GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH DISRUPTIVE, DISTURBING OR DANGEROUS BEHAVIOR

The 3D View on Classroom Management

Pellissippi State Community College
Student Conduct Office
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Introduction

Along with faculty and students, the Student Conduct Office assumes responsibility for creating and maintaining a campus environment that supports effective instruction and enhances student learning. In a community of learners, it is expected that students will conduct themselves in an orderly manner. However, when student misconduct does occur, appropriate intervention and/or corrective action must be taken. These guidelines are designed to help instructors address disruptive student behavior and determine the appropriate course of action. The Dean of Students guides the student disciplinary process whereas the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) assesses disturbing and/or dangerous behavior. The BIT reviews the referral and determines when to refer the situation directly to student conduct for disciplinary action. For information on the Behavioral Intervention Team, please review the BIT website.

Nothing in these guidelines is intended to infringe upon the academic freedom of students or teachers. Two fundamental principles must be observed: 1) students have the right to express opinions germane to the subject matter of a course; 2) faculty have the right to guide classroom discussion and to set reasonable limits on the classroom time made available to students for the expression of their opinions. The responsibility for striking a balance between these principles rests with faculty. For further information, refer to Rights, Freedoms and Responsibilities of Students Policy 04:02:02.

Disruptive Behavior

Disruptive behavior can be defined as behavior that substantially or repeatedly interferes with the instructor’s ability to conduct class or students’ ability to learn.

Examples include:

Observable Behavior

- **Actions**—physical gestures, body language (often repeated)
  - Examples:
    - Slams fist on table
    - Stands up, throws things in the backpack and leaves class
    - Stands in instructor’s personal space or prevents movement by instructor
    - Refuses to comply with the directions of the instructor (e.g. cell phone, laptop use, leaving and returning to the classroom multiple times, etc.)

- **Words**—voice volume/tone, outbursts, demands (use quotes to report phrases said)
  - Examples:
    - Has a voice volume much higher than that of others
    - Makes excessive demands for grade changes or test-taking extensions
    - Makes accusations, threats, ultimatums
    - Displays an angry tone and facial expressions--eyes narrowed, frowning
    - Talks out of turn consistently
Is argumentative and often takes opposing view to the material being taught
Makes repeated grandiose statements about him/her self

- **Excessive questions**--frequency and duration, inappropriate context
  Examples:
  - Asks a disproportionate amount of questions
  - Asks questions not germane to discussion topic

**Email or Discussion Board Communication**--frequency and length, inappropriate context, tone
Examples:
- Uses CAPITAL LETTERS for effect
- Writes about personal situations in great detail, often multiple situations occurring
- Expects or demands immediate action/response when email is sent
- Writes lengthy messages, which may be disjointed or incongruent with class material
- Displays fragmented thought patterns
- Makes excessive demands for grade changes or test-taking extensions
- Makes accusations, threats; uses profanity

**Impact on Others**
- Observable changes in others’ behaviors
- Reported or perceived emotions of others whereby students complain/report:
  - Having difficulty concentrating;
  - Being fearful of outbursts by the student;
  - Feeling scared about what else will happen;
  - Being irritated because the class discussion gets “high jacked” by the disruptive student

Some student behavior may seem to be odd or bizarre, but not threatening. The instructor may want to discuss the student’s behavior with Pellissippi State Counseling Services. The instructor may also contact the Behavioral Intervention Team (BiT), who will consult with the instructor and other appropriate staff in developing interventions with the student.

**Instructors’ Rights**

As an instructor, you have the right to direct students to cease disruptive behavior immediately. In the cases where the disruptive behavior is interfering with your ability to instruct class or students’ ability to learn, you have the right to direct a student to leave your classroom for the rest of the class period. You should document the behavior and your directive. It can be very effective to send the student an email describing the inappropriate behavior, stating your expectations, and outlining the consequences if the behavior continues.

