

2024 Public Description of Work for Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

University of Connecticut Student Ambassador Program

Relevant Rubric Area(s):

1. Response: Transparency and Communication

Description of Work:

Purpose and Goals:

The Student Ambassador Program was created to support students navigating the Office of Community Standards (OCS) process by offering peer-to-peer guidance. The program aims to:

- Reduce anxiety and intimidation associated with the student conduct process.
- Provide accessible, student-friendly explanations of policies and procedures.
- Foster a sense of community and accountability among students.
- Encourage student engagement in upholding community standards.
- Train ambassadors to serve as advocates, educators, and peer mentors in the conduct process.

Program Structure and Implementation

Development & Rationale:

OCS identified a gap in student support for those involved in conduct processes. Many students expressed uncertainty about their rights, responsibilities, and options. The Student Ambassador Program was designed in response, leveraging trained students to assist their peers in understanding policies, preparing for hearings, and navigating resolutions.

Recruitment & Training:

- The program launched in Fall 2024 with a cohort of six student ambassadors. Expansion is planned for future semesters.
- Ambassadors undergo comprehensive training covering:
 - The Student Code of Conduct and university policies.
 - Best practices for peer support and mentorship.
 - Restorative justice principles and ethical decision-making.
 - Trauma-informed approaches for assisting students.
- Ambassadors receive continuous professional development through workshops and mentorship from OCS staff.

Roles & Responsibilities of Student Ambassadors

- Serve as peer guides for students navigating conduct cases.
- Assist students in understanding procedural steps and preparing for hearings.
- Promote educational outreach initiatives on community standards, conflict resolution, and student rights.
- Facilitate informational sessions for residence halls, student organizations, and campus groups.

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- Provide feedback to OCS on ways to improve student engagement in conduct processes.

Status of Work & Progress

- Pilot phase launched in Fall 2024 with six ambassadors, with plans to expand in Fall 2025.
- Ambassadors have participated in mock hearings, outreach events, and peer support meetings.
- Initial feedback from students engaging with ambassadors has been positive, citing reduced anxiety and increased clarity on policies.

Evaluation & Future Plans

Planned Assessments:

- Conduct student surveys to measure the program's impact on knowledge, confidence, and satisfaction.
- Gather qualitative feedback from ambassadors on their experiences and training effectiveness.
- Track engagement metrics, including the number of students assisted and outreach events held.

Next Steps:

- Expand the student ambassador cohort to include more volunteers.
- Develop online resources and informational materials for students involved in conduct cases.
- Establish a formal mentorship component, pairing ambassadors with students for ongoing support.
- Incorporate ambassador participation in policy discussions and OCS training sessions.

Conclusion

The Student Ambassador Program represents an innovative approach to student engagement in the conduct process. By providing peer-led guidance, education, and advocacy, this initiative helps students feel more supported, informed, and empowered in navigating university policies.

Website for further information (if applicable): N/A

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