Dealing with Disruptive Students in the Classroom  
July 2006 Update  
Office of the Dean of Students

The following recommendations are provided to assist faculty members in both preventing undesired student behavior and appropriately dealing with it should the behavior occur.

1. Go over Standard College Policies with your class on the first class day and attach a copy of the class roll with attendees marked. I know this takes up class time, but it could save you some administrative headaches during the course of the semester. You now have documentation that you reviewed those policies. Often times, the excuse given by students when confronted with unacceptable behavior is, “I did not know.”

2. Call out the names of students who missed this session in future classes. Now you have documentation on your daily attendance roll that all students were informed of the policies. I wouldn’t bother to go over them again, just let them know where to obtain them (Security desk/Library) but emphasize their importance and offer to entertain questions at a later time during office hours or at a convenient time to be announced.

3. If it fits your teaching style, make some of the following points:
   A) This is not high school...students attend because they want to attend. It is assumed that students have a desire for constructive learning and are attending with that purpose in mind. Common courtesy and cooperation are expected of all students, B) in that context, emphasize some undesirable behaviors e.g. conversations between students in class, cell phone disruption, etc., C) Define desired classroom behavior (see attachment).

3. Review the College Catalog and pay close attention to the Student Conduct Code section. Be familiar with some of the specific codes that deal with undesired student behavior. Some of the more common violations reported to my office involve talking during lectures, arguments between students while in class, arguing with the faculty member, and the use of cell phones in the classroom.

In an extreme situation in which you have directed the student to stop and they continue, you could say, “Since you have not followed my directions to stop __________ (list violation), I am directing you to leave class until you have met with the Dean of Students. If you do not leave at this time, Security will be summoned to remove you.” If the student still refuses, dismiss the class. Avoid confrontation and immediately report the incident to Security and any administrator. A written report must be submitted to the Dean of Students as soon as possible. Remember do not leave your classroom unattended in this situation. Send a student to summon Security.

Another option is to read the following statement to your class.

*The College has a zero tolerance for disruptive class behavior. Since enrollment in college is by choice, students who fail to demonstrate common courtesy and
cooperation in the classroom are choosing, by their behavior to cancel their enrollment. The Dean of Students will be notified of all such violations to ensure implementation and due process."

Due process will be granted to the student as part of our hearing process. Please be aware that if a hearing committee reinstates the student, they must be allowed to return with no penalty (be able to make up work missed, exams, etc.).

Due process also dictates that a student receive a copy of all statements (including your written report), so document carefully, and avoid personal, and subjective generalizations.

**Classroom Behavior:** Students will be expected to: give courtesy to others while in class, show a willingness to respond to questions and participate in class discussions, and have a lively interest in the subject matter, as evidenced in alertness and attentiveness during all classroom activities. A student who is interested in obtaining the highest possible scores in participation will follow these basic criteria for acceptable classroom behavior:

- Come to class on time and be prepared to participate as required.
- Show an interest in the lecture or discussion-give your full attention.
- Raise your hand if you want to speak.
- Ask questions and offer comments related to the material, but don’t monopolize class time. Be brief.
- Take notes. Turn in all assignments on time.
- Don’t work on other subjects, read non-related materials, or sleep in class.
- Cell phones should be turned off or on “silent” mode.
- Wait until the instructor has dismissed class to gather up your books and materials.