If the behavior continues in subsequent classes, you have the right to direct students to leave the classroom and not return until they have met with the academic dean, the campus dean or the Dean of Students. In these cases it is essential to provide all documentation from this and previous occurrences.

If a student fails to comply with your directive to leave the classroom, you should contact Safety and Security immediately and have the student removed from the class. If there is resistance from the
student, the instructor may need to direct all students to leave the classroom either for the remainder of the class period or to assign a time to reconvene. Report the matter to the academic dean and Dean of Students promptly.

While instructors have the authority for short-term removal of a student from class, they may not prevent students from attending subsequent classes for the duration of the semester. Class suspension of this nature constitutes a disciplinary sanction which must involve appropriate disciplinary procedures and due process to be managed by the Student Conduct office.

**FERPA**

In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), care must be taken to protect the privacy of the student; therefore, only those college officials determined to have a legitimate educational interest or “need to know” should be included in any conversation about a student concern [Pellissippi State Policy 04:03:00 Student Records Confidentiality](#). The question to be answered is, “How does this person have a legitimate need to know the information/knowledge I have about a particular student?”

It is perfectly reasonable to consult with another colleague about strategies to manage a student’s disruptive behavior. This consultation can be done without disclosing the student’s personally identifiable information. For instance, when describing the situation, do not use the student’s name, physical description, etc., anything that would lead to an easy identification of the student. Describing the behavior and not the student is an appropriate conversation to have with other faculty.

It is acceptable to inform the appropriate administrator, dean, or counselor of the identity of the student when making a referral. It is perfectly reasonable to report the student and the situation in writing, either in a BIT referral form or email.

**Making a Report or Referral**

Submit the [BIT Referral Form](#). The behavior will be evaluated and a determination will be made regarding a behavioral assessment, intervention, or referral for disciplinary action.

**Preventing Disruptive Behavior**

1. Focus on the positive. Clearly articulate your expectations in your syllabus. Your syllabus is your contract with the student related to academic requirements in the course as well as required behaviors and conduct in the course. Describe appropriate behavior and how it relates to success in the course. Define behaviors that are unacceptable in your class. Review this information with students the first day of class. Include specific expectations for student behavior (e.g., no cell phones, no tardiness, respectful communication including email and discussion board, use of laptops, etc.) Examples can be found in the appendix.
2. Clearly explain what consequences will occur if students violate your class rules.
3. Indicate that any disregard of your class rules is also a violation of Pellissippi State Policy 04:02:00, the Student Conduct Code and Due Process, and could lead to a disciplinary action.

4. Confer with colleagues on ways they prevent or respond to disruptive behavior.

5. Model the behavior you expect of students.

6. Attend a workshop or request a consultation with the BIT, Dean of Students, program coordinator, academic dean, or campus dean regarding strategies for diffusing problems.

Responding to Disruptive Behavior

1. Respond to disruptive behavior when it occurs. Do not ignore disruptive behavior. Ignoring it or avoiding it WILL NOT make it disappear. To do so sends the message that you are condoning the behavior, which results in creating an atmosphere of disrespect.

2. For minimal disruption, consider expressing a general word of caution rather than warning or embarrassing a particular student. For example: “There are several conversations going on in here. Let’s all focus on the topic.”
   - Sometimes it may be necessary to speak to a student during class about his/her behavior. If so, correct the student in a courteous manner and then ask the student to meet with you after class or during office hours. Meeting one-on-one often resolves the problem.
   - In meeting with the student, explain how his/her behavior is disruptive to you, other students, and the classroom environment. Be specific about the behavior that is disruptive.
   - Explain what the consequences will be if the behavior continues, such as having to meet with the academic dean and/or Dean of Students and possibly being told to leave class.
   - Allow the student to respond. Listen carefully to the student. If the student is having problems outside the class setting that are affecting him/her, you may want to refer the student to Counseling Services for assistance.
   - Restate your expectations for the student’s future behavior.
   - Always document disruptive behavior and how you dealt with it. This is helpful if the behavior continues and you refer the matter to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action.

