

4-19-1999

Procedures for Dealing with Students Who are Disruptive in Class

The College at Brockport, College Senate

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BROCKPORT

Faculty Senate
State University of New York
College at Brockport
350 New Campus Drive
Brockport, NY 14420-2925

**Resolution#18
1998-99
FACULTY SENATE**

TO: Dr. Paul Yu, College President
FROM: The Faculty Senate Meeting on: *April 19, 1999*
RE: X I. Formal Resolution (*Act of Determination*)
 II. Recommendation (*Urging the Fitness of*)
 III. Other, For your Information (*Notice, Request, Report, etc.*)
SUBJ: *Procedures for Dealing with Students Who are Disruptive in Class*

Signed: *Thomas Bonner* Date Sent: *5/12/99*
(Thomas Bonner, Faculty Senate President)



TO: The Faculty Senate
FROM: Dr. Paul Yu, College President
RE: I. Decision and Action Taken on Formal Resolution
 a. Accepted. Effective Date: *5/12/99*
 b. Deferred for discussion with the Faculty Senate on / /
 c. Unacceptable for the reasons contained in the attached explanation
II, III.
 a. Received and acknowledged
 b. Comment: _____

DISTRIBUTION: *Administrative Group - Please share with appropriate staff*

Distribution Date: *6/3/99* Signed: *Pal Yu*
(President of the College)

Resolution Disk::9899-18::ayk

BROCKPORT

State University of New York
College at Brockport
1 New Campus Drive
Brockport, New York 14420-2919

Office of
Vice President for Academic Affairs
(716) 395-2524
FAX: (716) 395-2401

S.U.N.Y.
COLLEGE AT BROCKPORT
RECEIVED

MAR 19 1998

FACULTY SENATE
BROCKPORT, NY 14420

TO: Roger Weir
Chair, Faculty Senate Policies Committee

FROM: P. Michael Fox
Asst. Vice President for Undergraduate Education *pmf*

DATE: March 17, 1999

RE: "Procedures for dealing with students who are disruptive in class" – revision

The attached *Procedures for dealing with students who are disruptive in class* as you know has been reviewed by a number of people. It has been through the Academic Council, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, and your committee. I have revised it after each group has responded with their comments.

The motivation for writing this set of procedures is to give classroom instructors some guidance on how to handle disruptive behaviors. Thankfully, disruptive behaviors do not seem to be an everyday occurrence on our campus but, several times a semester, a faculty member will request information on how to deal with a disruptive event or series of events. Often, the instructor has not documented any of the events or given the disruptive student any formal warning about the behavior. Sometimes the instructor has been tolerating disruptive behaviors until s/he becomes convinced that the student must be suspended from class. Without prior notice to the student, it is difficult to move on disciplinary action as quickly as the instructor might like. Our actions in dealing with students must stand up under scrutiny should litigation take place on the matter.

These procedures emphasize the importance for instructors to keep records on disruptive events and for instructors and chairpersons to issue appropriate formal written notifications to students about disruptions in the classroom.

Procedures for Dealing with Students Who Are Disruptive in Class

3/17/99 Version

Expectations for classroom student behavior: Students are expected to treat each other and the instructor* or person in charge with common courtesy, decency, and respect. They will refrain from behaviors that interfere with the teaching/learning process. All behaviors that, in the judgment of the instructor, interfere with the teaching/learning process will be considered disruptive. Students will recognize that the instructor of the course is the leader of the class and is in charge of instruction.

Attempts to dispute the instructor's authority to lead will be considered disruptive.

General principles for instructors' handling of disruptive students: When faced with disruptive behavior in the classroom or other instructional settings, the instructor is advised to keep his/her own emotional reactions under control and to refrain from using abusive language. The ability of the instructor to keep calm may help to prevent escalation of the behavior. Some students may respond better to an initial private discussion of their disruptive behavior than they will to being put in an embarrassing situation before other students. It is very important that the instructor not engage in a physical confrontation with a disruptive student except for self-defense or for preventing injury to other students. If it becomes necessary to remove the student from the area, University Police (#2222) on the Brockport campus or Building Security at the MetroCenter (232-3354) should be called to do this.

