University of Minnesota, Crookston

Recommended Campus Process for Responding to Disruptive Student Conduct – in the classroom, in offices, and public meeting spaces


Related Policies: University of Minnesota Student Conduct Code
University of Minnesota Classroom Expectations Guidelines

Responsible University Officers: Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, Department Chairs, and Associate Vice Chancellors for Student Affairs

Responsible Offices: Academic Affairs and Student Affairs

Governance Review/Action: Department Chairs and Executive Committee -April 2008 (initial review of draft) and September 2008 (follow-up review of working document). Chancellor’s Cabinet review (October 2008) and approval.

UMC faculty and staff are responsible for maintaining order and a positive learning environment in classrooms, offices, and public meeting spaces. Student conduct at the University is governed by the Student Conduct Code, which prohibits disruptive conduct.

Behavior which disrupts the classroom learning environment is addressed in the Student Conduct Code as follows 1:

Disciplinary Offenses: (2) Disruptive Classroom Conduct- Disruptive classroom conduct means engaging in behavior that substantially or repeatedly interrupts either the instructor’s ability to teach or student learning. The classroom extends to any setting where a student is engaged in work toward academic credit or satisfaction of program based requirements or related activities.

Instructors are encouraged to include the following statement in their course syllabi:
All activities in the University, including this course, are governed by the University of Minnesota Student Conduct Code. Students who engage in behavior that disrupts the learning environment for others may be subject to disciplinary action under the Code. In addition, students responsible for such behavior may be asked to cancel their registration (or have their registration cancelled).

Abusive, disrespectful, harassing or threatening behavior is inappropriate and should not be tolerated in any UMC campus setting. The guidelines on the next page are possible steps employees can take when confronted by a student exhibiting uncivil behavior. Employees are urged to remain professional and use their best judgment in any given situation. The initial and subsequent steps will depend on the type and severity of the behavior.

Procedures

Faculty, staff, and administrators are encouraged to contact their supervisor or Academic Department Chair and the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs with concerns over disruptive behavior. Guidelines regarding responding to such behavior follow.

A. In the Classroom
   1. Faculty Immediate Response to Disruptive but not Threatening Behavior

   University of Minnesota “Classroom Expectations Guidelines”, adopted by the University Senate and University Administration state, “All students at the University have the right to a civil, productive, and stimulating learning environment. In turn, instructors have the responsibility to nurture and maintain such an environment. Lively, even heated, discussion is not disruptive behavior.” The guidelines speak to disruptive behavior as follows:

   Instructors should take steps to have removed from class students who disrupt the educational process because of discourteous, threatening, harassing, or other aggressive behavior.

   Students who use laptop computers or other electronic equipment during class time should use their device for course-related activities only. Any other use of the computer or the Internet (including e-mail, Internet surfing, games, chat rooms, instant messaging, and so on) is distracting and disruptive to fellow students and is not permitted during class time.

   Faculty members should talk with students after class about behavior that doesn’t support the learning environment. It is expected that for minor disruptions, this practice should be followed. Occasionally student behavior in the classroom is such that it substantially or repeatedly interrupts either the instructor’s ability to teach or student learning. This behavior should be addressed immediately with the student. Behavior at this level violates the student conduct code and should be reported to faculty’s Department Chair and the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

   These behaviors correspond to Level I-Mild Behaviors (classroom) outlined in “Disruptive Student Behavior Response”.

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2 University of Minnesota Classroom Expectations Guidelines, University Senate, April 2000; Administration, July 2000. Copies are available through the University of Minnesota Policy Library. See footnote 1.
2. Response Process When Behavior Substantially or Repeatedly Interrupts Teaching/Learning: (Note: For threatening or violent behavior, see A3 below.)

Disruptive students should be informed they are interrupting the learning process of others and be asked to leave the class/learning environment. If the student(s) will not leave, Campus Security (281-8531) and Associate Vice Chancellors of Student Affairs (281-8505 or 289-2366) should be notified and the student(s) will be removed.

At this time, it should be made clear to the student(s) that they may not return to the class/learning environment until the student and the faculty member have met and discussed how to improve the situation.

The faculty member should inform their department chair of this incident. They may request advice in planning the meeting and include another person at the meeting (e.g., for faculty: a senior colleague, department chair or student’s advisor, coach, Director for Diversity Programs or other student affairs personnel, etc.) When scheduling the meeting, the student should be informed if the faculty member has asked another person to attend the meeting with them, and if so, the student should be given the option of having a person of their choice attend the meeting.

At the meeting between the faculty member and the student, the problem behavior should be identified and guidelines for future behavior established. Students whose behavior suggests the need for counseling should be referred to Student Counseling. Following this, the student may return to the class.

If the student further disrupts the same class, he/she should be informed that they are interrupting the learning process for others and be asked to leave (or be removed by Campus Security and the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs). The Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs will meet with the student to address his/her behavior. The student may not return to the class until this meeting has occurred. During the meeting, the student’s behavior will be addressed. Additionally, the student will be informed that a subsequent disruptive incident could result in significant sanctions as afforded by the Student Conduct Code, such as cancellation of registration for the course, required compliance, probation, suspension or expulsion. This incident may be referred directly to the Student Conduct Committee for formal adjudication.

These behaviors correspond to Level II- Moderate Behaviors (classroom) outlined in “Disruptive Student Behavior Response”.

