

Responding to Classroom Disruptions

Each case is different and you need to use your best judgment in responding. If you judge a student to be disruptive, you have several courses of action depending upon the severity of the incident. **By TBR policy, you have responsibility for control over classroom behavior and can order the temporary removal of a disruptive student from the classroom.**

1. Tell the student politely but plainly to stop his/her behavior immediately.
2. Counsel with the student in the privacy of your office or in the hall after telling the student to step out of class for a minute.
 - a. Indicate plainly the behavior you object to.
 - b. Indicate your specific expectations for appropriate behavior.
 - c. Indicate the specific consequences of noncompliance, i.e., dismissal from class, referral to judicial authorities, campus police will be summoned, etc.
3. Ask the student to leave class. If the student refuses, immediately call campus police. Follow with a call to the Dean of Student's Office and ask for Joe Sherlin (439-4210). Expect to be asked to make a signed, written statement of the incident in as much detail as possible. Expect to be asked, "Do you wish to press judicial charges?" Remember the student has the right to return to class after two absences. Note: You have the option of requesting that the student be given a formal written warning to cease and desist by the Dean of Students as an alternative to charging the student with a disciplinary rule violation.

In every instance, the Dean of Students will make a judgment whether the student is dangerous to himself or others or is likely to cause substantial disruption of classroom activities. In such cases, the student may be immediately suspended pending a hearing. Other options may also be explored by the Dean of Students in conjunction with you, your department chair, and/or the Associate Dean of your college. These may include requesting that the student drop the class, move to another section, etc.

Caution: If a student ever threatens you directly or touches you, call campus police immediately. Give the police a full statement, decide if you wish to charge the student in criminal court and/or the campus judicial system.

Postscript: After dealing with disruptive students over the years, I have two words of advice: (1) In all cases, confront the problem head-on with direct, plain language. Do not try to be nice and hope the problem will go away if you do nothing. It is better to respond in every instance in an appropriate manner while keeping a cool head. Be sure to report the problem to your department chair, associate dean, or my office early on. Often assistance, advice, and support from a third party will prove invaluable; (2) Don't worry about being sued.