

- Remaining calm will often de-escalate the situation. Listen carefully to what is being said and acknowledge the individual's feelings.
- Consider giving a written warning to the student addressing your concerns, stated expectations, and consequences for non-compliance, such as referral to the Student Conduct System.
- When necessary, you may request that the student leave class immediately. If the student refuses to leave the class, you may contact The University Police Department (ext. 2801) for assistance. If necessary, remove yourself and other students from the situation.
- Immediately report the incident to your department head and the Student Conduct Office (ext. 3979).
- A disruptive student cannot be removed permanently from a class in which he/she is enrolled without formal review.
- Document the incident in writing, noting names of witnesses. Indicate what occurred and what was said, (i.e., specific chronology of events). Note if there have been previous encounters with the student. Save and report all threatening or offensive e-mails, notes, phone calls/voice messages to the University Police.

## PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

The University may bring charges of misconduct against a student for disruptive behavior, in accordance with the procedure outlined in the Student Conduct Code. As a faculty member, you may be called to be a part of the judicial hearing as the complainant or as a witness in a case in which you are involved.

In circumstances in which the student's behavior may jeopardize the safety, health, or welfare of the student or the University community, the Vice President for Student and International Affairs has the authority to impose an immediate suspension, which prohibits the student from being on University property. Permanent removal requires a hearing by the Student Conduct System.

Offices Available for Additional Help:

### **Student Affairs**

Student Union (Bldg. 58 East)/Rm. 2309

### **University Police Department**

Garris Police Building (Bldg. 41), 620-2801

### **Student Conduct Office**

Honors Hall (Bldg. 10)/Suite 2460

### **Counseling Center**

Schultz Hall (Bldg. 9)/Rm. 1129

### **Office of Faculty Enhancement**

(for classroom management resources)

Honors Hall (Bldg. 10)/Rm. 1102, 620-1447

Endorsed by the UNF Chapter of the United Faculty of Florida.  
Dr. Henry B. Thomas, President

*Dealing with Classroom Disruption*

Produced by the Division of Student Affairs



## INTRODUCTION

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The University of North Florida is committed to academic freedom for students and faculty. Inherent in this philosophy are two fundamental principles:

1) Students have the right to: express opinions germane to the subject matter of a course in a non-disruptive manner only during times when the instructor permits discussion.

2) Faculty have the right to: guide classroom discussion; set reasonable limits on the time made available to students for the expression of their opinions; and in cases where class participation is included in the grading process, specify how class participation is graded.

## DEFINING DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

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Disruptive behavior is defined in the UNF Code of Student Conduct as:

“Acts that impair, interfere with, or obstruct the orderly conduct, processes and functions of the University or the rights of other members of the University community. This includes acts that occur both inside and outside the classroom setting.”

Disruption, as applied to the classroom setting, means behavior that would be viewed as interfering with normal academic functions.

## COMMON DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIORS

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- Eating or sleeping in class
- Chronic poor personal hygiene
- Tardiness
- Interruptions by electronic devices: cell phones/pagers/beepers/radios
- Engaging in private conversations or passing notes during class
- Monopolizing class discussion
- Talking without being recognized
- Interrupting while others are talking
- Disputing the instructor’s authority/expertise
- Inappropriate language
- Verbal or physical threats to students or faculty (must be reported immediately)

## GUIDELINES

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To establish appropriate behavior standards in the classroom, the following guidelines are recommended:

- Clearly define academic standards and expectations in the course syllabus (e.g., attendance, tardiness, class participation, and behavior that constitutes academic misconduct). Define civility during class discussions, how a student will be recognized in class for discussion purposes, and what activities are not acceptable.
- If attendance or class participation is to be used as a grading factor, a consistent method for recording these should be created and communicated.

- Once the semester begins, any revisions to course policies or expectations and the reasons for the changes should be communicated to the class.

- Students have the right to discuss and review their academic performance with you. These discussions should take place outside of the class period at a mutually agreed upon time and location to ensure privacy.

- Serve as a role model and exhibit the type of behavior you expect from your students.

## DEALING WITH CLASSROOM DISRUPTION

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When disruptive conduct occurs in the classroom, document the incident even if it appears to be minor. This information will be important to show a pattern of behavior. Classroom management techniques for dealing with disruption include:

- If a potentially disruptive situation is developing, a general word of caution to the class rather than directed at a particular student may be effective in deterring the problem.
- If the disruptive behavior continues, it is best to address the problem early and in private.
- If a student prevents you from moving on to another topic, take control of the discussion, express the need to cover all material, and invite the student to continue the conversation during your office hours.