

Office of Student Discipline

Summary Statement

The Office of Student Discipline accomplished the seven goals it set for the 2003–2004 year. The department made significant progress in setting standards for judicial board programs in undergraduate dormitories. In addition, training programs were completed in a number of dorms, and many more buildings will implement fully authorized boards in fall 2004. A number of training programs were conducted for Dean's Office Panels this year including one on sexual harassment. The department also led two major projects: the Student Rights and Responsibilities Program and the establishment of new procedures for adjudicating complaints of sexual misconduct.

Highlights of the Year

Fifty-six students participated in disciplinary hearings this year (Committee on Discipline, Dean's Office Panels, and administrative hearings). This is a significant increase from the previous year (38), and this is important in light of the fact that the department was able to handle more cases with less staff.

The department conducted a significant number of prevention/awareness programs at orientation (alcohol, domestic violence, and academic integrity) and with student groups (academic integrity), completed an annual mediation training program, and hosted a new "bystander" conflict resolution program.

Sixteen hours of training were completed with Dean's Office Panels disciplinary panelists, sexual misconduct panelists participated in training, and training was conducted with various individual dormitories.

New Initiatives Completed

The Students Rights and Responsibilities document is near completion, awaiting the launch of a webpage and community forums to discuss the final draft developed by members of the Institute community.

In an effort to improve the system, the Working Group on Sexual Misconduct analyzed the way in which sexual assault cases are handled to include definitions, special cases, procedure, protocol, sanctions, counseling, legal and medical options, and communications issues. As a result, a new system was developed and implemented in FY2004. In the instance in which the new system was followed, both parties reported feeling satisfied with the process, which is rare. The new system will be followed in FY2005, and its effectiveness will receive ongoing review.

Lastly, we reestablished the disciplinary role with the Dormitory Council's Judicial Committee and began restructuring disciplinary panels in various dormitories.

Summary of Staffing Changes

Funding was secured from departments with shared interests to support a graduate intern whose primary responsibility was to manage the daily logistics behind the development of the Student Rights and Responsibilities document.

In addition, as the year comes to a close, there have been significant changes in the staffing pattern for the department:

- We had a self-imposed reduction in staffing, eliminating one part-time position as a result of the reorganization of job duties in the department.
- A new support staff person, Yvonne Doyle, was hired late in the year, and we are in the process of hiring a new associate dean and a new assistant dean for student discipline and mediation.
- A search process is also under way to replace departed staff that sat on review panels.

Steven Tyrell
Associate Dean

More information about the Office of Student Discipline can be found on the web at <http://web.mit.edu/discipline/>.