Documentation

1. Date each incident.

2. Describe the facts of the incident: actions you observed, comments made, observable impact on others. Use quotes when possible. Avoid opinions, mental health diagnosis and labels, such as “I think the student is completely paranoid and psychotic and obviously has severe mental issues.”

3. Include the names of any witnesses.

4. Describe any attempts you have made to resolve the situation.
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**Threatening or Violent Behavior**

1. If you believe there is imminent danger, call 911 or Safety and Security 694-6449.
2. If necessary, dismiss class, leave with the students and contact Safety and Security.
3. Submit the BIT Referral form as soon as possible.

**Disruptive Behavior and Disabilities**

1. The College may discipline a student with a disability or psychologically-based condition for being disruptive if it would impose the same discipline on a student without a disability or psychological condition.
2. The College will not tolerate or excuse disruptive or violent behavior from any student, especially when the behavior interferes with the instruction and the educational opportunities of other students.
3. Enforcing standards may actually encourage students with disabilities or a student engaging in conduct due to a medical or psychological reason to obtain needed assistance or to take prescribed medication.
4. Disabilities claims and accommodation requests should be discussed with the Disabilities Services staff.

**STUDENT DISCIPLINARY PROCESS**

Pellissippi State Student Code of Conduct and Due Process Policy 04:02:00

The instructor has the primary responsibility for control over classroom behavior and maintenance of academic integrity and can order the temporary removal or exclusion from the classroom of any student engaged in disruptive conduct or conduct that violates the general rules and regulations of Pellissippi State. Extended or permanent exclusion from the classroom or further disciplinary action can be effected only through appropriate procedures of Pellissippi State.

Disciplinary action may be taken against a student for violation of the policies which occur on institutionally owned, leased or otherwise controlled property, while participating in international or distance learning programs or at affiliated clinical sites, and while off campus, when the conduct impairs, interferes with, or obstructs any institutional activity or the mission, processes, and functions of the institution.

**Part 2 Disciplinary Offenses (Annotated)**

A. College disciplinary measures shall be imposed, through appropriate due process procedures, for conduct that adversely affects Pellissippi State's pursuit of its educational objectives, that violates or shows a disregard for the rights of other members of the academic community, or that endangers property or persons on college or college-controlled property.

B. Individual or organizational misconduct that is subject to disciplinary sanction shall include but not be limited to the following examples:
1. Threatening or Disruptive Conduct. Any conduct, or attempted conduct, which poses a direct threat to the safety of others or where the student’s behavior is materially and substantially disruptive of Pellissippi State’s learning environment.

2. Omitted – (not germane to this guideline.)

3. Disorderly conduct. Any individual or group behavior that is abusive, obscene, lewd, indecent, violent, excessively noisy, or disorderly, or that unreasonably disturbs other groups or individuals.

Part 3 Academic and Classroom Misconduct

Disruptive behavior in the classroom may be defined as, but not limited to, behavior that obstructs or disrupts the learning environment (e.g., offensive language, harassment of students and professors, repeated outbursts from a student which disrupt the flow of instruction or prevent concentration on the subject taught, failure to cooperate in maintaining classroom decorum, etc.), text messaging, and the continued use of any electronic or other noise or light emitting device which disturbs others (e.g., disturbing noises from beepers, cell phones, palm pilots, lap-top computers, games, etc.).

Refer to Policy 04:02:00 Part 3 for additional information regarding cheating and plagiarism procedures.

Determination of Responsibility

The student conduct process uses the “preponderance of evidence” or “more likely than not” standard for determining whether or not the violation occurred. Both informal and formal adjudication methods can be utilized. Most cases are resolved informally in which the student and the Dean of Students reach a determination about responsibility and disciplinary sanctions. If the case is not resolved informally, formal charges ensue and the student chooses his/her case to be decided by the Dean of Students or the Student Disciplinary Hearing Body. In cases when suspension or expulsion is likely, the student may also elect to have the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act (UAPA) adjudicate the charges.

