

Senate Discipline Committee (SDC) 2020-2021 Annual Report

The Senate Discipline Committee (SDC) submits the following annual report for 2020-2021.

1. **Membership** (between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021):

Faculty members:

Susan Holmes (Chair)	College of Continuing Education
Andrew Warkentin	Faculty of Engineering
Robin Parker	Faculty/ University Libraries
Jure Gantar	Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences
Kyung Lee	Faculty of Management
Mohamed Gebril	Faculty of Dentistry
Chris Hartt	Faculty of Agriculture
Victoria Allen	Faculty of Medicine
Sarah Kirk	Faculty of Health

Dalhousie Student Union members:

Erica Seelemann
Mariam Hanna
Nicholas Darbyshire
Lauren Delaney
Ella Murphy
Morgan McAloney
Andrew Marshall

All student union members are leaving the SDC at the end of this academic year except Erica Seelemann who will continue with SDC for the next year. Faculty members Jure Gantar, Victoria Allen and Kyung Lee are also leaving SDC.

We thank all faculty and student representatives for their outstanding support and dedication throughout an exceptionally busy year.

2. **Jurisdiction**

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-Provost, Student Affairs. 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.

In the Winter term of 2018, the Senate and Board of Governors jointly approved a new Sexualized Violence Policy, effectively replacing the portions of the Code of Student Conduct that dealt with those offences. Starting in 2018-19, the SDC applied its jurisdiction to hear allegations of sexualized violence referred from the Vice-Provost, Student Affairs, with the SDC's jurisdiction in those cases narrowed to determining appropriate sanctions

and remedies in the cases recommended by the Vice-Provost. There were no Code of Student Conduct or Sexualized Violence cases referred to SDC during the 2020-21 year.

3. Caseload

Total Allegations¹ 71

Total Hearings² 65

First time offenders: 19

Repeat offenders: 52

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	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Agriculture	1	1	0	0	0
Architecture and Planning	0	1	0	0	1
Arts and Social Sciences	11	7	7	4	6
College of Sustainability	0	0	0	1	2
Computer Science	4	3	11	20	34
Dentistry	0	0	0	0	0
Engineering	0	3	0	1	5
College of Continuing Education	0	0	0	0	0
Graduate Studies	0	0	0	0	0
Health	3	1	0	1	6
Law	0	1	0	0	0
Management	5	3	5	7	7
Medicine	0	0	3	0	0
Science	6	7	16	3	10
King's College	2	5	1	3	0
Code of Conduct, Sexualized Violence	4	5	3	1	0
Total	36	37	46	41	71

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

² A **hearing** 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 only **one** hearing.

4. Student Statistics

a) Outcome

Proven:	64
Not Proven:	7
Total:	71

NOTE: The standard of proof is the balance of probabilities. An allegation is considered proven when a panel of the SDC, having reviewed and deliberated over the evidence before it, concludes that it is more likely than not that the student in question committed the alleged offence.

b) Citizenship status:

Canadian:	18
International:	51
Permanent Resident:	2

c) Allegations by Course Level

Level	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
1000	22	22	16
2000	11	11	30
3000	9	3	12
4000	1	3	6
5000	0	1	7
6000+	0	0	0
Other	0	1	0

NOTE: In 2020-21, for the 4000 level, 4/6 allegations involved a group of students that copied/inappropriately collaborated on an exam. Another involved cheating on an exam and another was copying on an assignment. In 2020-21, for the 5000 level, 3/7 involved a group of students that cheated on a mid-term, 3/7 involved copying/plagiarism on assignments and one allegation involved plagiarism on a take-home exam.

5. Allegations by Type (*some students have combined allegations)

	2020-21	2019-20
Plagiarism	23	21
Copying/Cheating on assignment	13	7
Cheating on exam/test	31	7
Unauthorized Collaboration	5	6
Contract Cheating (Purchased paper)	1	0
Use of unauthorized materials - exam/test	0	1
Code: Breach of informal agreement	0	1

NOTE: The allegations involving copying/cheating on assignment have almost doubled from 2019-20 to 2020-21.

The allegations involving cheating on exam/test have more than quadrupled from 2019-20 to 2020-21.

6. Penalties

NOTE: More than one penalty may be ordered against a student for the same offence (i.e. Resubmit assignment *and* capped grade on assignment).

Incidents of Common Penalties	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19
Writing Centre Requirement	19	20	21
Academic Integrity Module	8	9	0
Study for success, smart goals & time management workshop	3	5	0
Meet with Advisor/AIO to discuss finding and impact on program	13	7	6
Reduction of final class grade/capped grade for class	16	10	9
Reduction of grade for assignment	1	2	5
Grade of "0" on portion of assignment/exam	3	2	0
Grade of "0" on assignment/exam	14	11	13
Notation on transcript	52	25	25
Failure of course	42	19	16
Suspension	19	7	8
Expulsion	3	0	0

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 meet required academic standards, the student may be required to participate in one of the writing workshops or seminars presented by the Dalhousie Writing Centre at the Killam Library. During the pandemic, the Writing Centre pivoted and provided online workshops and one-on-one advising to students in need of assistance due to academic integrity violations.

The Writing Centre has become a well-used support for students who require further guidance in their writing, researching and citation skills. In the last 5 years, many writing centre requirements were ordered by the SDC, with many more recommended by Academic Integrity Officers at the Faculty discipline level.

The Writing Centre has proven to be a vital resource for students struggling with academic integrity issues and we thank them for the support they provide.

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.

Suspensions	
2020-21	19
2019-20	7
2018-19	8

Expulsion:

Expulsion is rarely applied, and has occurred on 10 occasions since the 2013-14 academic year, including 3 expulsions issued in 2020-21 academic year.

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 due to 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.

7. Acknowledgements

The past year has been one of increased caseload and additional stresses experienced by all parties. The SDC wishes to thank Bob Mann and Kara Miller for their outstanding calmness and support on all aspects of the Committee's activity. They were the backbone that facilitated a smooth and efficient online hearing process that effectively served student needs.

SDC also wishes to acknowledge the Academic Integrity Officers who have demonstrated patience and understanding during many hearings that have often required answers to questions that had been answered in previous hearings.

A special thank you to all panel members who listened with empathy to the struggles that students faced with online learning and the uncertainties of a world in a pandemic, while balancing Dalhousie's standards for academic integrity.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan Holmes". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Susan" and "Holmes" being capitalized and prominent.

Susan Holmes, Chair (2020-21)