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## **Policy for Dealing with Classroom Disruption**

### **Background**

The university encourages all instructors to strive for free and open communication within their classrooms. However, for student learning to be most effective, classrooms must maintain a civil environment, free from intimidation, disruption, violence, and harassment.

A fundamental principle underlying university governance and academic freedom is that the faculty has the responsibility to determine the curriculum, methods of delivery, and means for assessing student performance. The general faculty discharges this curriculum responsibility through curriculum committees at the department, college, and university levels. Curricula and course descriptions are approved by the Faculty Senate and the Board of Regents, State of Iowa. Individual course descriptions in the University Catalog are the manifestation of the general faculty's expectations for the course. Individual faculty members then determine the exact nature of the course content, method of delivery, course assignments, etc., and have full responsibility to assess and evaluate student performance.

Student comments on the course may be expressed to the instructor or the Department Chair and are solicited on course evaluations. Students, who feel they have been treated unfairly, may file an Appeal of Academic Grievances (see Iowa State University Catalog, or see <http://www.iastate.edu/~catalog>).

### **Policy Statement**

#### Response to Classroom Disruption

Should any student officially enrolled for credit or audit in a class disrupt the instructor's ability to ensure a safe environment, control the class agenda, and/or deliver the approved curriculum, the instructor has the right to ask that the disruptive action cease immediately. The instructor should announce to the student and the class that the particular action is deemed disruptive. The instructor should also take into consideration complaints of disruptive behavior brought to their attention by students. The responsible student should cease the disruption and utilize non-disruptive means for expressing disagreement or concern. If the disruption continues, the instructor can pursue various forms of intervention, including suspension from class, use of student disciplinary regulations, or police intervention, as discussed below.

Although most situations are best resolved without resorting to requests for police intervention, the Department of Public Safety *should* be called when the disruptive behavior prohibits the continuation of the class. The Department of Public Safety may

also be called if any person enters or remains in the classroom after being asked by the instructor to leave.

#### Procedure to Suspend a Student from Class Attendance

If, in the instructor's opinion, the student should be suspended from attending the class, the instructor must request the Chair of the Department offering the course to suspend the student from the class until a decision is reached by the Chair as to whether the student will be allowed to return to the class. When the course is offered by a Program, the Director of the Program should assume the role of the Chair. Moreover, when the instructor is an administrator, the petition should be reviewed at the next higher level of administration.

If the instructor's request to suspend the student is accepted by the Chair, the suspension will take effect immediately and the student and the instructor will be notified in writing. Immediately after suspension, the Chair must investigate and determine whether to permit the student to return to the class. The Chair must provide the student and the instructor with a written statement of the outcomes of the investigation in a timely manner.

If the instructor's request to suspend the student is not accepted by the Chair, the Chair must explain the reasons to the instructor in writing for not accepting the instructor's request. The Chair must also ensure that the resources in classroom management are made available to the instructor so that the instructor can manage the student upon the student's return to the class. The instructor may, however, appeal the Chair's decision to the Dean of the College.

#### Procedure for Students Returning to Class

If the student is allowed to return to the class, the Chair must notify both the student and the instructor in writing. The instructor must inform the student of any conditions of the return and of make-up opportunities for missed work. In some cases, it may be productive to have a conference of the Chair, the instructor, and the student before the student is allowed to return to the class. Upon return to the class, further incidents of disruption by the student could be the basis for terminating the student's enrollment in the course and/or for disciplinary action.

#### Procedure to Terminate a Student's Enrollment in a Class

If the Chair decides that the student should not be allowed to return to the class, the Chair will notify the student in writing of 1) removal from the class, 2) the reasons for removal, and 3) the right to appeal the decision using the Appeal of Academic Grievances process (see Iowa State University Catalog <http://www.iastate.edu/~catalog>). The Chair will also send written notification of the action to the Dean of the student's college, the Dean of

the instructor's college, the Dean of Students and the Registrar. The Dean of the student's college must request that the Registrar terminate the student's enrollment in the course administratively.

#### Filing of Disciplinary Charges

During the investigation phase, the instructor and/or the Chair could also consider whether the conduct that led to the suspension and/or termination should be reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary charges. If disciplinary charges are filed, the student's suspension may continue pending the outcome of the disciplinary hearing (see Student Disciplinary Regulations <http://www.dso.iastate.edu/handbook/sdr.pdf>).

#### Attendance by Persons not Enrolled in a Course

The University has the right to determine who is enrolled in a class and to control the presence of the person who is not enrolled in the class. Non-enrolled person is allowed in the classroom only at the discretion of the instructor. The instructor should ask the non-enrolled person who attends a class against the express wishes of the instructor to leave. The instructor should ask such a person to identify themselves. If the person refuses to leave, the Department of Public Safety may be called. If the person is a student enrolled in the university but not enrolled in the class, disciplinary charges may be filed.