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

Effective: August 2006
Related Policies: University of Minnesota Student Conduct Code
University of Minnesota Classroom Expectations Guidelines
Responsible University Officers: Vice Chancellors for Student and Academic Affairs, Division Chairs, Asst. Vice Chancellor for Student Life
Responsible Offices: Student Affairs and Academic Affairs
Governance Review/Action: Approved Scholastic Committee, Student Services Committee-April 2006

UMM 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).

Procedures

Faculty, staff, and administrators are encouraged to contact their academic Division Chair and the Asst. Vice Chancellor for Student Life regarding concerns over disruptive behavior. Guidelines regarding responding to such behavior follow.

1. Faculty and Staff Immediate Response For Disruptive but not Threatening Behavior

In the classroom: 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 computer equipment during class time should use their computers 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 routinely 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. Behavior at this level violates the student conduct code and should be addressed as indicated below.

In offices: In an office setting, faculty or staff members may need to ask a student who is upset or angry to return at a later time to address their concerns when they are calmer and able to manage their emotions. It is expected that this practice should be followed. 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 conduct code and should be addressed as indicated below.

In public meeting spaces: In public meeting spaces on campus, faculty, staff, and students routinely address noise and behavior that disrupts classes, work, or campus events by talking with the individuals involved, describing the disruption, and asking 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 as follows.

Response Process When Behavior Substantially or Repeatedly Interrupts Teaching/Learning: (Note: For threatening or violent behavior, see Section 2.)

Disruptive students should be informed that they are interrupting the learning or working process of others and be asked to leave the class/learning environment/office/meeting space. If the student(s) will not leave, Campus Police should be notified (589-6000) 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/office until the student and the faculty/staff member have met and discussed how to improve the situation.

The faculty/staff member should inform their division chair or department director 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, division chair, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Life or the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, Multi-Ethnic Student Program or other Student Affairs director, etc. For staff: immediate supervisor, department director, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Life or the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, MSP or other Student Affairs director, etc.). When scheduling the meeting, the student should be informed if

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.
the faculty/staff 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/staff 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/learning environment/office/meeting space.

If the same student further disrupts the same learning, office, or meeting space, they should be informed that they are interrupting the learning or working process for others and be asked to leave (or be removed by Campus Police). The incident should be reported to the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Life (589-6470/6060). The Asst. Vice Chancellor will meet with the student to address their behavior. The student may not return to the class/learning environment/office until this meeting has occurred. During the meeting, the student’s behavior will be addressed. Additionally, they 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.

If following their meeting with the Asst. Vice Chancellor for Student Life, the same student further disrupts the same learning or office environment, the student should be asked to leave from the class/learning environment/office (or be removed by Campus Police). The Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Life should be contacted (589-6470/6060) to initiate a formal complaint with the Student Behavior Committee for a violation of the Student Conduct Code. The student may not return to the class/learning environment/office while the complaint is being addressed through the Student Behavior Committee process. Sanctions afforded by the Student Conduct Code include cancellation of registration for the course, required compliance, probation, suspension or expulsion.

2. Faculty/Staff Immediate Response For Disruptive Behavior that is Threatening or Violent

Faculty or staff should not hesitate to call Campus Police (589-6000 or 911), if the disruptive student appears to pose a safety threat to him/herself or others (e.g., physical assault, threat with a weapon, intoxicated). In addition, the incident should be reported to the Student Behavior Committee, through its administrative secretary, the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Life (589-6470/6060).

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 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 Police at 589-6000.

Individuals experiencing harassment in person, through email, telephone, fax or other means, should call UMM Human Resources/Equal Opportunity at 589-6021 and Campus Police at 589-6000.
The Student Conduct Code affords sanctions including warning and admonition, required compliance, confiscation, probation, and suspension or expulsion. 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 Behavior Committee.

3. 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:
Drafted March 2006 by Leslie Meek, Academic Alert/Scholastic Committee, Sandy Olson-Loy, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, and Henry Fulda, Asst. Vice Chancellor for Student Life/Student Behavior Committee Administrative Secretary.
Reviewed and revised by Division Chairs, Vice Chancellor Group, Student Behavior Committee Chair.

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