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Student Conduct, Restorative Justice, and Student Development:
Findings from the STARR Project
(Student Accountability and Restorative Research Project)

DRAFT

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Student Conduct, Restorative Justice, and Student Development: Findings from the STARR Project (Student Accountability and Restorative Research Project)

Abstract

The STudent Accountability and Restorative Research (STARR) Project is a multi-campus study of college student disciplinary practices in the United States, comparing traditional conduct hearings that use restorative justice practices with traditional college student misconduct hearings. This study provides a coherent set of learning goals in college student conduct administration and a robust data set capable of measuring student learning across different types of disciplinary practice, in particular, comparing traditional "model code" practice with emerging restorative justice processes. Integrating several student development theories, we identify six student development goals: just community/self authorship, active accountability, interpersonal competence, social ties to institution, procedural fairness, and closure. The STARR Project includes data from 18 college and university campuses in the United States. We analyzed 659 student conduct cases based on surveys of student offenders, conduct officers, and other participants in the conduct processes. Using multiple regression to control for a variety of influences, we determined that the type of conduct process used is the single most influential factor in student learning. In addition, we consistently found that restorative justice practices have a greater impact on student learning than model code hearings.

Key terms: college student discipline, restorative justice, conduct process, student development, model code hearing, student conduct administration, higher education administration

> "Student conduct officers are not employed to find new and more efficient ways to dismiss students. One of our primary roles--recognizing that dismissals are sometimes necessary--is to help students who commit disciplinary offenses make amends and stay enrolled. That goal requires keeping a fresh and open mind to creative educational strategies." Pavela (2009)

> "The primary weakness resulting from overly legalistic student judicial affairs systems is the creation of an increasingly adversarial environment… [where] the educational focus… is often lost." Stoner & Lowery (2004)

Conduct officers in higher education, administrators who are responsible for hearing cases of student misconduct, widely share the twin goals of student development and educational sanctioning. Rarely does a conduct officer seek retributive punishment, enunciating with ironic darkness, "We are here to teach you a lesson you will not forget." The aspirations are typically compassionate, developmental, and educational, and in this article we explore what is learned by participants in a conduct process, and how well these lessons accord with student development theory. More specifically, we compare more traditional conduct practice, known as the "model code," with emerging restorative justice practices (Karp, 2013; Karp & Allena, 2004; Karp & Conrad, 2005; Lipka, 2009). This article reports findings from the STARR Project (Student Accountability and Restorative Research Project), a multi-campus study of several hundred cases of student misconduct in the United States. In essence, we examine what students learn from the experience of going through a disciplinary process on a college campus after they have gotten in trouble for violating the institution's code of conduct.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Past Research

Surprisingly little research exists on student development in conduct administration. This is a common lament in recent literature reviews. Stimpson and Stimpson (2008, p.18) noted, for example, "The most disheartening aspect of the literature reviewed… is the lack of emphasis on student learning. With the exception of one article (Howell, 2005), no study that we found focused on the learning that occurs as a result of student conduct processes." So what did the author of the one article find?

> First, judicial officers can feel confident that in most cases, some kind of learning does occur for students in the process and behaviors generally change. For some students, that learning may take the form of more sophisticated moral thinking; for others, it may simply take the form of increased awareness of the institution's expectations or the institution's procedures. Howell (2005, p.389)

As laudable as Howell's study may be, it is of limited generalizability. Howell interviewed only ten students who had participated in informal resolution meetings with conduct officers. Swinton (2008) identified only one other study that pertains to student development in conduct administration. This study also suffers from a small sample size of 39 students who completed an assessment of moral development and a questionnaire about the fairness and educational value of the conduct process (Mullane, 1999). While Mullane found the majority of students believed their conduct hearing was fair and educational, she did not specify what it was that they learned.

A large survey of students has been conducted by researchers at Virginia Tech. Unpublished results from this survey of more than 3,000 students indicated most students who participated in a conduct hearing believed they were treated respectfully and fairly. "Students also reported benefiting from the campus conduct system. Almost half of students said they had learned at least one skill in the course of their hearings" (Lipka, 2011). Again, it is unclear what skill the students learned. Thus, the accumulated evidence is thin, but tells us that students do learn something through their participation in the conduct

process. It may be moral development, a better understanding of their institution's policies and expectations, or that they can be treated respectfully and fairly as a respondent or participant in the process. Unfortunately, past research has not offered much theoretical guidance about what student affairs professionals most want students to learn, and how well the practices succeed at teaching them. This study seeks to address this problem by providing a coherent set of learning goals and a robust data set capable of measuring student learning across different types of conduct practice.

