

## *Disruptive Behavior*

Civility, understanding and mutual respect toward all members of the University community are important to effectively maintain a University environment. Therefore, disruptive behavior does not have to be tolerated. However, there are many reasons why a student may act out in class, so it is important to deal with this issue sensitively.

There are many resources to help you and the student deal with disruptive behavior, and you are encouraged to utilize these resources as needed. The Office of University Residences and Judicial Affairs, the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, the Student Health and Counseling Center, and Academic Advising are just a few of the offices available to assist.

## *Reporting Disruptive Behavior*

Disruptive behavior should be reported to the Office of University Residences and Judicial Affairs. Reporting helps everyone to ensure there is centralized record keeping. The student may also be acting out in other classes, so it is useful to know everything that is occurring in order to provide the most effective assistance. Disruptive behavior can be a cry for help, so reporting can enable the student to get the assistance he/she needs. Reporting may also help avoid litigation issues.

## *Types of Disruptive Behavior*

- Minor – newspaper reading in class, using cell phones, leaving early, coming in late.
- Major – cheating, plagiarism, shouting out in class, irrelevant questions, bizarre behavior, unwanted attention to others.

## *Recognizing a Disruptive Student*

Some students engage in behaviors that are disturbing and disruptive. They may be immature, manipulative, or engage in disorderly conduct both in and out of the class. These behaviors actively hamper the ability of other students to learn and of faculty to teach.

## *Guidelines for Dealing with a Disruptive Student*

1. Call the Office of University Residences and Judicial Affairs at 503-838-8311 to consult with the Director of University Residences and Judicial Affairs. The steps or options for dealing with a disruptive student can be discussed. You can call at any step of the process.
2. Address the student as soon as possible after the behavior begins. Try to do so in a respectful manner and in a way that does not embarrass the student. If possible address the student privately. Be clear about what behavior is unacceptable and state some possible consequences if the behavior continues. (Removed from class for the day, conduct charges, participation grade, etc.).
3. Meet with the student in your office. Put in writing your expectations for behavior in class and consequences for disruption, including possible conduct charges. Hand this letter to the student in your meeting, and be respectful to the student at all times.
4. One helpful approach in addressing disruptive students is to share that you are concerned about them. Mention that you have noticed a

change in behavior and that you wonder if there is something going on in their life that has affected them. Offer to provide resources or just a listening ear.

5. If the behavior still continues, call the Director of University Residences and Judicial Affairs to discuss whether conduct charges are appropriate or if there is some other way to resolve the situation.
6. If the behavior persists and disrupts class, you may ask the student to leave. If the student refuses, you may contact Public Safety at 503-838-8481 and they will remove a student. Note: these options should only be used in extreme circumstances.

## *The Conduct Process*

If a student is accused of violating the Code of Student Responsibility, they may choose between an informal or a formal resolution process. Students accused of violating the Code of Student Responsibility will receive a letter charging them with a violation of the code and asking them to schedule an appointment with the Director of University Residences and Judicial Affairs. The student will then meet with the Director to decide how they want to proceed.

## *Ideas to Help Troubled Students*

- Observe/assess the student – What do visual, interpersonal, and academic signs

suggest? Is there immediate danger to the student or others?

- Define your role – Who could best approach the student? What are your limits? Is the setting appropriate?
- Talk with the student – Share your observations with the student and checkout your perceptions(s) with him or her. Listen to the problem and ask clarifying questions. Reflect back what you've heard.
- Identify the problem and build a bridge to assistance – Who is best equipped to help with this problem? What resources are available?
- Create a specific plan – Be certain to ask the student if the plan is appropriate.
- Provide care for yourself – Seek support and debrief.

## *Successful Planning and Referral*

- Begin with a general plan appropriate to a solvable problem and then break the plan down into smaller components.
- Try to assess the individual's level of self-direction and coping skills.
- Involve the individual in creating the plan.
- The plan should be realistic, time-limited, and concrete.
- Limit referrals to three places or people.
- How realistic is the plan?
- Create a back-up plan.
- After a plan is created, "mobilize" the individual

## *Ways to Prevent Classroom Misconduct*

In order to be proactive, it is important to let

students know what you expect from them and what they can expect from you. One way to accomplish this is to place your expectations for classroom behavior in your syllabus. It might be appropriate to include expectations next to a section on academic dishonesty. This way you are placing students on notice of your expectations. Another suggestion is to hold a discussion in class early in the term. If you notice disruptive behavior, address it as soon as it begins to occur.

### *Syllabus Tips*

As you prepare the syllabus for the classes you are teaching, here are some suggestions to include:

- Classroom participation is a part of your grade in this course. To participate you must attend class having prepared the materials for the day. Questions and comments must be relevant to the topic.
- You are expected to be on time. Class starts at “X”. You should be in your seat and ready to begin class on time. Class ends at “X”. Packing up your things early is disruptive to others around you and to me.
- Classroom discussion should be civilized and respectful to everyone and relevant to the topic we are discussing. Everyone is entitled to his or her opinion. Classroom discussion is meant to allow us to hear a variety of viewpoints. This can only happen if we respect each other and our differences.

- Classroom attendance is a necessary part of

this course. You are allowed no more than “X” number of unexcused absences.

- Raise your hand to be recognized.
- Discussion from class that continues on any listserv or class discussion list should adhere to those same rules and expectations.
- Continued disruption of class will result in a report to Judicial Affairs for a conduct code infraction. After one warning, if the disruption continues, you will be asked to leave the classroom for the remainder of the class period.
- You are expected to do your own work. Cheating, plagiarism and any other form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Please refer to the Code of Student Responsibility by which all students are expected to abide. The grade penalty that will be issued to you should you be found guilty of academic dishonesty could be (F in course, F on assignment, one letter grade lower in course, redo assignment, etc.).

Identify on your syllabus what your students can expect from you. Some examples are: being prepared for class, being on time, not leaving early, and being respectful toward other’s opinions.

### *Resources*

Judicial Affairs	503-838-8930
Vice President for Student	503-838-8221

Affairs	
University Residences	503-838-8311
Student Health and	503-838-8313
Counseling Center	
Academic Advising and	503-838-8428
Learning Center	

# DISRUPTIVE STUDENTS: A GUIDE FOR FACULTY AND STAFF



*Office of University Residences  
and Judicial Affairs*  
503-838-8930

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## DEALING WITH