

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 0309). Nevertheless it is possible that faculty or staff may experience behavior that is disruptive to the learning/workplace environment or even personally threatening. These disruptions may happen in a classroom, department, faculty or staff offices, or others areas on the campus. Disruptions might be caused by members of the campus community, but may also be caused by people who visit the campus or by children of students or personnel. **Civility is the responsibility of everyone who participates on the CSULB campus.** Student behavior is governed by University policies, including the CSULB Student Code of Conduct. However, in cases in which a student has caused a disruption to educational or administrative activities, faculty or staff members may need to address issues related to the perceived safety to themselves and other members of the community. These guidelines were developed to provide faculty and staff with a range of responses to disruptive behavior.

DEFINITION OF DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

Behavior is considered disruptive when it interferes in a significant way with the opportunity of other students to learn, or with the administrative functions of the University. Disruptive behavior may sometimes be so severe as to threaten or endanger the physical safety or psychological wellbeing of personnel or students.

Examples of Disruptive Behavior

Disruptive behavior may assume many forms, such as:

- Persistently arriving late to class or leaving early in a manner that interferes with the learning activities of other students;
- Talking incessantly while the instructor is delivering a lecture or when others students are presenting, thus preventing others from benefiting educationally from the class;
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UNIVERSITY STANDARDS FOR STUDENT BEHAVIOR

All students of the California State University system must adhere to the Student Conduct Code as stated in Section 41301 of the Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations as well as all campus rules, regulations, codes and policies. The Student Conduct Code, as well as CSULB policies covering areas of discrimination, harassment, and the use of computing resources, are published in the Schedule of Classes and the University Catalog.

SUGGESTED PRACTICES FOR INSTRUCTORS

The instructor of a course has the authority to establish appropriate academic and behavioral standards. There are many ways that an instructor may influence student behavior that will impact the teaching/learning environment. The following measures do not constitute a fixed procedure that must be followed in each instance, but these strategies may be pursued, based on an assessment of their suitability

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FACULTY AND STAFF

Helpful Hints

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.

DOCUMENTATION

In resolving disruption cases it is critical that there be appropriate documentation of the problem behavior, including time, date, brief description of the incident, and what actions were taken. This documentation should always be factual and avoid personal interjections or conjecture.

Initially, the faculty or staff member may wish to maintain the documentation in their own files, however, if the disruptive behavior escalates, the faculty or staff may provide the Chair or Dean with the information they have compiled. If the situation continues and requires a hearing by Judicial Affairs, a factual record of the encounters will be beneficial in effectively resolving the situation.

All of these recommendations are intended to be consistent with policies of the University. In a situation in which the recommendations and the established policies are in conflict with existing legal statutes or administrative regulations, those statutes and regulations shall govern.

DISRUPTION CAUSED BY STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The Office of the Dean of Students (58670) – works cooperatively within the Division of Student Services and throughout the university to assist **students** in achieving their academic goals and enhancing their personal, intellectual and social development.

Office of Judicial Affairs (55270) – assists **students, faculty, staff, administration and community members** in locating, interpreting and applying campus policies and regulations and laws applicable to students. Investigates and adjudicates campus related complaints and charges against students involving alleged violations of campus regulations and explores alternatives to resolve actual or perceived problems.

The Office of Disabled Student Services (55401) – Offers a **student** support program within the Division of Student Services. Its mission is to assist students with disabilities as they secure their university degrees at California State University, Long Beach. A Disabled Student Services **Faculty Handbook** is available at: http://www.csulb.edu/divisions/students/dss/faculty_handbook/

University Police (54101) – Will respond to severe and immediate threats and can enforce the administrative instructions of faculty and staff.

This document was adapted from the following sources:

Information about Disruptive and Distressed Students
Faculty Center for Professional Development, California State University, Long Beach
<http://www.csulb.edu/divisions/aa/personnel/fcpd/>

Disruptive & Threatening Student Behavior: Guidelines for Faculty and Staff. Division of Student Affairs, University of Southern California, Fall 2004.
https://sait.usc.edu/SCNav_secured/PDF/USC%20Disruptive%20Behavior%20Brochure%2004.pdf

Dealing with Incidents of Disruptive Student Behavior in the Classroom, California State University, Sacramento, Reference: PM 8909
<http://www.csus.edu/admbus/umannual/UMD03250.htm>