Restorative Justice and the Model Code

The vast majority of higher education institutions in the United States base their disciplinary policies on two similar templates promoted nationally. Each is described as a "model student conduct code" or "model code" for short (Stoner & Lower, 2004; Pavela, 1979-1980). In a recent study by one of the authors of this article (Karp, 2009), the model code was compared with a restorative justice approach to student misconduct. To summarize this analysis, both practices are used for a wide variety of conduct violations on college campuses, such as underage drinking, plagiarism, theft, and assault. Both models share an aspiration for fair treatment and the application of educational sanctions. However, the models differ significantly in both procedure and sanctioning.

Restorative justice is a collaborative decision-making process that includes victims, offenders, and others seeking to hold offenders accountable by having them (a) accept and acknowledge responsibility for their offenses, (b) to the best of their ability repair the harm they caused to victims and communities, and (c) work to reduce the risk of reoffense by building positive social ties to the community (Karp, 2013). The model code calls for a hearing process that is conducted by a single hearing officer or a volunteer board, often composed of students, faculty, and staff. While proponents of the model code highlight that the hearing is not a criminal trial, it has many of the similarities to the courtroom process. While proponents of restorative justice highlight that it is not mediation, it has many similarities to the mediation process.

The model code is more a formal process, emphasizing authority and control as a way to guarantee fairness and legitimacy. Restorative practices instead focus on creating social support in order to elicit honest dialogue and personal investment in the process. The model code strives for an objective assessment of the facts through a careful parsing of the evidence in order to make the best possible determination of responsibility. Restorative practices are typically used when a student has already admitted responsibility, and focus much more on the impact the misbehavior has had on everyone involved in order to tailor an outcome that best meets the needs of the participants. Model code sanctions are varied and inclusive of a wide range of punishment philosophies, however, the prescribed list tends to feature retribution, deterrence, and incapacitation, and is often a model of progressive restriction and exclusion—with sanctions that begin with restrictions such as losing access to the gym or participation in a club, to fines, to removal from campus housing or suspension from classes, and finally to expulsion from the institution. Restorative practices instead focus on strategies to repair the harm caused by the offense and tasks that will rebuild trust between the respondent and the campus community. One area of commonality is the concern for rehabilitation. Both practices will often lead to outcomes such as referral to counseling, be it for academic support, emotional support, or substance treatment.

While there is much overlap between the model code and restorative justice, the differences are significant, and it may very well be that one approach is better suited for some types of cases than the other and that a well-trained conduct officer can deftly choose the best approach given a particular circumstance. But we argue here that restorative justice is in greater alignment with theories of student development, and will produce better learning outcomes for respondents in a conduct process.

Student Conduct and Student Development: Six Indicators

If the conduct process is meant to be a learning experience, then we must identify learning goals. Although past literature on college student conduct administration has not specified learning outcomes

(or measured them), a broader literature has identified learning goals specific to the developmental stage of traditional-aged (18-22) college students. Integrating several student development theories, we identify six student development goals: just community/self authorship, active accountability, interpersonal competence, social ties to institution, procedural fairness, and closure.

Just Community/Self-Authorship

One essential developmental outcome is the movement from extrinsic moral motivation to intrinsic. Rather than comply with community standards because the student fears the punitive consequences of misbehavior, student affairs professionals wish to have students internalize these norms because they share the community's values and recognize the wrongfulness of misconduct. Student development theorists point to two mechanisms through which this internalization occurs—the Just Community approach and Self-Authorship. Both require the active participation of the student in the decision-making process.

Ignelzi (1990) argued the "Just Community" approach to student development incorporates Kohlberg's theory of moral development, Dewey's ideas of democratic community, and Durkheim's theory of moral education. The Just Community is a "participatory democracy in which students and advisors share power and authority in setting their own community norms and making decisions that affect the community." It allows individual students to gain "direct, active experience in the democratic process, which facilitate[s] understanding of the complexities and mechanics of managing a democratic system and provide[s] opportunities for developing skills to influence an ethical governing process" (p.193). In a student conduct context, a just community offers student offenders a voice in the process. Rather than be passive recipients of a decision-making process external to them, they become part of the decision-making process taking an active role in rectifying the situation.

Similarly, Baxter Magolda's (2008) research built on Kegan's concept of self-authorship. She describes self-authorship as the "shift of meaning-making capacity from outside the self to inside the

self" (p.268). In a student conduct situation, "meaning-making" would refer to the student's ability to understand the impact of their misbehavior on others, locate their behavior within the context of community membership, and imagine alternative future pathways that demonstrate personal responsibility. Baxter Magolda wrote "Self-authorship evolves when the challenge to become self-authoring is present and is accompanied by sufficient support to help an individual make the shift to internal meaning making" (p.269). Internalization of standards occurs when students are confronted about their misconduct, but also supported in a reflection process that helps them understand their behavior and its implications for themselves, others, and their place in the community.