The need for documentation of disruptive events: Disruptive behaviors in the classroom and other instructional settings occur on a continuum from minor irritants to rare episodes of major violence. Disruption by a student may be a single major event or it may occur repeatedly as a series of less serious events. It is very important for the instructor to document disruptive behaviors by noting date, time, and the specific behaviors of the student that were disruptive. By the time that the instructor has decided that it is necessary to expel the student from class, several disruptive episodes may have occurred. However, unless the instructor has documented each episode, it may be necessary to begin the documentation process at a time when an action to expel might already be justified. Documentation is required to show a history of repeated disruption.

General principles for documenting disruptive behaviors: When keeping notes or writing letters about disruptive behaviors, faculty members and department chairpersons should confine their comments about the student to describing specific behaviors that were disruptive in the classroom. The comments should not take the form of real or implied statements of psychological diagnosis, speculations on the student's motives or mental status, or value judgments about the student. It is important to document *what* the student was doing, not *why* s/he was doing it.

Types of disruptive events:

A. Single event disruptions: Definition: A student becomes disruptive in the classroom but there is no previous history or pattern of repeated disruptive behaviors. Examples: A student comes to class intoxicated and engages in inappropriate behavior, or, a student becomes angry and the situation escalates to a disruptive level of confrontation with another student or the instructor.

Dealing with single event disruptions:

1. The instructor or person in charge may ask the offending student to leave if his/her continued disruptive behaviors are compromising the instructional process. The instructor should state clearly to the student what behaviors are disruptive and give the student the option of leaving class and returning after s/he regains control. The instructor should also inform the student of what the consequences will be if the disruptive behavior continues.
2. If the student refuses to leave when asked, the instructor may leave the classroom and call the University Police to come and remove the student. The instructor will not try to physically remove the student. If the instructor believes that the other students are in any danger due to the situation, s/he may cancel the class and send the students away.
3. The instructor should file a written report on all such events with the department chair within 24 hours. The report will describe the student's disruptive behaviors, the instructor's actions in response to the student, the resolution of the conflict, if any, and supply names of any witnesses to the events described. A copy of this report will be kept in the department and a copy will be sent to the Vice President for Student Affairs. The department chair should attempt to meet with the student and the faculty member to discuss the incident before any other action is taken.
4. The department chairperson will take appropriate disciplinary steps in consultation with the Dean and, if necessary, the Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. As a minimum action, the department chairperson will warn the student in writing of the consequences of further disruptions. The Counseling Center would be an appropriate referral for the student if the department chair believes that s/he might need support in correcting the behavior problem.

B. Multiple event disruptions: Definition: A student shows a pattern of minor disruptive behavior through several class sessions which, in the judgment of the instructor, impairs the instructional process. Because of these behaviors, the instructor is less able to teach and the students are less able to learn. Examples: A student arrives late repeatedly and disrupts classroom activities as s/he enters the instructional setting. A student distracts by talking out of turn or repeatedly refuses to observe normal expectations for classroom etiquette. A student repeatedly monopolizes the classroom discussion, refusing to allow other students to talk, or repeatedly challenges the instructor's authority to lead the class.

Dealing with multiple event disruptions:

1. The instructor should document all disruptive behaviors as they occur by taking personal notes that include date, time, specific behaviors, names of people present. The instructor should state clearly to the student what behaviors are disruptive. The instructor should also inform the student of what the consequences will be if the disruptive behavior continues.
2. As a history of repeated disruptive behaviors by a student develops, the instructor will document the events using written notes and will keep the department chairperson informed. The Counseling Center may be a helpful resource for a faculty member attempting to deal with a series of disruptive behaviors.

3. If the instructor and the departmental chairperson decide that removing the student from class may be necessary, the student must first be informed in writing by the department chairperson of the specific behaviors which are objectionable and asked to refrain from these behaviors. The student will be informed about the possible consequences of further disruptions. Any discussions between the instructor and the student about the disruptions should be carried out in the presence of the department chairperson.

