduct	4
Other (non-credit course)	2
Thesis	0

General Types of Allegations Heard by SDC between July 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017:

a. Plagiarism (excluding unauthorized collaboration)

Number of students with allegations: 17
 Number of allegations proven: 17
 Number of allegations not proven: 0

b. Plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration

Number of students with allegations: 2
 Number of allegations proven: 2
 Number of allegations not proven: 0

c. Self-plagiarism

Number of students with allegations: 1
 Number of allegations proven: 1
 Number of allegations not proven: 0

d. Copying

Number of students with allegations: 5

Number of allegations proven: 5

Number of allegations not proven: 0

e. Unauthorized Collaboration

Number of students with allegations: 3

Number of allegations proven: 2

Number of allegations not proven: 1

f. Code of Conduct (offences against persons)

Number of students with allegations: 3

Number of allegations proven: 1

Number of allegations not proven: 2

g. Code of Conduct (Property offence; unauthorized use of facilities/equip/service)

Number of students with allegations: 1

Number of allegations proven: 1

Number of allegations not proven: 0

h. Use of unauthorized materials/exam-test

Number of students with allegations: 1

Number of allegations proven: 1

Number of allegations not proven: 0

i. Cheating on exam/test

Number of students with allegations: 3

Number of allegations proven: 3

Number of allegations not proven: 0

j. Academic Dishonesty

Number of students with allegations: 1

Number of allegations proven: 1

Number of allegations not proven: 0

10. Summary of Penalties over the last 5 years

The following chart identifies the number of students who received a particular penalty in a given year (last five years). Explanations of some of the penalties are provided below.

Penalty	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
"0" on the assignment/exam	12	14	19	21	15
"F" in the class	9	18	3	4	2
"F" on assignment/exam			2		
Academic Integrity Module	3	5	3	2	
Expulsion		1	2	1	1
Meeting with AIO to discuss Academic Integrity	1				
Notation on transcript	7	20	20	29	12
Other penalty		1			
Reduction of final class grade/capped grade for class	3	4	4	3	1
Reduction of grade for assignment/exam	2	2	2	2	3
Resubmit assignment		3	3		2
Second midterm worth 15% of final grade	2				
Sessions with a tutor at the Writing Centre	3			2	2
Submit an additional assignment		1			
Suspension	4	4	2	7	4
Warning; reprimand only					
Writing Centre requirement	12	24	16	23	11
Special assignment on integrity	1	2			
Study for Success Workshop	2	2			
Failure of Comprehensive exam, permitted second attempt			1		
Dismissal from program			2		
Grade for exam / assignment capped			3	2	1
Grade capped for course				2	
Sanction of probation				1	
No further on-line credits allowed towards degree at Dal				3	
Failure in course				13	11
Guilty of a second offence					1
Must repeat refining study skills to return to Dalhousie					1
Prepare an audio recording on animal welfare to educate other students					1
Complete a self-reflection essay about code of conduct					1
Number of allegations (total)	31	33	39	47	36
Number of allegations (proven)	23	31	36	43	33

Notation:

A notation of Senate disciplinary action for an academic offence can be placed on a student's transcript for up to five years. Commonly, a notation is between six months and one year. A notation of two or more years is generally applied only in the case of a second or subsequent offence, possibly in combination with suspension.

Writing Workshop requirement:

If the offence involves incorrect citation or a demonstrable lack of competency in research and writing to required academic standards, the student may be required to attend one of the writing workshops or seminars presented by the Dalhousie Writing Centre at the Killam Library.

Suspension:

A student may be suspended for a specified time if the case is egregious and/or involves a repeat offence. Suspensions are most frequently for one term or year, to a maximum of 3 years.

Expulsion:

Expulsion is rarely applied, and has occurred on only five occasions since the 2005-2006 academic year. This most recent academic year 2016-17 included one expulsion from the university.

Other penalty:

Occasionally it is necessary to tailor penalties to suit the circumstances. For example, a student in the King's Foundation Year Program receives a single grade for the year, so prescribing "F in the class" would be inappropriate. Instead, an overall grade reduction might be prescribed.

No penalty or a warning:

A hearing panel may determine that a student has committed an academic offence, but that no penalty or only a warning is appropriate. For example, there may be a number of mitigating factors. However, even when this might occur, the fact that an academic offence has been proven regarding the student will be recorded on the Senate disciplinary case database.

11. Acknowledgements

The SDC further wishes to thank Bob Mann and Kara Miller for their support on all aspects of the Committee's activity.

Respectfully submitted,



Susan Holmes
Chair (2016-2017)