Both the Just Community and Self-Authorship approaches point to the internalization of community standards so that student behavior is guided by conscience and recognition of the ethical responsibilities inherent in community membership.

Active Accountability

Taking responsibility for misdeeds is a central theme in student development. This is reflected in Chickering and Reisser's (1995) well-known "seven vectors" of identity development, Kohlberg's (2005) "three stages" of moral development, and Rest's "four components" of moral development (Bebeau, Rest & Narvaez, 1999). Each of these theorists emphasized the movement toward independent moral decision-making, which is less reliant on obedience to authority, and motivated instead by a sense of personal responsibility.

Legal scholars John Braithwaite and Declan Roche (2001) emphasized the important shift from passive to active accountability. Traditional, retributive conceptions of accountability are passive; the offender is identified as responsible for the transgression and subject to the community's determination of a commensurate punishment. The core question for retribution is "What must be done to the offender to reassure the community that such behavior will not be tolerated?" The community acts; the offender receives.

Braithwaite and Roche advocated a restorative justice philosophy of accountability, which is active. “Our argument is not that restorative justice abandons passive responsibility, but that restorative justice uses passive responsibility to create a forum in which active responsibility can be fostered. Restorative justice, then, is about shifting the balance from passive responsibility toward active responsibility” (p.64). The core question now becomes: What must be done to rectify the damage caused by the transgression? The offender is a central player in the decision-making process in a way that is highly consistent with student development. The offender acts; the community receives. For active accountability, the offender must understand not only that the behavior was a violation of rules, but also the consequences of the behavior on others. He or she must also be treated as an autonomous actor capable of taking responsibility for making things right. This would include repairing the harm and demonstrative steps that reassure the community that the offender can be trusted going forward.

Interpersonal Competence

In the age of Facebook and text messaging, it is a common refrain that students lack the ability to speak openly and honestly with each other face-to-face. Chickering and Reisser (1993, p.186) argued, “Interpersonal competence entails not only the skills of listening, cooperating, and communicating effectively, but also the more complex abilities to tune in to another persona and respond appropriately, to align personal agendas with the goals of the group, and to choose from a variety of strategies to help a relationship flourish or a group function.” Of course, many student conduct violations have their roots in students’ inability to listen, cooperate, and communicate. In a student conduct context, interpersonal competence would include the ability to listen to others’ perspectives, express remorse, and repair fractured relationships at least to the point that students in conflict can safely and civilly co-exist in the campus community.

A natural educational outcome of a student conduct process would be to help students become more interpersonally competent. This may be achieved through the motivational interviewing strategies

of a one-on-one conduct meeting, through sanctions that incorporate social interaction, and through the often-difficult face-to-face dialogue between offenders and harmed parties in a restorative justice process.

Social Ties to the Institution

Student success is typically tied to retention and academic achievement. From a student affairs perspective, alienation from the campus community is not only a risk factor for academic failure, but for misconduct. Just as owners are more likely to keep up their properties than renters, students who feel a strong sense of membership are more likely to abide by the community's standards. They have more to lose by engaging in misconduct.

A sociological approach to student misconduct foregrounds the student's social ties to the campus community. While not dismissing individual risk factors, which are typically addressed through treatment interventions, like academic or psychological counseling, the sociological approach focuses on rehabilitating the student's social ties. The sociologist Gordon Bazemore (1998, p.786) wrote, "If the crime is viewed as the result of weak bonds, a relational rehabilitation must be focused primarily on strengthening the offender's ties or bonds to conventional adults and peers."

A student development outcome in the student conduct process is to increase a student's social ties to the institution, reducing their risk of future misconduct. While conduct administrators are quick to point out the necessity of student separation from the institution in order to protect the safety of the campus, suspension may often conflict with this developmental outcome.

Procedural Fairness

Fair treatment is the cornerstone of a just student conduct process. The authors of a widely-adopted model code of student conduct remind conduct administrators that, "whatever process it adopts, the institution will want to remember the basic student affairs precept that it is important to treat all students with equal care, concern, honor, fairness, and dignity" (Stoner & Lowery 2004, p.15). This is

important, obviously, from an ethical perspective and from a liability perspective. But it is also important from a student development perspective.

Tom Tyler, a scholar who specializes in the psychology of law, argues that procedural justice is essential to obedience to the law. When people are treated fairly, "…they view law and legal authorities as more legitimate and entitled to be obeyed. As a result, people become self-regulating, taking on the personal responsibility for following social rules" (Tyler, 2006, p.308). Students are more likely to conform to college policies when they understand their purpose and do not view them as arbitrary. Moreover, they will have greater trust in campus authorities when they do not believe they will be singled out and treated differently than other students. Thus, even when they are caught and sanctioned for misconduct, a student development goal is to have them conclude that the process was fair to them.