4. If, after receiving written notification (see point 3 immediately above), the student refuses to stop creating disruptions in class, the department chair will report the situation to the Dean and ask that the student be suspended from attending class meetings of that course.

5. In the absence of the department chairperson, the duties in 1 through 4 above will be carried out by the acting chairperson or the chairperson's designee.

Dealing with students who attend class under the influence of alcohol or psychoactive drugs: Attending class under the influence of alcohol or psychoactive drugs may present dangers for the intoxicated student as well as for classmates and others. Because of these dangers, especially in laboratory, field, or clinical situations, an instructor is justified in asking a student who appears to be under the influence of alcohol or psychoactive drugs, even if s/he is not overtly disruptive, to leave the class. Such actions should be documented and pursued by the instructor in the same way as described for single or multiple event disruptions. Instructors should be aware that unexpected reactions to prescription medications occasionally occur and this should be ruled out before disciplinary actions are recommended.

Suspensions, Terminations, and Referral to the Judicial Process:

In the case of either single event or multiple event disruptions, actions at the Dean's and/or Vice President's level may be necessary.

1. For serious disruptions, the Dean may authorize suspending the student from class or terminating the student's participation in the course. If the Dean elects to terminate the student's participation in the course, a failing grade will be recorded. The student will be informed of the disciplinary action to be taken by letter from the department chairperson and the Dean. Instructors are not required to offer makeup for work missed during behavioral suspensions.

2. Student appeals of suspension or termination of registration for these reasons will be directed to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The Vice President will arrange for a committee of faculty to consider the appeal.

3. If the University Police become involved in a disruptive event, the Vice President for Student Affairs will be consulted and will determine whether to refer the student to the College judicial process or to take legal action as may be appropriate.

4. If there is a suspicion that the student is a threat to him/herself or others, or to College property, or if s/he is disruptive to the normal operations of the College, an "interim suspension" pending disciplinary proceedings or medical evaluation may be justified. Such suspensions can be immediate and without prior notice (at the discretion of the College judicial coordinator). The student's suspension may continue until a professional evaluation clarifies his/her mental status

at which time the College judicial coordinator will take appropriate action. Such action may include being "administratively withdrawn." The special policies that may apply to this situation are found in *Your Right to Know & Academic Policies Handbook*, p. 43, Section 8, especially a, b, and c and p. 50 section H.

Authority for the procedures outlined in this document: The following sections of "*Your Right to Know & Academic Policies Handbook, 1998-1999*" serve as the authority for the procedures outlined in this document:

p. 52, *Codes of Student Social Conduct Rules and Regulations, Section 3. Prohibited Conduct*, (l) No person, either singly or in concert with others, shall ...deliberately disrupt or prevent the peaceful and orderly conduct of classes, lectures and meetings or deliberately interfere with the freedom of any person to express his views, including invited guests.

p. 53, Section 5. *Penalties*. A person who shall violate any of the provisions of these rules shall...If s/he is a student, be subject to expulsion or such less disciplinary action as the facts of the case may warrant, including suspension, probation, loss of privileges, reprimand or warning.

p. 53. *Enforcement Program*. (a) The chief administrative officer shall be responsible for the enforcement of these rules...and shall designate other administrative officers...to carry them into effect.

p. 42. *Personal Integrity*. Section 28 (It is also true that students are prohibited from) "failure to comply with the directions of College officials acting in performance of their duties.

p. 42. *Range of disciplinary actions*. A range of possible disciplinary actions is possible as described in this section.

p. 42, *Violation 19*, Engaging in disorderly or disruptive conduct...

p. 43, Section 8. *Administrative Withdrawal*: This section contains policies related to mental health, drug abuse, and eating disorders.

* The term "instructor" is used in this document to refer to the person in charge of the class, laboratory, or other instructional settings. However, these procedures apply equally to disruptions in the computer center and laboratories, the library, student services areas, and other academic support areas.