



Report of the Governance Office, Vice-Provost, Students and Learning, and Legal Office's Conflict Engagement Team

FOR INFORMATION

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Date of Meeting: October 17, 2026

Subject: **Non-Academic Student Discipline Report – 2025/26**

Background:

Senate has a legislated responsibility, under *The University of Saskatchewan Act*, 1995 to make bylaws and establish the framework governing how the University addresses non-academic student misconduct. Senate's role in this is primarily governance and oversight rather than case management. For example, Senate periodically reviews and approves the *Standard of Student Conduct in Non-Academic Matters and Procedures for Resolution of Complaints and Appeals* (the *Standard*), which sets out the University's expectations for student behaviour and the processes used to address alleged misconduct. Through this role, Senate establishes the principles, procedures, and the appeal framework that guides the resolution of non-academic misconduct matters. This responsibility helps ensure that the University's approach to non-academic misconduct remains fair, transparent, and aligned with institutional values and community expectations.

Because of this connection, each year, Senate receives a report on non-academic student misconduct.

2025-2026 Year:

During the 2025-26 reporting period, **approximately 45** non-academic misconduct matters came into the Governance Office and were addressed and resolved without the need for a formal hearing, while only **one** matter proceeded to a hearing. This reflects a shift toward enhanced intake assessment, including conflict de-escalation, expectation management, procedural triage, and broader use of alternative dispute resolution (ADR).

Complaints resolved outside of a hearing included dismissals, voluntary withdrawals, facilitated discussions, pre-mediation and mediation work through a restorative lens, referrals to more appropriate processes or offices, and other informal or ADR approaches. In many cases, early engagement with parties clarified concerns, addressed misunderstandings, or identified pathways better suited to the nature of the conflict than a formal adjudicative process.

While historical data does not consistently capture inquiries, intake activity, or matters redirected before reaching a hearing stage, the available information suggests that a larger proportion of concerns were previously advanced directly into a formal hearing process. Over the past year, the portfolio has

increasingly relied on ADR-informed practices and early resolution strategies, allowing complaints and concerns to be addressed more efficiently and proportionately. This shift has been supported by additional Governance Office staff resources, enhanced intake practices, and closer collaboration with the Legal Office – particularly the Conflict Engagement team, Student Affairs and Outreach, and the Interim Vice-Provost, Students and Learning.

The low number of hearings should not be interpreted as a reduction in activity. Rather, it reflects the effectiveness of enhanced intake, assessment, and resolution processes in addressing concerns at the earliest appropriate stage. Formal hearings remain available where necessary; however, most complaints were resolved through approaches that promoted accountability and fairness while reducing procedural burden. This approach aligns with the University's *Student Discipline Policy* and the intent of the *Standard*, which encourages informal resolution where appropriate. It also supports a more positive student experience by reducing the stress often associated with formal misconduct proceedings.

Themes and Observations:

While the number of complaints reaching a formal hearing remained low, several themes emerged across complaints and consultations during the reporting period. These included interpersonal conflict between students, communication breakdowns within student groups and organizations, concerns arising from online interactions, and situations where misunderstandings escalated before appropriate supports were accessed. Many concerns involved ongoing relationships or community dynamics rather than misconduct requiring formal adjudication and heavy sanctions. This highlights the value of early intervention, education, and proportionate resolution pathways.

Conflict Engagement and ADR:

ADR provides structured opportunities for individuals to address concerns collaboratively, understand impacts, and participate in developing solutions. Depending on the circumstances, this may include facilitated discussions, mediation, restorative conversations, conflict coaching, and other informal resolution approaches. While not a substitute for accountability measures where misconduct has occurred, ADR can be particularly effective in addressing relationship-based conflicts, promoting behavioural change, and supporting student learning and community repair. ADR is therefore well-suited to the University's educational mission and non-academic misconduct – not always, but in increasing instances.

To better incorporate ADR where appropriate, the Governance Office continued to work closely with the Conflict Engagement team throughout the reporting period. This collaboration strengthened access to conflict coaching, facilitated dialogue, mediation, and restorative approaches, allowing concerns to be addressed in ways that supported communication, accountability, and learning. Together, these approaches help ensure that formal disciplinary processes remain available when necessary while providing students with additional pathways for resolving conflict.

Next Steps and Timeline:

Given the *Standard* is due for comprehensive review and considering the themes identified through the 2025-26 reporting period, the University is well positioned to undertake a broader review of its non-academic misconduct framework. This work would build on the findings and recommendations of the 2023 Senate working group, ensuring prior efforts inform future developments. Areas for review may include: examining emerging best practices across the post-secondary sector, identifying policy gaps and overlaps, and developing a clearer Student Code of Conduct. This will help ensure the University's policies remain responsive, fair, educational, and aligned with contemporary student needs and their experience, as well as institutional priorities.

Over the next six months, the University intends to re-establish a cross-institutional and Senate working group of key stakeholders to develop a project plan and guide the review process. The working group will consist of the University Secretary, the Interim Vice-Provost, Students and Learning, members of the Legal Office and Conflict Engagement team, students, faculty, and Senate members.

Senate members interested in participating in the working group are encouraged to contact the Governance Office. Expressions of interest are welcome from all Senate members, regardless of current service on the Board for Student Discipline or Appeal Board.