Closure

Although typically used as a measure of program success, participant satisfaction with the conduct process is also a student development goal. In particular, satisfaction with the process leads to closure—facing up to the misconduct, learning from it, but not letting it become an obstacle to future success. In other words, the student conduct process should enable students to learn from their mistakes and move on.

Participation in a conduct process can be stressful. Many student offenders suffer under the shame of being caught and sanctioned. They are uncertain about what might happen to them both formally and in their social worlds. As the psychologists, Walter Mischel and Aaron DeSmit (2000, p.264) noted, "Anxiety, rumination, and preoccupation undermine self-regulation, particularly if the conflict is a complex one that requires abundant mental resources for successful resolution." Therefore a necessary developmental outcome is to simultaneously accept responsibility for the behavior, but compartmentalize it to be able to continue functioning as a student.

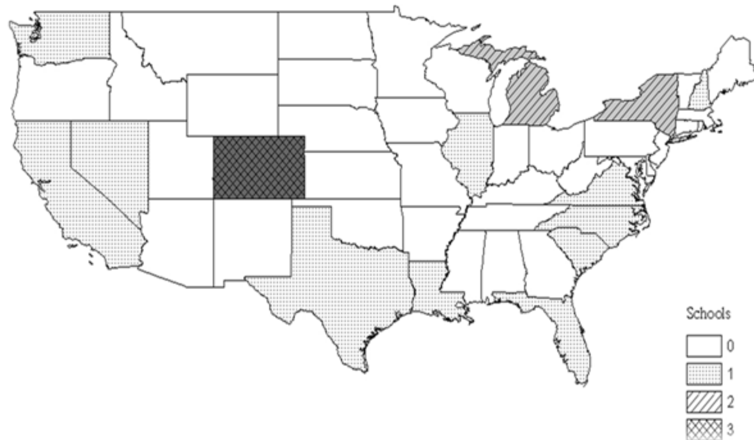
A major pathway to closure is the student's experience with the conduct process. A satisfying experience is one that helps reduce their anxiety and rumination while increasing their sense of purpose and direction. A positive experience can lead to closure, enabling them to confidently pursue future goals rather than anxiously mull over the past.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: THE STARR PROJECT

Sample and Participants

The STARR Project is a data collection effort seeking to obtain information about conduct cases that vary by type of violation, type of conduct process (model code vs. restorative justice), and type of institution. The project includes data from 18 college and university campuses in the United States (see Figure 1). Initially, we invited 108 schools to participate in the study. Twenty-eight schools agreed to take part in data collection, 18 schools ultimately contributed cases for our data set. Schools were recruited with an intentional strategy to provide geographic and institutional variety, especially with regard to their conduct practices. The primary purpose of the sampling was to ensure variation in cases and conduct process in order to test hypotheses about student learning rather than to statistically represent a national portrait of conduct processes and outcomes. Hence, these data cannot be generalized regarding case populations (for example, restorative justice cases are intentionally overrepresented), but they provide seminal data on the effect of different conduct practices on student development. Characteristics of participating institutions are provided in Table 1.

Figure 1. Geographic distribution of participating institutions



Each institution was assigned a case administrator who collected data for each case. Each case administrator was asked to collect data sequentially over a one year period in order to prevent selection bias that would result if cases had been handpicked for inclusion. Cases were included only if the student was found in violation of the conduct policy. Schools varied significantly in the number of cases actually provided, ranging from only three cases to as many as 80 cases. Cases were included in the data set when the case administrator submitted both the offender survey and the case administrator survey. Overall, the STARR Project has 659 complete cases.

Table 1. Characteristics of participating institutions

School	# of Cases	Public/Private	Size*	Religious	Process
1	31	Public	Medium	Secular	Model Code
2	8	Public	Large	Secular	Model Code/Restorative Justice
3	27	Public	Large	Secular	Model Code/Restorative Justice
4	61	Public	Large	Secular	Model Code/Restorative Justice
5	9	Public	Medium	Secular	Restorative Justice
6	44	Public	Large	Secular	Model Code/Restorative Justice
7	80	Private	Small	Religious	Model Code/Restorative Justice
8	14	Public	Large	Secular	Model Code
9	3	Public	Medium	Secular	Restorative Justice
10	64	Private	Large	Religious	Restorative Justice
11	41	Public	Large	Secular	Model Code
12	57	Public	Large	Secular	Model Code
13	47	Public	Medium	Secular	Model Code/Restorative Justice
14	36	Public	Large	Secular	Model Code
15	16	Public	Large	Secular	Restorative Justice
16	10	Private	Small	Secular	Model Code/Restorative Justice
17	62	Public	Medium	Secular	Model Code
18	49	Public	Large	Secular	Model Code
Total =	659				

*Carnegie Classifications: small= 1,000-2,999; medium=3,000-9,999; large=10,000+

Survey Instruments

The STARR Project included two surveys that were completed immediately following the conduct hearing (survey instruments are available online at www.campusrj.com). Each survey was made available using the online survey tool, SurveyMonkey. In some cases, printed versions of the surveys were completed by students, and subsequently entered into SurveyMonkey by the research team. In order to ensure the validity of the survey questions, the study used several items that were established from previous research (Bazemore & Elis, 2007; Dannells, 1997; Howell, 2005; Mullane, 1999; Stimpson & Stimpson, 2008) and each instrument was piloted with small groups of students at two of the participating institutions.

