



Policy Title:	Classroom Disruption		
Approval Authority:	President	Date Effective:	December 5, 2011
Responsible Office:	Accounting/HR	Responsible Office Contact:	Vice President for Business and Finance

1. POLICY STATEMENT/REASON FOR POLICY

This policy addresses the issue of Classroom Disruption.

2. ENTITIES AFFECTED BY THIS POLICY

All Departments with direct student contact.

3. WHO SHOULD READ THIS POLICY

All Faculty, Instructors and Adjunct Instructors.

4. WEB SITE ADDRESS FOR THIS POLICY

-This policy can be found at:

<http://www.bmcc.edu/about-bmcc/governance-administration/college-policies>

5. FORMS/INSTRUCTIONS

No forms required.

6. HISTORY

-Amended: December 5, 2011

-Next Review Date: December 5, 2017

-BMCC reserves the right to revise policies at any time.

7. THE POLICY

ADDRESSING CLASSROOM DISRUPTION

The classroom is a special environment in which students and faculty come together to promote learning and growth. It is essential to this learning environment that respect for the rights of others seeking to learn, respect for the professionalism of the instructor, and the general goals of academic freedom are maintained. Occasionally, faculty members find that they cannot provide effective classroom instruction because of disruptions. Examples of disruptive behaviors include: loud or prolonged side conversations; exaggerated movement of papers, books, or other materials; use of disruptive mechanical devices (e.g., pagers, cell phones); repeatedly leaving class early or coming to class late; and unnecessary or repetitive questions or comments which seek to delay the normal instructional process. Classroom behavior, such as this, that seriously interferes with the instructor's ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to benefit from the instruction need not be tolerated. A student engaging in such behavior may be subject to disciplinary action. BMCC considers discipline an educational tool used to educate students to the acceptable standard of behavior for the community.

The following guidelines are intended to suggest alternative methods of addressing student misconduct in a classroom setting. Because College instruction and human behavior vary greatly, these guidelines are not intended to be exclusive. Accordingly, faculty members should exercise their best judgment in setting standards of conduct for their classes and taking a reasonable approach in responding to disruption in their classroom. The V.P. of Academics and/or Department Chairperson may have specific recommendations or processes for reporting and responding to disruptive behavior.

Guidelines

1. Faculty members are responsible for management of the classroom environment. Teachers in some respects can be compared to judges: both focus on relevant issues, set reasonable time limits, assess the quality of ideas and expression, and make sure participants are heard in an orderly manner. While their ultimate goals and formalities may be different, both judges and teachers need to exercise authority with a sense of fairness, and with appreciation for the reality of human fallibility.
2. Classroom disruption may constitute a disciplinary offense, as defined by BMCC's Student Code of Conduct (Student Handbook). The term "classroom disruption" means behavior a reasonable person would view as substantially or repeatedly interfering with the conduct of a class. Examples include repeatedly leaving and entering the classroom without authorization, making loud or distracting noises, persisting in speaking without being recognized, or resorting to physical threats or personal insults. Faculty members are strongly advised to keep records of dates, times, names of those present, and objective details of disruptive incidents.

This documentation is an integral and indispensable part of the disciplinary process. It usually constitutes the primary source of evidence for disciplinary action. Also, when documentation is received from various sources, the Academic Affairs office is able to determine if the student is engaging in an ongoing pattern of disruptive behavior, act on the multiple violations and impose a more serious sanction. Any questions regarding the College's disciplinary intervention should be discussed with the Academic Affairs Office as early as possible.

3. Both students and faculty members have some measure of academic freedom. College's policies on classroom disruption cannot be used to punish lawful classroom dissent. The lawful expression of a disagreement with the teacher or other students is not in itself "disruptive" behavior.
4. Rudeness, incivility, and disruption are often distinguishable, even though they may intersect. In most instances, it is better to respond to rudeness by example and suasion (e.g. advising a

student in private that he or she appears to have a habit of interrupting others). Rudeness can become a disruption when it is repetitive, especially after a warning has been given.

5. Strategies to prevent and respond to disruptive behavior include the following:
 - a) Clarify standards for the conduct of your class. For example, if you want students to raise their hands for permission to speak, say so, using reminders as needed. Generally, faculty members encounter fewer problems when they clearly state their expectations of respect in the classroom at the beginning of the semester. Some instructors have found including behavioral expectations in their course syllabus helps reduce disruptive behavior.
 - b) Serve as a role model for the conduct you expect from your students.
 - c) If you believe inappropriate behavior is occurring, consider a general word of caution, rather than warning a particular student (e.g. "We have too many simultaneous conversations at the moment; let's all focus on the same topic").
 - d) If the behavior is irritating, but not disruptive, try speaking with the student after class. Most students are unaware of distracting habits or mannerisms, and have no intent to be offensive or disruptive. If the discussion with the student raises concern of substance abuse, a disability, or psychological disturbance the faculty member is encouraged to consult with the Student Services Specialist.
 - e) There may be rare circumstances when it is necessary to speak to a student during class about his or her behavior. Try to do so in a firm and friendly manner, indicating that further discussion can occur after class. Public arguments and harsh language must be avoided.
 - f) A student who persists in disrupting a class may be directed to leave the classroom for the remainder of the class period. This is a serious step and not to be taken lightly. Whenever possible, prior consultation should be undertaken with the Department Chair, V.P. of Academics, and the Dean of Student Services.
 - g) If a disruption is serious, and other reasonable measures have failed, the class may be adjourned and Academic Affairs or the Tribal police contacted. Teachers must not use force or threats of force, except in immediate self-defense. Prepare a written account of the incident. Identify witnesses for the Tribal Police, as needed.
6. The Dean of Student Services and/or Student Services Specialist can help by reviewing the College's Student Code of Conduct with you, and meeting with accused students formally or informally. It is better to report disruptive incidents promptly, even if they seem minor. A preferred strategy is to develop a behavioral contract with the student, so they have clear guidelines about what behavior is expected of them. In the most serious cases, we can suspend students immediately, pending disciplinary proceedings, or medical evaluation.

Special Situations

Students with Disabilities

Some disruptive students may have emotional or mental disorders. Although such students may be considered disabled and are protected under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, they are expected to meet the same standards of conduct as other students. This is true even if the disruption is directly related to his or her physical or mental disability. It is important that an instructor establish the standards for his or her classroom and enforce them for all students, in conformance with the principles of academic freedom.

Referral to Counseling

Counseling can be a helpful experience; however, it is not a substitute for student conduct action. The goal of the conduct program is to effectively and quickly correct student misconduct and to educate the student as to appropriate conduct in the college community. Counseling is an ongoing process and, generally, not designed to bring about prompt behavior change. In fact, the student's behavior may not change or, in fact, deteriorate. Lastly, psychotherapy is predominantly elective.

Consultation

Some students' behavior may seem to be bizarre, but not threatening. The instructor may want to discuss the student's behavior with professionals, such as a member of the Bay Mills Indian Community counseling staff. Please contact Student Services Specialist if you would like to consult with a counseling professional.

If you have questions regarding appropriate responses in these or other situations, please contact the V.P. of Academic Affairs or the Dean of Student Services.