

A FACULTY GUIDE TO Managing Disruptive Behavior IN THE CLASSROOM

Do you have students in class who do the following:

- Text or talk on cell phones?
- Sidebar conversation with classmates?
- Interrupt discussions or make inappropriate remarks?
- Write or mention ideas that cause concern for their mental state?
- Repeatedly arrive late or leave early?

If you consider any of these behaviors annoying, you have the right to address such behavior. Annoying classroom behavior should not be tolerated and may become disruptive if ignored.

Preventative Measures Faculty Can Take

- Include specific expectations for, and consequences of student behavior (e.g., no cell phones, no tardiness, etc.) during first day introduction and in your course format.
- Use the first class meeting to review what is and isn't appropriate.
- Confer with your colleagues on ways they prevent or respond to disruptive behavior.
- Model the behavior you expect of students.

Steps for Responding to Disruptive Behavior

- Immediately ask the student to stop the behavior.
- Speak with the student privately after class about their conduct.
- Document in writing the situation and your actions.

*When you talk privately with the student...**

- Be specific about the behavior that is disruptive.
- Explain the affect the behavior has on your ability to teach and the class's ability to learn.
- Address what you observe about the behavior, e.g., communicate your concern.
- Allow the student to respond and listen carefully to their words.
- Restate your expectations for the student's future behavior.

** It is your judgment whether to have a colleague or administrator present during this conversation.*

Your Rights as a Faculty Member

You have the right to direct students to cease disruptive classroom behavior immediately. If it becomes necessary, you can direct a student to leave your classroom for the rest of the class period. If they fail to comply with your directives to leave the classroom, promptly report their failure to do so to Campus Police, and ask them to remove the student from your classroom. Depending on the severity of the situation, an option may be to dismiss the class for an impromptu break away from the classroom.

If Disruptive Behavior Continues

Some disruptive behavior simply reflects bad manners and a lack of consideration of others and may cease after one warning. If such conduct persists, in a future class, inform the student you will report the behavior to the administration. The case may be treated as a violation of the OU Student Rights & Responsibilities. Behaving in disruptive ways in class and failing to comply with directions to stop are both violations of the Rights & Responsibilities. Inform the Executive Director for Student Affairs and program administration via email or the BIT online reporting form. OU-Tulsa Student Affairs will decide if a conduct hearing is warranted.

If you suspect the disruptive behavior could be related to psychological matters, please submit a BIT report and refer the student to Counseling Services, (918) 660-3109.

Threatening or Alarming Behavior

Sometimes behavior is more than just thoughtless or rude. Signs of threatening/alarming behaviors include:

- Using derogatory or profane language in an angry manner.
- Appearing hostile, aggressive, or violent.
- Escalating behavior (e.g., louder voice, faster speech, pacing).
- Making statements such as, "If I don't pass this course, some one will pay," "I better graduate or else," "I will take things into my own hands."
- Speaking incoherently with unconnected thoughts, garbled speech, under the influence.
- Exhibiting paranoid or suspicious behaviors.
- Bullying behavior focused on a specific target in the classroom.
- Storming out of class and/or slamming doors.

If the student's behavior is alarming, escalating, or if you or others feel threatened, immediately:

- Contact OU-Tulsa Police dispatch at (918) 660-3900, identify yourself and your location, describe the behavior, and request assistance.
- Consider dismissing the class.
- Inform your program administration and notify the Executive Director of OU-Tulsa Student Affairs by calling (918) 660-3107.

Contact Us

OU-Tulsa Student Affairs: (918) 660-3100

OU-Tulsa Police (Non-Emergency): (918) 660-3900

OU-Tulsa Police (Emergency): (918) 660-3333