Upon completion of the conduct meeting, student offenders were provided a brief 28-item survey indicating key demographic data and measures of student development. The Case Administrator (or relevant conduct officer) for each campus completed a 20-item online survey providing case

management data, including information about the nature of the incident and the outcome of the hearing.

Measures of Conduct Process

The primary goal of this study is to compare learning outcomes in model code conduct practices with restorative justice practices. This study identifies three categories of conduct practice:

1. *Model Code Hearing.* In this model, an administrative or board hearing is conducted in a manner consistent with best practice (e.g., Stoner & Lowery, 2004). An administrative hearing is a one-on-one meeting between a conduct officer and an accused student. A board hearing is a meeting between the accused student and a panel of conduct board members which may include students, faculty, and staff. The focus of the model code hearing is on the determination of responsibility, followed by the assignment of sanctions that include warnings, probation, fines, restrictions of privileges, suspension from residence, suspension, and expulsion.
2. *Restorative-Oriented Administrative Hearing.* This is a hybrid model that applies restorative goals of identifying and repairing harm to a one-on-one meeting with a conduct officer. Harmed parties do not participate in these hearings.
3. *Restorative Justice Practice.* In this model, a facilitator hosts a dialogue between the student offender (who has admitted responsibility) and affected community members. The dialogue maintains a focus on identifying and repairing harm as well as tasks to rebuild trust between the campus community and the student offender.

Because of variation in practice from campus to campus, the conduct process was self-identified by the Case Administrator for each case. Subsequently, the researchers compared the Case Administrators' judgments against the theoretical model. Model code hearings are predicted to employ model code sanctions, restorative justice practices will employ restorative sanctions, and the hybrid restorative-oriented administrative hearings are expected to employ both. Each process is also predicted to make

use of a variety of additional discretionary sanctions, such as parent notification, research or reflection papers, referrals to counseling or other educational workshops, etc. Table 2 demonstrates the consistency between Case Administrators judgments and the predicted model.

Table 2. Predicted sanctions and Case Administrator assignments of hearing process

Hearing Process	**Model Code Sanctions**		**Restorative Justice Sanctions**		**Discretionary Sanctions**	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Model Code Hearing	338	83.9	54	13.4	334	82.9
Restorative-Oriented Administrative Hearing	56	61.5	47	51.6	77	84.6
Restorative Justice Practice	43	26.1	121	73.3	121	73.3

Dependent Variables: Measures of Student Development

Six scales were constructed as measures of student development drawing upon existing research in both student development theory and restorative justice theory. The six scales were designed to measure just community/self authorship, active accountability, interpersonal competence, social ties to the institution, procedural fairness, and closure. Indicators of the theoretical dimensions were selected not only for theoretical validity but also for their applicability to student conduct administration. Table 3 outlines the items for each scale and its measure of statistical reliability (Chronbach’s Alpha).

Table 3. Six measures of student development based on items from the student offender survey

Just Community/Self-Authorship: "I had a voice" (α=.79):
- To what extent were you given options in how the case would be handled?
- To what extent were you able to communicate your thoughts and feelings about the incident?
- How much were you able to meaningfully contribute your ideas towards the outcome?
- To what extent was the outcome tailored for you and your situation?

Active Accountability: "I took responsibility" (α=.71):
- How much did the process help you to take responsibility for the consequence of the incident?
- To what extent did the outcome focus on repairing the harm that was caused by this incident?
- To what extent did the outcome create opportunities to respond to larger social issues that are relevant to the incident (such as relevant community service, research on alcohol issues, etc.)?

Interpersonal Competence: "I talked it out" (α=.75):
- How much did the process help you to understand the point of view of those most affected?
- To what extent did the process offer an opportunity to give a sincere apology to those most affected?
- To what extent was a sincere apology offered during this process?
- To what extent would you now feel comfortable seeing the others involved in the incident around campus or in the community?

Social Ties to the Institution: "I belong here" (α=.76):
- How much did the process help you to understand your responsibilities as a member of the community?
- As a result of this process, I have a greater appreciation for the campus administrators involved in my case (such as deans, residential life staff, conduct officers, etc.).
- As a result of this process I have a greater appreciation for campus safety officers.

