

A Faculty Guide to Managing Disruptive Behavior in the Classroom

Do you have students in class who do the following:

- IM friends 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 it is ignored.

Preventive 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.
- Become familiar with the Faculty Guide to Managing Classroom Behavior, which includes the Student Code of Conduct, found in the Student handbook (ORACLE).

Steps for Responding to Disruptive Behavior

- Immediately ask the student to stop the behavior.
- Speak with the student privately after class about his/her conduct.
- Document in writing the situation and your actions to your Department Chair/ Associate Dean. Complete the web-based Incident Reporting Form found at <http://dothan.troy.edu/forms/CampusIncidentForm.html> .

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 his or her words.
- Restate your expectations for the student's future behavior.

- It is your judgment whether to have a colleague, Department Chair, Associate Dean, or Dean of Students present during this conversation.

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 TROY Student Code of Conduct. Behaving in disruptive ways in class and failing to comply with directions to stop are both violations of the Code. Again inform your Department Chair/Associate Dean in writing of the situation and your actions and complete the web-based Incident Reporting Form. The Dean of Students will hold a disciplinary hearing with the student(s) involved. If you suspect the disruptive behavior could be the result of psychological problems, always contact the Dean of Students for advice on how to respond and see our **A Faculty Guide to Encountering Students in Distress or Personal Crisis**.

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 Security (334-685-1185), and ask to remove the student from your classroom. Depending on the severity of the situation, an option may be to dismiss the class.

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, someone will pay," "I better graduate or else," "I will take things into my own hands."
- Speaking incoherently with unconnected thoughts, garbled speech, or under the influence. If the student's behavior is alarming, escalating, or if you or others feel threatened:
 - ❖ Contact the Security Office immediately at 334-685-1185, or the Dean of Students at 334-685-1183, identify yourself and your location, describe the behavior, and request assistance.
- Consider dismissing the class immediately.
- Inform your Department Chair/Associate Dean and complete the online Incident Reporting Form. This online report can be found at the following address:
<http://dothan.troy.edu/forms/CampusIncidentForm.html>.