

A Faculty Guide to Managing Disruptive Behavior in the Classroom

Emergencies **x4911**

Police
Non-Emergencies **x4010**

Do you have students in class who do the following:

- Text or answer their cell phones?
- Repeatedly arrive late or leave early?
- Have sidebar conversations?
- Interrupt or make irrelevant comments?

If you consider these behaviors a disruption to the learning environment in your classroom, you have the right to address it. Disruptive classroom behavior should not be tolerated and may become more problematic if it is ignored.

Preventative Measures Faculty Can Take

- Include statements in your syllabus that address your policies regarding cell phones, absence/tardiness, late work, etc.
- Spend time during the first class period discussing your expectations in further detail, outlining consequences that may exist.
- Model the behavior expected of students.
- Become familiar with the Code of Conduct, www.grcc.edu/studentconduct.

Steps for Responding to Disruptive Behavior

- Address problem behavior immediately.
- Speak with the student privately about your concern (after class if possible).
- Document your action using the Starfish Early Alert™ system in Blackboard.

When you talk privately with the student...

- Be specific about the behavior of concern (cell phone use vs. disrespectful behavior).
- Allow the student to respond, listening for any miscommunication or disconnect between the two of you.
- Be flexible if presented with new, reasonable information about the situation.
- Restate your expectations and consequences if behavior is unchanged.

You will want to use your judgment about whether or not you want to make your department head aware of your interaction with the student.

If the Disruptive Behavior Continues

Most students have the ability to improve their behavior once they are aware of the concern. However, others may persist or may not connect new behaviors as also being disruptive. If a student continues to be disruptive after you have provided a warning, you may choose to provide one additional warning (in writing). Otherwise, you will want to refer them to the Code of Conduct office for a hearing by submitting the online report form found at www.grcc.edu/studentconduct.

If you suspect the disruptive behaviors could be a result of psychological or mental health, contact Counseling Services (616-234-3900) for advice on how to respond.

Your Rights as a Faculty Member

You have the right to manage your classroom, set policies for your classroom, and enforce those policies accordingly. If necessary, you have the right to remove a student from class for the remainder of a class period. That student should be required to meet with you or the Associate Director of Student Conduct prior to returning to class.

If a student refuses to leave when asked, explain that they can leave on their own or you will contact GRCC Police to remove them. If they still do not leave, contact the police to remove them immediately (616-234-4010.)

Threatening or Alarming Behavior

Occasionally, behavior is more than incivility. Signs of threatening/alarming behaviors include:

- Statements, spoken or written, such as "If you don't change my grade, someone will pay," or "I will take things into my own hands."
- Appearing hostile, aggressive or violent.
- Speaking incoherently with unconnected thoughts.
- Escalating behavior (e.g., louder voice, faster speech, pacing, clenching).

If the student's behavior is alarming or makes you or others feel threatened:

- Contact GRCC Police if the threat feels immediate—any emergency situation needs to be reported to them.
- Consider dismissing the class immediately.
- Fill out the online reporting form for the Behavioral Intervention Team at www.grcc.edu/BIT.



**Significant portions of this document were borrowed from Bucks County Community College.*

All emergencies or situations of a criminal or threatening nature need to be reported directly to the GRCC Campus Police.

Emergencies (616) 234-4911
Police Non-Emergencies . . . (616) 234-4010
Conduct Office. (616) 234-3924
Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT). (616) 234-3337