Procedural Fairness: "That was fair" (α=.74):
- To what extend did you receive the information needed for you to confidently participate in this process?
- How much did the process include people who could offer you counsel and support?
- To what extent did you feel respected throughout the process?
- To what extent was the process fair to all parties?

Closure: "I'm ready to move on" (α=.87):
- Overall, how satisfied are you with the way this process was handled?
- Overall, how satisfied are you with the outcome of this process?
- How much did the process help you bring closure to this situation?

DATA SCREENING AND ANALYSIS

Values were calculated for all scales for all respondents. The levels within several independent variables were collapsed to increase power and effect size for the statistical analyses. No univariate outliers were identified. This study utilized the original, non-transformed data for all analyses. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical procedures including t-tests, ANOVA, and multiple regression. Tolerance statistics exceed 0.1 for all variables. Standard multiple regression was conducted to determine the accuracy of the independent variables predicting the six student development outcomes.

An analysis of missing data demonstrated that results are equivalent with and without data imputation, therefore all analyses were conducted without imputation.

Independent Variables

The study controls for type of hearing process, type of violation, the seriousness of the violation (scale based on Case Administrator's assessment of whether it was a suspension-level case, the harmfulness to the community, and whether or not there was police involvement), and offender demographics – race, sex, class year, and school size. Table 4 provides descriptive statistics for these independent variables. Of note, most cases examined used a traditional model code hearing (61%), alcohol was identified as the primary violation in 34% of all cases, most cases were not considered serious violations, and most of the offenders where White, male, and first year or sophomores.

Table 4. Independent variables for conduct cases

Variable	N	%		N	%
Hearing Process			**Offender Race**		
Restorative Justice Practice	91	13.8	*Students of Color*	181	28.0
Restorative-Oriented Administrative Hearing	165	25.0	*White*	466	72.0
Model Code Hearing	403	61.2	Total	647	100
Total	659	100			
			Offender Sex		
Primary Violation			*Male*	418	64.0
Academic Integrity	77	12.5	*Female*	235	36.0
Alcohol	207	33.8	*Total*	653	100
Person	110	17.5			
Property	86	13.7	**Offender Class Year**		
Drug	89	14.7	*First Year*	251	39.0
Other	90	7.9	*Sophomore*	183	28.5
Total	659	100	*Junior*	104	16.2
			Senior	105	16.3
Seriousness of Case			Total	643	100
Not Serious	274	45.2			
Mildly Serious	251	41.4	**Offender School Size**		
Moderately Serious	68	11.2	*Small (1000-2999)*	90	13.7
Very Serious	13	2.1	*Medium (3000-9999)*	152	23.1
Total	606	100	*Large (10000+)*	417	63.3
			Total	659	100

Results

Predictors of Just Community/Self Authorship

Regression results indicate that the overall model significantly predicts just community/self authorship, R^2=.178, R^2_{adj}=.167, F (7, 533) =16.461, $p < .001$. This model accounts for 17.8% of the variance in just community/self authorship. A summary of regression coefficients is presented in Table 5 and indicates four (violation, process, race, school size) of the seven variables significantly contribute to the model.

Table 5. Coefficients for model variables just community/self authorship

	B	β	*t*	*P*	Partial *r*
Violation	.218	.148	3.685	<.001	.158
Process	.965	.350	8.561	<.001	.348
Seriousness	-.018	-.006	-.144	.886	-.006
Race	.175	.164	4.141	<.001	.177
Sex	-.006	-.001	-.030	.976	-.001
Class year	.024	.011	.271	.787	.012
School size	.359	.111	2.661	.008	.111

Predictors of Active Accountability

Regression results indicate that the overall model significantly predicts active accountability, R^2=.118, R^2_{adj}=.104, F(7, 451)=8.6, $p < .001$. This model accounts for 11.8% of the variance in active accountability. A summary of regression coefficients is presented in Table 6 and indicates only two (process and race) of the seven variables significantly contribute to the model.

Table 6. Coefficients for model variable active accountability

	B	β	*t*	*p*	Partial *r*
Violation	.070	.055	1.231	.219	.058
Process	.743	.321	6.982	<.001	.312
Seriousness	.092	.034	.758	.449	.036
Race	.104	.113	2.538	.011	.119
Sex	.093	.022	.487	.627	.023
Class year	.007	.004	.086	.931	.004
School size	.201	.075	1.589	.113	.075

Predictors of Interpersonal Competence

Regression results indicate that the overall model significantly predicts active accountability, R^2=.173, R^2_{adj}=.159, F(7, 409)=12.197, p < .001. This model accounts for 17.3% of the variance in interpersonal competence. A summary of regression coefficients is presented in Table 7 and indicates only two (process and school size) of the seven variables significantly contribute to the model.

