The Dalhousie University Experience: Should conduct as a student impact professional licensure?

The International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards 2016 Annual Meeting

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Overview

- Role of regulatory body
- Current environment
- Scandal at Dalhousie University
- Position taken by the RCDSO
- Response from Dalhousie
- Outcomes
Role of regulatory body

• “...govern the members in accordance with...this Code and the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 and the regulations and by-laws.”

• “To develop, establish and maintain standards of qualifications for persons to be issued certificates of registration.”
Role of regulatory body

• “It is a requirement...the applicant’s past and present conduct afford reasonable grounds for the belief that the applicant,...
  (b) will practice dentistry with decency, integrity and honestly and in accordance with the law;...
  (e) will display an appropriate and professional attitude.
  O. Reg. 407/04, s. 1.”

Role of regulatory body

Audience:
• The Public
• The Government
• The Membership
• The Media
• The Applicant
Current environment

- Ghomeshi
- Cosby

“Three-times married Trump takes aim at Bill Clinton's infidelities as he fights dirty with Hillary over her claims he's sexist”

MailOnline on Twitter | DailyMail on Facebook
Current environment

“UBC 'abandoned' women who reported sexual assaults
Grad student finally expelled after a year and half of complaints, fifth estate discovers”
CBC News

Current environment

“Doctors Without Boundaries
When doctors are accused of crossing ethical or legal boundaries with their female patients, why does it take so long for authorities to protect the public - if they act at all? Bob McKeown investigates.”
The Fifth Estate – CBC, January 22, 2016
Current environment

Ontario Minister of Health

• “I have established the Minister’s Task Force on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Patients”
• “I am asking that all Colleges fully participate in and cooperate with the Task Force”
Scandal at Dalhousie University

• From the Report on the Task Force on Misogyny, Sexism and Homophobia in Dalhousie University, Faculty of Dentistry: June 26, 2015
  • Significant number of male fourth-year students posted sexist, misogynistic, homophobic remarks and images on Facebook.
  • Posts focused on female classmates, using derogatory, demeaning and sexually violent terms.
Scandal at Dalhousie University

Dalhousie head promises ‘significant consequences’ in Facebook posts scandal

Scandal at Dalhousie University

University expects to find systemic issues
Scandal at Dalhousie University

Dentistry Facebook scandal prompts inquiry calls from Dal Faculty

Scandal at Dalhousie University

Dalhousie Facebook posts ‘completely unacceptable,’ says professor
Sometimes the Media gets it wrong

Meeting on open meetings is closed

Sometimes the Media gets it wrong

Study Shows Frequent Sex Enhances Pregnancy Chances
Sometimes the Media gets it wrong

Marijuana issue sent to a joint committee

The Toronto Star 06/14/96

Sometimes the Media gets it wrong

Parents keep kids home to protest school closure
Sometimes the Media gets it wrong

Hospitals resort to hiring doctors

PHYSICIAN SHORTAGE PROMPTING MOVE, ADMINISTRATORS SAY

Sometimes the Media gets it wrong

Homicide victims rarely talk to police
Royal College of Dental Surgeons: Position

- Requested names of students involved
- Why?
- Student conduct should be a factor in assessing an individual’s suitability to practice
- Obligation to make inquiries
- Audience

Response from Dalhousie:

- Refused to provide names
- Obligation to protect the privacy of their students
- Their responsibility
Dalhousie/RCDSO: Media Coverage

• Dalhousie ‘gentleman’s club’ and why we’re withholding names

• CBC Power & Politics: Interview with RCDSO Registrar

Reaction to College’s Position

“I am a mother of a daughter who graduated from Dal University. I was horrified at the story. I congratulate the College on its thoughtful decision”.

Reaction to College’s Position

“I know it is difficult to stand up and declare a position...especially when you are the first. Good for you”.

Reaction to College’s Position

“I am a dentist in Ontario. The majority of dentists support the College in the position with Dal”.

Reaction to College’s Position

“Thank you for taking a stand against sexual violence against women…I commend you for your stance”.

Reaction to College’s Position

“Bravo to you for looking out for the public interest and for boldly stating that anything less than professional behaviour will not be tolerated”.
Reaction to College’s Position

“All people concerned about violence against women are grateful for your action”.

Reaction to College’s Position

“I want to know who has got their fingers in my mouth. I do not want those people, “at Dal”, working on me”.
Reaction to College’s Position

“The Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario has demonstrated strong and ethical leadership”.

Reaction to College’s Position

“I am Dal grad female and I have a daughter. I think that it is admirable of you to take such a stand. This will certainly put pressures on other licensing boards”.
Outcomes

Task Force on Misogyny, Sexism and Homophobia in Dalhousie University, Faculty of Dentistry

Report dated June 26, 2015

Outcomes

Themes:

• “The culture within the Faculty of Dentistry permits incidents of sexism, misogyny, homophobia and racism.”

• “The best route for the future is to focus on systemic change.”

• “Education and research is the key to significant and lasting change”
Outcomes

Recommendation:
14. The Faculty of Dentistry should collaborate with other dental schools, professional licensing boards, and professional associations across Canada to address equity and sexual misconduct within the profession.

Outcomes

Recommendation:
16. The Faculty of Dentistry should improve the effectiveness of ethics and professionalism education for dental students. Steps in doing so should include making the courses more central to the curriculum, integrating learning on these subjects with other courses and Clinic activities, and including issues relating to sexism, misogyny, homophobia, racism, disability, and discrimination.
Outcomes

• RCDSO and Ontario Universities have collaborated to build ethical components into dentistry programs

• Commission on Dental Accreditation has added an ethical component to teaching requirements

Outcomes

McGill University: National Research Project

• Defining the Policy Lines: Examining the Role of News and Social Media, Popular Culture and the Justice System in Reducing and Mobilizing Change, or Sustaining Sexual Violence and Rape Culture in Universities
Outcomes

“Sexual Abuse Prevention: The Limits of the Relationship”

“The Meaning of Touch”
By Dr. Ruth Gallop, RN, MScN, PhD
Professor Emeritus
Faculty of Nursing & Department of Psychiatry,
Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto

Outcomes

“Coping and Reporting: Understanding the Complainant Experience”
By Dr. Sandy Welsh, PhD
Vice Provost Students and Professor of Sociology
University of Toronto
Outcomes

• RCDSO reviewed application requirements and application process.

• Question added to application form:
  – Have you ever been the subject of an inquiry, investigation or complaint?

• YouTube video on Registration Process

Outcomes - Video
Outcomes

“From now on we should expect all regulators to take a closer look at bad university behaviour and consider whether that will prevent graduates from entering a profession.”

• RCDSO was never provided with names of students involved
Outcomes

• Scandal cost Dalhousie University $650K

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