

Classroom Management

It is the faculty member's responsibility to manage student behavior in the classroom and ensure that a positive learning environment exists. Occasionally, a faculty member may experience a situation in which a student is displaying unusual behavior. In these instances, the faculty member should first determine whether the particular case is an instance of "disruptive behavior" or if it rises to "threatening behavior."

What is disruptive behavior?

Disruptive behavior is student behavior that interferes with the educational process of other students or the normal business functions of the college. Some specific examples of disruptive behavior in the classroom may include:

- Monopolizing discussion or taking over the lecture
- Side conversations
- Making hostile remarks to the instructor or fellow student
- Arriving late/leaving early
- Distracting behavior such as sleeping, cell phone use; eating in class
- Any activity that interrupts the educational or work process
- Violating any specific classroom rules or expectations.

Strategies to Discourage Disruptive Behavior in the Classroom

Faculty can prevent most of the negative behavior issues from occurring by creating a positive classroom environment at the onset. Faculty are strongly encouraged to do the following:

- Be engaged with students as individuals. Learn students' names and refer directly to comments they have made ("As Mary pointed out earlier...")
- Clearly demonstrate a willingness to respectfully listen to students' views
- Model the behavior required of students (be on time, treat students with respect, etc.)
- Use structures that encourage students to get to know each other. It's worth giving up some content time because this creates community.
- Let students know that the instructor cares about their success and is willing to help them succeed. Commonly use phrases such as "I want to help you" or "I'm on your side."
- Provide a syllabus that accurately and fully communicates class requirements and course schedule. Clearly communicate deviations from the syllabus. Many student complaints arise from syllabi that create misunderstandings about course expectations.
- Clearly communicate policies regarding lateness, student attentiveness, cell phone usage, eating in class, unrelated talking in class, etc. Make sure that guidelines are clear and are enforced in a consistent and equitable way.
- Set the tone and classroom expectations early in the class. It is difficult to impose new rules after the class is underway.
- Use active learning techniques to fend off inattentiveness.

- Seek feedback from students to see how things are going. This can be an informal evaluation or something more formal.
- Be passionate about your subject. Students will sense your passion and develop a deeper engagement. Be excited and help them see the value of the knowledge and skills they are developing.
- Avoid grade surprises. Make certain students understand the grading system and that they have sufficient feedback so that the final grade is not a shock. If part of a student's grade is based on participation, make certain that this grade is communicated throughout the semester.
- Be careful about creating too much informality within the classroom environment.

Suggestions for Reducing Disruptive Behavior

Occasionally, faculty will work to create a positive learning environment, but never-the-less, disruptive behavior issue arises. Though every situation is unique, the following suggestions may be helpful:

- Deal with disruptive behavior early, before feelings of anger develop.
- Avoid taking students' behavior personally. Often students come to class with personal matters that impact their learning.
- Decide if the issue needs to be dealt with immediately or if it can wait until after class. If it requires an immediate response, verbally request that the student stop the disruptive behavior. If the student persists, ask the student to leave. If they refuse to leave and you feel the situation is escalating, notify Campus Safety (603.921.1089)
- If a student is monopolizing a discussion or going off on a tangent, skillful teachers can often rectify the problem by using positive instructional techniques. Strategies for dealing with such a student might include saying things such as: "We've heard John's opinion. What do others think?", "It seems like we have two conversations going. Let's come back to the topic at hand."

Important:

If a student is being disruptive, faculty should always inform the department chair. [Guidance for Faculty Dealing with Disruptive Students in Classroom](#)

Disruptive student behavior in a classroom or other learning environment (to include both on and off-campus locations) includes behavior that disrupts the educational process as defined by the instructor. Disruptive student behavior also includes engaging in threatening, intimidating, or other inappropriate behavior toward the instructor or classmates outside of class.

1. In the first instance of behavior that an instructor considers sufficiently disruptive to be a violation of the Code of Conduct, the instructor will inform the student that continuation of the offensive behavior will result in a written complaint to the Academic Affairs Office. Depending on the gravity of the behavior, the instructor may ask the student to leave class for the remainder of that day.
2. Where the behavior is sufficiently disruptive to warrant more formal action in the first instance, the President or Vice Presidents of the college, or a designee, may seek removal of the student from class as an interim sanction prior to resolution of a written complaint before a judicial

body. Under the Student Judicial Code, interim sanctions may be imposed by the official designated by the college a) to ensure the safety and well-being of members of the college community or preservation of college property; b) to ensure the student's own physical or emotional safety and well-being; or c) to ensure the normal operations of the college. Notification of the imposition of Interim Sanctions must be communicated to the Judicial Advisor as soon as is practical, as well as to the appropriate Vice President (if the Vice President did not originate the imposition of sanctions) and campus security as appropriate.

3. If an oral warning is given in the first instance and the disruptive behavior persists, the instructor will complete a written complaint on a form generated by the college which provides the student written notification that the complaint has been filed and that a college representative will be contacting the student.
4. Upon receipt of the complaint from the faculty member, the college representative will investigate, speaking with both the instructor and the student. Ideally, this would occur prior to the next class meeting.
5. The college representative can negotiate a resolution directly with the student or upon completion of his/her investigation issue a decision based upon the evidence gathered including the evidence provided by the student.
6. If suspension from the college or class is deemed the appropriate sanction, the faculty member would be notified and the registrar would be informed of the outcome and instructed to enter an AF grade with the date of that the student last attended class to be entered as the withdrawal date, and the student would be informed by the Academic Affairs Office.
7. Appeals of the decision could then go to the Judicial Committee.