Table 7. Coefficients for model variable interpersonal competence

	B	β	*t*	*p*	Partial *r*
Violation	.157	.087	1.879	.061	.093
Process	1.306	.397	8.474	<.001	.386
Seriousness	-.033	-.008	-.180	.858	-.009
Race	.064	.048	1.066	.287	.053
Sex	-.011	-.002	-.041	.967	-.002
Class year	.056	.020	.437	.663	.022
School size	.410	.105	2.212	.027	.099

Predictors of Social Ties to Institution

Regression results indicate that the overall model significantly predicts social ties to the institution, R^2=.100, R^2_{adj}=.087, F(7, 477)=7.572, p < .001. This model accounts for 10% of the variance in social ties to the institution. A summary of regression coefficients is presented in Table 8 and indicates only one (process) of the seven variables significantly contributed to the model.

Table 8. Coefficients for model variable social ties to institution

	B	β	*t*	*p*	Partial *r*
Violation	.043	.031	.714	.476	.033
Process	.790	.318	7.018	<.001	.306
Seriousness	-.092	-.032	-.726	.468	-.033
Race	.024	.025	.567	.571	.026
Sex	-.007	-.002	-.036	.971	-.002
Class year	.042	.021	.467	.641	.021
School size	.281	.098	2.096	.037	.096

Predictors of Procedural Fairness

Regression results indicate that the overall model significantly predicts procedural fairness, R^2=.119, R^2_{adj}=.107, F(7, 514)=9.960, p < .001. This model accounts for 11.9% of the variance in procedural

fairness. A summary of regression coefficients is presented in Table 9 and indicates only two (process and race) of the seven variables significantly contributed to the model.

Table 9. Coefficients for model variable procedural fairness

	B	β	*t*	*p*	Partial *r*
Violation	.073	.054	1.271	.204	.056
Process	.768	.300	6.920	<.001	.292
Seriousness	.117	.040	.939	.348	.041
Race	.152	.153	3.668	<.001	.160
Sex	.067	.14	.342	.733	.015
Class year	.032	.015	.363	.717	.016
School size	.202	.067	1.517	.130	.063

Predictors of Closure

Regression results indicate that the overall model significantly predicts closure, R^2=.116, R^2_{adj}=.104, F(7, 530)= 9.888, $p < .001$. This model accounts for 11.6% of the variance in closure. A summary of regression coefficients is presented in Table 10 and indicates only three (violation, process, and race) of the seven variables significantly contributed to the model.

Table 10. Coefficients for model variable closure

	B	β	*t*	*p*	Partial *r*
Violation	.126	.089	2.127	.034	.092
Process	.751	.285	6.701	<.001	.279
Seriousness	-.187	-.062	-1.484	.138	-.064
Race	.121	.118	2.866	.004	.124
Sex	-.085	-.018	-.433	.665	-.019
Class year	.149	.071	1.712	.088	.074
School size	.091	.029	.673	.501	.029

Disciplinary process and outcomes

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed the effect of process was significant for all outcome variables: just community/self authorship, F (2, 609) = 39.75, $p < .001$; active accountability, F (2, 521) = 27.03, $p < .001$; interpersonal competence, F (2, 609) = 39.75, $p < .001$; social ties to the institution, F (2, 554) = 25.11, $p < .001$; procedural fairness, F (2, 589) = 25.28, $p < .001$; and closure F (2, 609) = 26.87, $p < .001$. Post hoc analyses using the Sheffe test for significance indicated the average reported learning was significantly lower in the administrative hearing process than in the other two processes. Table 11

displays the means for each group. It is important to note that the number of items varies between scales, making direct comparisons of means between scales inappropriate in this table. For example, learning was not lower for “active accountability” than for “Just community/self authorship.” On all six scales, students reported learning more when restorative practices were used than when administrative hearings were used.

Table 11. Means for each type of disciplinary process

	Administrative Hearing	Restorative-Oriented Administrative Hearing	Restorative Practice
Just community/Self authorship	12.93	14.54	14.68
Active accountability	9.31	10.35	10.71
Interpersonal competence	12.93	14.54	14.68
Social ties to the institution	9.23	10.15	10.67
Procedural fairness	13.12	14.35	14.48
Closure	9.42	10.51	10.88

DISCUSSION

This study provides a robust set of findings about learning outcomes in the student conduct process. It identifies six specific learning outcomes, measures them using scales derived from multiple indicators, and links each of the indicators to student development theory. With 659 cases drawn from 18 higher education institutions, we are able to compare the impact of different conduct practices on student learning. Using multiple regression to control for a variety of influences, we determined that the type of conduct process used is the single most influential factor in student learning. We consistently found that restorative justice practices have a greater impact on student learning than model code hearings. On all six student development measures, the only item that consistently helped to explain the variance observed in reported learning was the disciplinary process. Students who engaged in restorative practices reported more learning on all six scales.

