



Responding to Student Disruptions on Campus

National trends and recent incidents at several universities show an increase in disrespectful, disruptive, and even violent student behavior on campuses. This can create challenges for University staff members as they maintain an environment that is safe and caring. Although some inappropriate behavior can be easily and directly dealt with, staff members are encouraged to consult early and often with resources on campus that address student disruption and distress. This brochure can help staff to identify problem behavior and be aware of available resources.



Center for Prevention and Outreach
216 Stony Brook Union
Stony Brook, New York 11794-3200

RESPONDING TO STUDENT DISRUPTIONS ON CAMPUS

A GUIDE FOR STAFF MEMBERS

OFFICE OF THE PROVOST, OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS, HUMAN RESOURCE SERVICES



■ What is Disruptive Behavior?

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR INTERFERES with administrative and other University activities. Such behavior actively inhibits the regular operation of campus offices or obstructs staff members from effectively doing their jobs. Disruptive behavior may even threaten or endanger the physical or psychological health, safety, or welfare of others.

Multiple factors, including emotional distress, can contribute to disruptive behavior. However, as a staff member, you do not have to know how to identify the underlying causes of disruption. Clear communication of behavioral expectations for students, early consultation and communication with mental health professionals and/or University Police and Judicial Affairs, and written documentation of disruptive behavior have proven to be key elements in effective prevention and early intervention. These actions are often enough to prevent a situation from escalating into a larger crisis, for the student exhibiting the disruptive behavior and the staff member involved.

■ Prevention

TO FOSTER A CAMPUS CULTURE OF CIVILITY AND RESPECT, it is important to set limits and respond to problems consistently. Staff members can often lessen the negative impact of disruptive student behavior when they clearly communicate how an observed behavior is interfering with the operation of their office, articulate their responsibilities as a University staff member, and emphasize the importance of respectful behavior on campus.

Both students and staff share responsibility for maintaining a safe campus environment that reflects the values of civility and respect. Students have the right to utilize the resources and services on campus and the responsibility to do so in a way that respects the rights of others.

■ Consultation and Early Reporting

IF STUDENT BEHAVIOR FEELS INTIMIDATING OR DISTURBING, IT IS WISE TO CONSULT EARLY ON, before the conduct becomes an emergency. Many staff members find it helpful to first consult with Judicial Affairs on specific situations, to discuss the behavior and possible methods of response. During early consultation, Judicial Affairs can check disciplinary records to determine how to handle the problem and whether to initiate the judicial process. In summary, if staff members have any concerns or questions about how to handle a particular situation, they should consult Judicial Affairs.

To request consultation or report disruptive behavior, contact Judicial Affairs by telephone at (631) 632-6705. Written documentation of the problem behavior is required. The student is entitled to see this documentation, so make sure that it contains only factual, descriptive information. If the student interferes with the orderly function of an office or the safety or welfare of others, the student may be prohibited from returning to the office pending disciplinary hearing. In addition, directives can be issued to prohibit contact with specific individuals. Such directives can be issued by Judicial Affairs.

The purpose of disciplinary hearing is to review the facts of the case, hear the student's perspective, and if the student is found to be responsible for the disruption, determine an appropriate disciplinary response, ranging from a warning to expulsion from the University. In addition, administrative action, such as referral for a medical or psychological evaluation, may be an option. Disciplinary decisions take into consideration both the needs of the campus community and the rights of the accused student.

■ When to Contact University Police

WHEN A SERIOUS INCIDENT OF DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR OCCURS ON CAMPUS, University Police should be contacted immediately by calling 911 or 333 from on-campus phones, and 632-3333 from off-campus and cellular phones.

Disruption by students constitutes a serious breach of University behavioral expectations described in the University Student Conduct Code. If there is any immediate threat to the safety of any person, the University Police should be summoned.

Blue light phones, restricted campus phones, and conventional academic building office phones throughout the campus can be used as emergency telephones. The average University Police emergency response time to on-campus locations is under two minutes. The University Police emergency dispatcher will contact other services, such as ambulances, if needed. If you are unable to make the call yourself, designate a specific person to do it. When making a call to University Police, provide as much information as possible about the nature of the problem.

■ Important Phone Numbers

University Police

(on-campus phones) **911**

(off-campus/cellular phones) **632-3333**

Judicial Affairs

347 Administration Building **632-6705**

University Counseling Center

Second floor, Student Health Services Building **632-6720**

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216 Stony Brook Union **632-2748**