

Guidelines and Policy on Dealing with Disruptive Students

Appropriate conduct by students is an absolute requirement in the college and distance education classroom and the university must operate with a policy of zero tolerance for any disruptive behavior. The term 'disruptive behavior' means any behavior that substantially interferes with the conduct of a class. Disruptive behavior may include but is not limited to:

- Persistent late arrivals or leaving early in a manner that disrupts the regular flow of the class.
- Talking while the instructor is talking.
- Speaking in class without first obtaining recognition and permission to speak.
- Use of electronic equipment such as cell phones, computers, MP3 players, etc. in a manner that disrupts the class.
- A student who becomes belligerent or verbally abusive when confronted as a result of his/her inappropriate behavior.

These guidelines are designed to provide faculty members with their options when confronted with disruptive students as well as inform them of the mechanisms they may use to correct the problem.

The most powerful deterrent to classroom disruption is for the faculty member to provide class expectations concerning appropriate conduct in the classroom. Each faculty member should publish in the course syllabus the course attendance policy, behavior policies, and other expectations for appropriate conduct in the classroom. A faculty member may consider disruptive behavior when assigning grades for the class if participation is part of the final grade.

Students do not have the right to engage in behavior that is disruptive in the classroom. The instructor of record has the authority to maintain appropriate classroom behavior in all courses offered by Old Dominion University, whether in traditional or distance modes. Faculty have the right to immediately confront any student causing disruptive behavior, and request cessation of the behavior. A follow-up conversation with the student(s) is recommended to reinforce the faculty member's expectations for appropriate conduct in the classroom. In situations in which students are cooperative with the faculty member's request to cease disruptive behavior, the faculty member need only report the incident to the department chair.

Should any student choose not to respond to a request to cease disruptive behavior, the faculty member should ask the student to leave the classroom to prevent further disruption to the class. A disruptive student should be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity for disciplinary action under the Student Disciplinary Policies and Procedures.

Students engaged in classroom disruption will normally be charged with:

1. Failure to comply with the directions of university officials, their authorized agents, and local police agencies acting in the performance of their duties; and/or
2. Obstruction or disruption of university activities.

Should a student refuse to leave a classroom when asked to do so, or should a faculty member become concerned about his/her personal safety or the safety of the class, the Old Dominion University Police Department should be called immediately to remove the student. Even if the student leaves the classroom before Old Dominion University police arrive, the student is to be reported to the Old Dominion University Police Department and the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity for appropriate disciplinary action.

If a faculty member is concerned about the behavior of a student or a group of students, the dean and department chair will consult with the faculty member about ways to improve the situation and will intervene in order to correct the problem.

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