One reason why learning may be greater with restorative practices is that student development is a holistic enterprise focused on moral concern, citizenship, and emotional intelligence. Model code

practices tend to focus on facts and procedures—Did the student violate the code of conduct? Did the process ensure that evidence was reviewed impartially? Are sanctions proportionate to the severity of the offense? Questions pertaining to the mindset of the offender are predicated on deterrence—Did the student understand the rules? Did he or she recognize how the behavior jeopardizes the student's future? What action steps can be taken to ensure better judgment going forward? Restorative justice leads to a different line of inquiry, less focused on conformity and reason than on empathy and engagement. The wrongfulness of the behavior is predicated on the hurt rather than the proof of rule-breaking. Student offenders are first asked to listen to the accounts of those harmed by their behavior, and these emotional appeals are often effective in eliciting expressions of contrition and remorse. When harmed parties hear a student admit fault, they often respond with, if not forgiveness, then appreciation of the student for taking responsibility. This is important groundwork for cooperative, inclusive decision-making about a just response to the misconduct and building support systems to reassure the group of the offender's continued membership in the community. The lessons from this experience are in greater alignment with the overarching goals of college student development.

The study also found, to a lesser degree, the impact of race on student learning. In four student development outcomes, just community/self authorship, active accountability, procedural fairness, and closure, White students reported higher levels of learning than students of color as a result of their participation in the conduct process (without regard to type of process). Further research is needed to determine why students may report significantly different outcomes with similar conduct cases and similar processes.

In two student development outcomes, just community/self authorship, and interpersonal competence, students from larger schools reported higher levels of learning. This is seemingly counterintuitive. One explanation may be that restorative practices help to connect students with their community and in a larger school those positive connections are more likely to be missing. In two

outcomes, just community/self authorship and closure, there was variation in reported learning based on the type of violation. Each of these areas may warrant further examination in future studies. However, in all of these cases, the variation was substantially less than the variation between model code and restorative justice practices. It is also notable that we did not find any differences in learning based on gender, class year, or the seriousness of the violation.

One limitation of the study is our inability to gather survey data from students who commit very serious violations. We have very few suspension-level cases in our data set; our participating institutions had difficulty obtaining surveys from students who had just been suspended. Therefore, we have little to say about the benefits of one or another approach for very serious conduct cases. Another limitation in our study is the potential for selection bias. Conduct officers may refer students to a restorative justice process when they believe the student is remorseful and ready to take responsibility for their offending. This, in turn, may be correlated with their openness to learning. In this way, students who participated in restorative justice may be predisposed to the lessons learned. A counterargument, however, is that students also show strong gains from the restorative-oriented administrative hearings, where there is less likely to be a selection bias. This suggests that all students may benefit from restorative practices, though some will learn more than others.[i]

In general, we find that students benefitted from their participation the conduct process by showing learning gains in six dimensions of student development. Overall means for model code and restorative justice typically indicate that the students say they learned either a “fair amount” or a “great amount.” But a pattern emerges across the three types of practice. The most learning occurs with restorative justice practices that include harmed parties into the decision-making process and focus on repairing harm and rebuilding trust. The second highest learning occurs in restorative-oriented administrative hearings, which do not include harmed parties, but do focus on sanctions that repair harm and rebuild trust.

Although restorative justice practices have demonstrated positive findings in criminal justice settings (Sherman & Strang, 2007), this is the first study to examine its impact in college student conduct administration and on the learning outcomes for student offenders. The evidence provided here would support more widespread implementation of restorative justice, assuming that conduct officers are committed to evidence-based best practices in student development. We do not argue that restorative justice replace the model code, which remains especially important in adversarial cases where the student is denying responsibility for the alleged violation. But we do argue conduct officers are too singular in their implementation of model code practices, and many more cases could benefit from a restorative approach.

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[i] The STARR Project examined three types of conduct process: MC one-on-one hearing/board; RJ one-on-one hearing; RJ circle that includes harmed parties. Of the eighteen schools in the sample,

referral practices varied. Nine schools did not offer RJ, so referrals to MC would include students who would be referred to RJ elsewhere. Seven schools only offer RJ (either administrative hearings or circles). These would include students who would be referred to MC elsewhere. Three schools offer both MC and RJ. One school offers MC for on campus cases and RJ for off-campus. Therefore, it was the location of violation that determined referral, not differences in students or their attitudes. The second school refers cases to MC as part of its AOD policy—low level violations. All more serious cases go to RJ. Therefore, it was the type of violation that determined referral, not differences in students or their attitudes. The third school offers both and makes the referrals based on the conduct officers' judgment. This school poses the biggest threat to validity. Therefore, we re-ran the data excluding the cases from this school and there was no change. All six student development variables remained statistically significant, with the same pattern of outcomes between the three conduct processes.