Disciplinary Sanctions and Rationale

Available disciplinary sanctions range from a warning to permanent expulsion from the College. Sanctions are determined on the circumstances of the case, as well as the perceived learning needs of the student.

The disciplinary sanctions for student violations of the standards of conduct are included in the Student Code of Conduct and Due Process which articulates the following relevant factors:

- The nature of the violation
- Prior violations/conduct history of the student
- Relevant sanctions for similar cases
- Factors that may assist the student to learn from the experience and make different choices in the future
- Impact on the learning environment and/or campus community
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- Student’s learning style, academic major or career goals

Disciplinary sanctions can include: warnings, probation, no contact orders, community service, assessment of alcohol and drug use, counseling intervention, educational sanctions, restrictions, suspension, and/or expulsion.

**PSCC Website Resources**

- Safety and Security
- Behavioral Intervention Team
- Student Conduct
- Counseling Services
- Disability Services

This document was prepared by Mary Bledsoe, Assistant Vice President/Dean of Students in consultation with Kathy Byrd, Dean, English Department. Some material in this document was adapted from Tallahassee Community College and the NaBITA 2012 Conference – Bennett & Friedman, Harper College 2016
A Guide for Having Productive Disciplinary Conversations with Students

So long as there is not a threat to physical safety, you are encouraged to speak to students about behaviors that may be concerning, disruptive, or annoying. This maximizes the opportunity for learning by letting the student hear directly from you how their behavior may have impacted others. If you decide not to confront a student about his/her behavior, at least one of these things usually happens:

- You will continue to be frustrated and the student may never know why, and therefore is not likely to stop the behavior
- The student will engaged in more egregious behaviors if he/she thinks your boundaries can continue to be pushed
- The learning experience of others are affected
- The safety and well-being of others is at risk

The following outline can be helpful as you determine how to discuss behaviors of concern with students:

1. Build rapport and explain why you want to talk to the student. Remember that you both have the same goal – for him/her to be successful in class. Find the common purpose.
2. Describe (in detail) the behavior that occurred. Stick to the facts of observed behaviors and statements made; omit any judgmental language or personal opinions.
3. Describe the effects of the behavior – both on you as the instructor as well as on others in the class, including the student him/herself.
4. Ask the student why this may have occurred, and then listen to the student's perspective. Don't interrupt them, and don't get defensive. Paraphrase back to the student what he/she says.
5. Inform the student what your expectations are for the future. Ideally, this will just be reiterating what is already on your syllabus or in Student Code of Conduct.
6. Offer ways that you can help the student to be successful in changing the behavior. An example might include that if the student attempts to interrupt, you will motion discretely with your hand for the student to stop talking. It can also be effective to ask the student for solutions and actions that would support his/her appropriate behavior.
7. Describe what will happen if the student continues with the same or other inappropriate behavior. Examples might include being asked to step outside until he/she can control the behavior or referral to the program coordinator, academic dean or dean of students for disciplinary action.
8. Inform the student how you plan to follow up on the situation. Often an email or report form is a convenient way to do this – you can summarize the conversation by outlining: your common goals/purposes for completing your class, graduating, etc.; appropriate behaviors and any behavior agreements made; information about campus resources; consequences for further inappropriate behaviors. If appropriate for you, include an affirming statement about the student and your hopes for him/her. Written communication ensures that you have documented the situation in case it happens again.
Behavioral Reminder Outline & Sample Template

(Document, document, document what happened)

A behavioral reminder is a document that reminds or clarifies what is expected behaviorally from a student and outlines suggested actions in order to align behaviors with that expectation. It also usually includes information about what will happen if the student does not behave as outlined. Behavioral reminders are most helpful when used in conjunction with a conversation with the student. It is also helpful to provide documented examples of the individual’s behavior. A suggested outline is:

