



OVERVIEW: The College faculty and staff value maintaining an orderly learning environment in the classrooms and service areas as explained by this policy.

OFFICE/DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBLE: Vice Provost for Academic Affairs; School Deans

DATE UPDATED: March 2012

Procedures for Dealing with Students Who Are Disruptive in Class

Expectations for Classroom Student Behavior

Students are expected to treat each other and the instructor* or person in charge with common courtesy, decency and respect. They will refrain from behaviors that interfere with the teaching/learning process. All behaviors that, in the judgment of the instructor, interfere with the teaching/learning process may be considered disruptive. Students will recognize that the instructor of the course is the leader of the class and is in charge of instruction. Students must respect the instructor's authority to lead and to direct the classroom activities. Attempts to dispute the instructor's authority to lead may be considered disruptive.

General Principles for Instructors' Handling of Disruptive Students

When faced with disruptive behavior in the classroom or other instructional settings, the instructor is advised to keep her/his own emotional reactions under control and to refrain from using abusive language. The ability of the instructor to keep calm may help to prevent escalation of the behavior. Some students may respond better to an initial private discussion of their disruptive behavior than they will to being put in an embarrassing situation before other students. It is very important that the instructor not engage in a physical confrontation with a disruptive student except for self-defense or for preventing injury to other students. If it becomes necessary to remove the student from the area, contact University Police at (585) 395-2222 on the Brockport campus or Building Security at the MetroCenter (585) 232-3354.

The Need for Documentation of Disruptive Events

Disruptive behaviors in the classroom and other instructional settings occur on a continuum from minor irritants to rare episodes of major violence. Disruption by a student may be a single major event or it may occur repeatedly as a series of less serious events. It is very important for the instructor to document disruptive behaviors by noting date, time and the specific behaviors of the student that were disruptive. By the time that the instructor has decided that it is necessary to remove the student from class, several disruptive episodes may have occurred. However, unless the instructor has documented each episode, it may be necessary to begin the documentation process at a time when a stronger action might already be justified. Documentation is required to show a history of repeated disruption.

General Principles for Documenting Disruptive Behaviors

When keeping notes or writing letters about disruptive behaviors, faculty members and department Chairpersons should confine their comments about the student to describing specific behaviors that were disruptive in the classroom. The comments should not take the form of real or implied statements of psychological diagnosis, speculations on the student's motives or mental status, or value judgments about the student. It is important to document what the student was doing, not to speculate why s/he was doing it.

Types of Disruptive Events

I. Single-event Disruptions

A student becomes disruptive in the classroom but there is no previous history or pattern of repeated disruptive behaviors.

Examples: A student comes to class intoxicated and engages in inappropriate behavior or a student becomes angry and the situation escalates to a disruptive level of confrontation with another student or the instructor.

Dealing with Single-event Disruptions

A. The instructor or person in charge may ask the offending student to leave if her/his continued disruptive behaviors are compromising the instructional process. The instructor should state clearly to the student what behaviors are disruptive and give the student the option of leaving class and returning after s/he regains control. The instructor should also inform the student of what the consequences will be if the disruptive behavior continues.

B. If the student refuses to leave when asked, the instructor may leave the classroom and call University Police to remove the student. The instructor will not try to physically remove the student. If the instructor believes that the other students are in any danger due to the situation, s/he may cancel the class and send the students away.

C. The instructor should file a written report on all such events with the department Chair within 24 hours. The report will describe the student's disruptive behaviors, the instructor's actions in response to the student, the resolution of the conflict, if any, and supply names of any witnesses to the events described. A copy of this report will be kept in the department and a copy will be sent to the Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs. The department Chairperson should attempt to meet with the student and the faculty member to discuss the incident before any other action is taken.

D. The department Chairperson will take appropriate disciplinary steps in consultation with the Dean and, if necessary, the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs and Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs. As a minimum action, the department Chairperson will warn the student in writing of the consequences of further disruptions. The Student Counseling Center would be an appropriate referral for the student if the department Chair believes that s/he might need support in correcting the

behavior problem.

II. Multiple-event Disruptions

A student shows a pattern of minor disruptive behavior through several class sessions, which, in the judgment of the instructor, impairs the instructional process. Because of these behaviors, the instructor is less able to teach and the students are less able to learn.

Examples: A student arrives late repeatedly and disrupts classroom activities as s/he enters the instructional setting. A student distracts by talking out of turn or repeatedly refuses to observe normal expectations for classroom etiquette. A student repeatedly monopolizes the classroom discussion, refusing to allow other students to talk, or repeatedly challenges the instructor's authority to lead the class.

Dealing with Multiple-event Disruptions

A. The instructor should document all disruptive behaviors as they occur by taking personal notes that include date, time, specific behaviors, names of people present. The instructor should state clearly to the student what behaviors are disruptive. The instructor should also inform the student of what the consequences will be if the disruptive behavior continues.

B. As a history of repeated disruptive behaviors by a student develops, the instructor will document the events using written notes and will keep the department Chairperson informed. The Student Counseling Center may be a helpful resource for a faculty member attempting to deal with a series of disruptive behaviors.

C. If the instructor and the departmental Chairperson decide that removing the student from class may be necessary, the student must first be informed in writing by the department Chairperson of the specific behaviors which are objectionable and asked to refrain from these behaviors. The student will be informed about the possible consequences of further disruptions. Any discussions between the instructor and the student about the disruptions should be carried out in the presence of the department Chairperson.

D. If, after receiving written notification, the student refuses to stop creating disruptions in class, the department Chairperson will report the situation to the Dean and ask that the student be suspended from attending further class meetings of that course.

E. In the absence of the department Chairperson, the duties in A through D above will be carried out by the acting Chairperson or the Chairperson's designee.

III. Suspensions, Terminations, and Referral to the Student Conduct Process for Reason of Disruptive Behavior

In the case of either single-event or multiple-event disruptions, immediate actions at the Dean's and/or Vice President's level may be necessary.

A. For serious disruptions, the School Dean may authorize immediate suspension of a

student from class or terminating the student's participation in the course. If the Dean elects to terminate the student's participation in the course for disruptive behavior, a failing grade will be recorded. The student will be informed of the disciplinary action to be taken by a joint letter from the department Chairperson and the Dean stating reasons for the suspension. Instructors are not required to offer make up for work missed during behavioral suspensions. [Note: This action may involve a course-by-course decision.]

B. Student appeals of suspension or termination of registration for these reasons (section A above) will be directed to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs or designee. The Provost and Vice President will arrange for a committee of faculty to consider the appeal and return a recommendation.

C. If the University Police become involved in a disruptive event, the Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs will be consulted and will determine whether to refer the student to the College's Student Conduct process or to take legal action as may be appropriate.

D. If a student is disruptive to the normal operations of the College, an "interim suspension" pending disciplinary proceedings or medical evaluation, may be justified. Such suspensions can be immediate and without prior notice (on the recommendation of the College's Student Conduct Coordinator to the VP for Enrollment Management & Student Affairs, or to the Provost). The College reserves the right to require a mental health assessment to determine the extent to which a student is a threat. The case may be referred to the Student Conduct System. The Student Conduct Coordinator will investigate the situation and recommend appropriate action to the Vice President or Provost. Such disciplinary action may include an interim suspension, conduct suspension, or even conduct dismissal. Please refer to the *Code of Student Conduct* found on the College's Student Policy Webpage at www.brockport.edu/policies for further information concerning the College's disciplinary process and disciplinary actions.

Note: Letters from College officials to warn students, or to suspend or terminate class participation, as required by this policy, should be delivered in person with the request that the student sign a delivery notice or else they should be sent by certified US mail. Email should not be used for such notifications.

IV. Students Who Attend Class under the Influence of Alcohol or Psychoactive Drugs

When students attend class under the influence of alcohol or psychoactive drugs, dangerous situations may develop. Because of these dangers, especially in laboratory, field or clinical situations, an instructor is justified in asking a student who appears to be under the influence of alcohol or psychoactive drugs, even if s/he is not overtly disruptive, to leave the class. Such actions should be documented and pursued by the instructor in the same way as described for single or multiple event disruptions. Students will be referred to the Health and Counseling Service.

V. Student Behavioral Consultant Team Referrals: Student behavioral issues may be referred to the Student Behavioral Consultant Team for investigation. This group may make recommendations to the Vice Presidents for further investigation, suspension or dismissal, and

also actions through the student conduct system. The Student Behavioral Consultant Team works cooperatively with all other disciplinary processes at the College. This team may become involved with student behavioral issues prior to or at any stage of actions taking place under Section III A-E above.

*Note: The term “instructor” is used in this document to refer to the person in charge of the class, laboratory, or other instructional settings. However, these procedures apply equally to disruptions in the computer center and laboratories, the Library, student services areas, and other academic support areas such as the Student Learning Center.