

CAMPUS CIVILITY AND THE DISRUPTION OF LEARNING: A GUIDE FOR FACULTY AND STAFF

INTRODUCTION

California State University, Long Beach takes seriously its tradition of maintaining civility and mutual respect among all members of the University community. These qualities are intrinsic to excellence in teaching and learning. They also contribute to the maintenance of a productive workplace and an overall positive campus climate. (from Policy Statement 03-09.)

Nevertheless it is possible that faculty or staff may experience behavior that is disruptive to the

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2. Remain calm – this may be difficult if the student is agitated, but reasoned responses will assist the student in addressing the behavior in question.
3. Do not take the student’s behavior or remarks personally. Disruptive behavior generally results from other life problems or general academic frustrations.
4. Be specific about the inappropriate behavior that the student exhibited. Describe the behavior, and do not focus on the person. Explain why the behavior is problematic for student learning.
5. Ask questions, and summarize what the student is saying. Respectful concern may enable the student to acknowledge the need for dealing with his or her behavior.
6. State what you want to see happen.
7. Focus on areas of agreement.
8. Conclude by summarizing any resolutions and articulate expectations for the future. Be clear that continued inappropriate behavior will require further action.

MODERATE INTERVENTIONS -- appropriate for behavior that is an ongoing problem, is escalating, or seriously interferes with the learning process.

Students may become verbally abusive when they encounter frustrating situations which they believe are beyond their control. They can displace anger and frustration from those situations onto the nearest target. Explosive outbursts or ongoing belligerent, hostile behavior become this student's way of gaining power and control in an otherwise out-of-control experience. It is important to remember that the student is generally not angry at you personally, but is angry at her/his world and you are the object of pent-up frustrations. This behavior may often be associated with the use of alcohol and other drugs. It is important at this level to differentiate between behavior that is just uncivil or rude and behavior that is threatening or harassing.

1. **Involve others as appropriate:** It may be helpful to involve your Department Chair, supervisor, the Associate Dean and/or Dean when meeting with a student to discuss his or her behavior. This may help to reinforce the importance of your standards and help keep the conversation focused on behavior. In meeting with the student you may learn that the disruptive behavior is the result of some a perceived conflict between the student and you or other individuals in the class. Depending on the nature of the problem, it may be appropriate to involve the Office of the Dean of Students, the Office of Judicial Affairs, or Counseling and Psychological Services.
2. **Seek voluntary Course Withdrawal:** Students cannot be involuntarily withdrawn from a course except as provided by an existing University policy or through the use of the student disciplinary process. Withdrawal should not be used as a substitute for discipline when a student has committed a serious act of misconduct. Withdrawals are most appropriate when there is a genuine personal conflict that cannot be resolved and administrative approval has been secured. If this recourse is necessary you may find it necessary to enlist the assistance of your Department Chair, the Associate Dean or Dean of the College or the Dean of Students.
3. **Suspension from class.** A faculty member has the right to suspend a student from a single class session. Notify the student that if the student refuses to leave when asked, the faculty member will contact the University Police and that will result in a formal disciplinary action.

4. **File a Student Misconduct Complaint with Judicial Affairs.** (Student Conduct Procedures - Executive Order No. 970)

EMERGENCY INTERVENTION - appropriate when there is an immediate threat of public safety.

Call University Police – Program the University Police number (562-985-4101) into your cell phone because if you dial 911 on a cell phone it may not connect directly to the University Police, depending on the cell site to which you have connected.

- “ When you believe that you or another person is in immediate danger.
- “ When you believe that the student is about to harm her/himself.
- “ When you believe that the student is out of control and is disrupting the classroom.

The Office of University Ombudsman (5-5983) – provides at no cost an confidential and neutral setting for students, faculty, staff and community members to informally solve campus-related problems and concerns. The Ombuds serves the campus community and its citizens as an independent and neutral party.

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