- Identify the previously communicated standards of behavior (usually the Student Code of Conduct, the course syllabus, or any other policies/procedures the student received)
- Describe the behaviors exhibited by the student that were not compliant with these standards
- Describe what appropriate behaviors look like
- Discuss any resources or actions that can help the student act in a more appropriate way – this includes actions or resources from the counseling office, tutoring center, as well as actions the student can take
- Describe any consequences or process if the student does not follow through

Sample:
As a student in ________ course, you are expected to align your behaviors with the Student Code of Conduct, the course syllabus, and all other college policies and procedures. The following behaviors are disruptive to the educational process and will not be tolerated:

- **Refusing to obey the instructor.** For example on (DATE) you did not comply when I asked you to sit down during another student’s presentation in class. In addition on (DATE) you refused to participate in the class activity and instead wore your iPod and listened to music.
- **Yelling at fellow classmates.** For example, on (DATE) you yelled at another student in class when she did not pass the papers as quickly as you wanted her to.

In order to uphold the behavioral standards for this course, you will need to:

- Follow all instructions from me during the class
- Not yell or raise your voice at anyone during the class

In addition, we discussed resources that can assist you at this time. You suggested that you would like to see someone at Counseling Services to discuss how you manage frustration in the classroom setting. I encourage you to do this. You also indicated that you would find it helpful if you could excuse yourself from class for a few minutes if you anticipate that you are getting frustrated. We discussed that you will try this so long as it does not disrupt class or occur more than once per week.

Please be aware that if you do not uphold the behavioral standards for my class, a complaint will likely be filed through the Academic Department Dean or Dean of Students.
Sample Documentation Emails/Letters

The following are basic examples of how to follow up in writing after a conversation about behavior. These examples proved the kind of documentation that can be very helpful to the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) and the College if the pattern of behavior continues and/or escalates.

A. Sample INAPPROPRIATE EXAMPLE:

Dear ________,

It is incumbent upon all students to behave in class. Review the course syllabus and do not act like a freak in class anyone. If you yell again, I will kick you out and you can never return to this college again. If you decide to come to class, do not speak to me for the remainder of our time together.

B. Sample email/letter follow-up if a situation was managed through feedback and behavioral changes:

Dear ________,

This email serves to follow up on our interaction on (DATE). I asked to speak with you about your interruptions of other students in class. During our conversation, you raised your voice to the point of yelling. I appreciate that, once I informed you that yelling is not permitted in (the office/classroom), you lowered your voice and we were able to resolve the situation. I was able to listen to you and we had an effective conversation. Your informed me that you interrupt others because you can’t hear them very well and you felt that your questions were more important. We discussed that if you interrupt someone, I will put my hand up to inform you to stop speaking and you will comply. I also reminded you that each student’s questions may be just as important as yours. I would appreciate it if you do not yell in the future. If you yell or if you continue to interrupt, I plan to report that to (the Academic Department Dean, the Dean of Students, etc.). Again, I would like to thank you for your willingness to hear my feedback and act appropriately. If you have any questions or if I can be of assistance to you in the future, please let me know.

C. Sample email/letter follow-up if individual was not compliant with feedback:

Dear ________,

The email serves to follow up on our interaction on (DATE). I asked to meet with you because you have been playing on your laptop in class, and you refused to close it during class activities. During our conversation, you raised your voice to the point of yelling. I attempted to inform you that yelling is not permitted in the (office/classroom), but you were not willing to listen. As a result, I informed you that if you did not stop yelling, I would need to end the meeting. You still would not stop yelling at that time. As a result, I called Campus Security. While my goal is to support your success as a student it is my expectation that you act appropriately while on campus. Please be aware that it is expected that you do not yell in offices/classrooms in the future. If you do, (Campus Security will be contacted, a Student Conduct complaint will be filed, etc.). It is also my expectation that you comply with my requests to promote a respectful environment (insert appropriate word matching your expectations) in class. If you do not, I may remove you from that class and file a student conduct complaint. If you have any questions about this, or if I can assist you in acting appropriately in the future, please feel free to contact me.
Sample Syllabus Statements

Provided by Annie Gray, Ph.D.