3. Faculty’s Immediate Response to Disruptive Behavior that is Threatening or Violent

Faculty should not hesitate to call Campus Security (281-8531), the Associate Vice Chancellors of Student Affairs (281-8505 or 289-2366), and/or the Crookston Police Department (9-911), if the disruptive student appears to pose a safety threat to him/herself or others (e.g., physical assault, under the influence, threat with a weapon). In addition, the
incident should be reported to the Student Conduct Committee, through the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs (Conduct Code Coordinator).

The following guidelines apply to those who are a victim of a violent crime, witness violence, or are aware of behavior that is threatening to their safety or the safety of others.

- Individuals should call 9-911 (from on campus phones) for police assistance if they observe violence occurring, believe or feel there may be an immediate threat to their safety or someone else’s safety, or if someone commits a violent act against them.
- For crimes that do not require an emergency response from the police, call Campus Security 281-8531.

Faculty experiencing harassment in person, through email, telephone, fax or other means, should call UMC Human Resources (281-8345). They should also notify their department chair and the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs at 281-8505.

The Student Conduct Code affords sanctions including warning and admonition, required compliance, confiscation, probation, and suspension or expulsion. The University may also implement an interim suspension until which time the Student Conduct Committee can be convened. Any or all of these sanctions may be considered for an incident of violent or threatening behavior. The student may not return to the class/learning environment/office without permission of the Student Conduct Committee.

These behaviors correspond to Level III- Severe Behaviors (classroom) outlined in “Disruptive Student Behavior Response”.

B. In an Office or Common Space
   1. Faculty/Staff Immediate Response to Disruptive but not Threatening Behavior

   a. In an office setting: Ask the student/s to calm down if they get too loud and or start to become upset. Tell the student/s his/her behavior is inappropriate especially if he/she becomes disrespectful. If the student persists or the situation escalates contact your supervisor or department chair. A supervisor may be able to help resolve the situation and/or provide support.

   Faculty or staff members may need to ask a student who is upset or angry to return at a later time to address his/her concerns when he/she is calmer and able to manage his/her emotions. Tell the student if his/her behavior continues and if he/she does not leave, the matter will be reported as a violation of the Student Code of Conduct. Students are expected to follow directive given to them from University personnel. Call Campus Security (x-8530) and Dr. Peter Phaiah (x-8505 or 289-2366) if the student/s refuses to leave.

   b. In common campus spaces: In public meeting spaces on campus, faculty, staff, and students routinely address noise and behavior that disrupts classes, work, or campus events. Faculty, staff or student worker should talk with the individuals involved, describe the disruption, and ask that the behavior stop or move to another location. This is a normal part of life in an active learning community. When student behavior
substantially and/or repeatedly interrupts teaching, learning, or other campus activities, it can be a violation of the Student Conduct Code and should be addressed accordingly. Follow the steps as described “In an office setting” on the previous page.

2. Response Process When Behavior Substantially or Repeatedly Interrupts Office or Campus Area Functions: (Note: For threatening or violent behavior, see B3 below)

Disruptive students should be informed that they are interrupting work and/or others and be asked to leave the office/common area. If the student(s) will not leave, Campus Security (281-8531) and Associate Vice Chancellors of Student Affairs (281-8505 or 289-2366) should be notified and the student/s will be removed. At this time, it should be made clear to the student/s that they may not return to the office or area until the student and the faculty/staff member have met and discussed how to improve the situation.

The faculty/staff member should contact his/her immediate supervisor or department chair and the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. The individual responsible for the space should also sit in on the discussion.

Occasionally, student behavior may substantially or repeatedly interrupt other students’ ability to receive service, or staff or faculty members’ ability to perform their work. Behavior at this level violates the Student Code of Conduct and should be reported to the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

If there are any threats, perceived violence or actual violence call Campus Security, Crookston Police and Dr. Peter Phaiah.

If following the meeting with the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, the same student further disrupts the same office environment or common area, the student should be asked to leave the area (or be removed by Campus Security and the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs). The Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs will convene the Student Conduct Committee to initiate a formal complaint for a violation of the Student Conduct Code. The student may not return to the office or designated area while the complaint is being addressed through the Student Conduct Committee process. The Student Conduct Committee may assign appropriate sanctions such as requiring compliance, probation, suspension, or expulsion.

3. Immediate Response to Disruptive Behavior that is Threatening or Violent

Faculty or staff should not hesitate to call Campus Security (281-8531), the Associate Vice Chancellors of Student Affairs (281-8505 or 289-2366), and the Crookston Police Department (9-911), if the disruptive student appears to pose a safety threat to him/herself or others (e.g., physical assault, under the influence, threat with a weapon). In addition, the incident should be reported to the Student Conduct Committee, through the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

The following guidelines apply to those who are a victim of a violent crime, witness violence, or are aware of behavior that is threatening to their safety or the safety of others.
• Individuals should call 9-911 (from on campus phones) for police assistance if they observe violence occurring, believe or feel there may be an immediate threat to their safety or someone else’s safety, or if someone commits a violent act against them.
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C. Record Keeping
Correspondence and notes related to behavioral misconduct are confidential and should be retained according to applicable University record retention policies. Confidential files of administrative actions should be maintained in the administrative office where the action was taken. Only faculty and staff with a legitimate right-to-know may obtain information.

Revision History:

This document is drafted after the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities College of Liberal Arts Advising Tools: Classroom, Grading and Examination Procedures.

This policy was modeled and drafted after the same policy adopted by the University of Minnesota, Morris campus with the permission of Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, Sandy Olson-Loy.

www.morris.umn.edu/services/acad_affairs/DisruptiveStudentConductinClassroom.pdf