**Etiquette and Behavior**: This is college. The stakes are high. I expect you to conduct yourself in a manner conducive to fulfilling our objectives noted above. I expect you to show courtesy and attentiveness to a person speaking. I expect you to bring required materials to class and to have open only those texts germane to our study. I expect you to take notes liberally, think deeply, and create sincerely; therefore, I expect no external distractions, neither human nor electronic. I expect you to read assigned works and to be ready to discuss ideas and forms introduced by those works. In return, I will give you my undivided attention to help you write better and grow in your understanding of academic writing. **Do not text or cruise the Internet during this class, especially while someone is speaking at the front of the room.**

**A FINAL NOTE**

**Again, this is college**, a place protected by a right called Academic Freedom. With this security, we can talk/write about subjects that you may not have been encouraged (or even permitted) to explore in high school. You will *undoubtedly* hear viewpoints that don’t exactly fit with your current worldview. I encourage you to suspend quick judgments, assumptions, and other such roadblocks that inhibit the free flow of ideas in the classroom. In our class dialogues, we will focus on how to listen and also how to put forth our own opinion in a respectful, thoughtful manner to build an overall individual and group understanding of whatever is being discussed. You can still believe what you believe in your heart of hearts, but comparing and contrasting your beloved beliefs with those of others will transform you into a more educated, tolerant human being. Trust me on this one.

Annie Gray, Ph.D.
GENERAL COURSE GUIDELINES

- Students' are responsible for reading the course policies and will be held accountable for their content. To ensure that this occurs students' are required to complete an online course policies quiz. The due date of this quiz is listed on your assignment sheet.

- Accounting can be a very challenging course for some. As a result, please make sure that you attend all class meetings. The material for multiple chapters will be discussed each class meeting.

- The assignment sheet is tentative and may be changed at the discretion of the instructor. If a student misses class for any reason, it is that students' responsibility to contact another student or the instructor to ensure that no changes were made. *Being absent is not an excuse for not knowing about changes in assignments or the dates of exams or quizzes.*

- Pellissippi State requires each student to attend at least 75% of all class meetings in order to receive credit for the course. As a result, in a MWF class 11 absences will result in an automatic F in the course.

- To perform well in this course you must regularly attend class, complete ALL homework and properly prepare for exams. Simply attending class will not enable you to pass.

- Cell phones must be turned off or set to vibrate during class time. *In addition, do not answer your phone during class.*

- Students are welcome to bring a computer or notebook to class for taking notes on the PowerPoint presentations provided on the course website in D2L. However facebook or other websites should not be viewed during class time. Since this behavior can also be disruptive to surrounding students', any student violating this policy may be requested to turn off their computer during class times and take notes via hand.

- Texting is prohibited during class time. This is disruptive to those around you.

- You MUST have a calculator for this course and bring it everyday.

- No extra credit will be available to students with low grades at the end of the course.

- Grades are nonnegotiable. You will receive the grade that was earned.

- Students should email the instructor during the semester at drmichaelson@pstcc.edu; not through Desire2Learn email. Although you will be on D2L regularly studying course material, I probably will not check that email as frequently as my D2L email account.
Syllabus Signature Form

Provided by Tammie Bolling

Review of Course Syllabus/Questions/Concerns/Signature

Directions: After reading and reviewing the course syllabus, please record your questions or concerns in the section of the document below the horizontal line. If you do not have any, please indicate that information. Type or sign your name and the date after your comments. Submit this form either via the Drop Box.

I have read and reviewed the syllabus for ADMN 2910 and have the following questions/concerns:

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

By signing or typing your name and date, I understand that I have stated I read and reviewed all of the items listed in the syllabus and have listed any questions that I have concerning the information presented on the syllabus for this course.

Name:

Date: