

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

“A Practical Guide for Faculty”

Classroom Disruption is a Disciplinary Offense

Primary responsibility for managing the classroom environment rests with the faculty. The term “classroom disruption” means behavior a reasonable person would view as substantially or repeatedly interfering with the conduct of a class. Examples range from persisting to speak without being recognized, to resorting to physical threats or personal insults.

Academic Freedom

College policies on classroom disruption cannot be used to punish lawful classroom dissent. The lawful expression of a disagreement with a teacher or other students is not itself “disruptive” behavior.

Rudeness, Incivility & Disruption are Often Distinguishable, Even Though They May Intersect

In most instances, it’s 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 disruption when it is repetitive, especially after a warning has been given.

Strategies to Prevent & Respond to Disruptive Behavior

Clarify standards for the conduct of your class. For example, if you want students to raise their hands for permission to speak, say so ...

Serve as a role model for the conduct you expect from your students.

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 contemporaneous conversations at the moment; let’s all focus on the same topic”).

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.

There may be rare circumstances when it is necessary to speak to a student during class about his or her behavior. Do so in a firm and friendly manner, indicating that further discussion can occur after class.

A student who persists in disrupting a class may be directed by the faculty member to leave the classroom for the remainder of the class period. The student should be told the reason(s) for such action, and given an opportunity to discuss the matter with the faculty member as soon as practicable. Prompt consultation should be undertaken with the Division Chairperson and the Executive Vice President. Suspension for more than one class period requires disciplinary action, in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

If a disruption is serious, and other reasonable measures have failed, the class may be adjourned, and campus security should be summoned.

Code of Conduct Violations

Disruptive classroom behavior is a disciplinary violation under HCC’s Student Code of Conduct. As such, students accused of this type of violation are subject to a disciplinary conference or hearing, depending upon the nature and frequency of the disruption.

Procedural Protections

Students accused of disciplinary violations are entitled to the following procedural protections:

- To be informed of the specific charges against them.
- To be allowed to request an informal resolution of the case.
- To be allowed reasonable time to prepare a defense.
- To hear and respond to all evidence upon which a charge is based.
- To call and confront relevant witnesses.
- To be assured of confidentiality, in accordance with the terms of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974.
- To be allowed to request that any person conducting a disciplinary conference, or serving as a discipline conference member or chair, be disqualified on the grounds of personal bias.
- To be provided with a copy of these rights prior to any conference or discipline hearing.
- To be considered innocent of the charges until proven guilty by a preponderance of the evidence.

HCC's Academic Honesty Policy

FIRST INFRACTION – The faculty member shall give the student a “0” or its equivalent on the paper, examination, or presentation in question. The faculty member will notify the student and explain the reason for the grade. This action could result in a lower final grade. The appropriate Division Chairperson will be informed of the infraction in writing and the Executive Vice President (EVP) will notify the student in writing of the consequences and implications of the infraction.

SECOND INFRACTION – The faculty member shall give the student a “0” or its equivalent on the paper, examination, or presentation in question. A second infraction, either in the same course or in another course, will also result in an automatic “F” in which the second infraction occurred and a determination is made that a second infraction has

occurred, the EVP will notify the student of the “F” for the course and make faculty aware that a second infraction has taken place. The student will be dropped from the course and barred from further class participation. In cases where the second infraction occurs in the same course, the faculty member will notify the student and explain the reason for the “F” in the course. Otherwise, the EVP will notify the student of the “F” in the course. The EVP will notify the Director of Records and Registration that the student is to receive an “F” for the course. The EVP will meet with the student involved and apprise the student of the implication of this second infraction.

THIRD INFRACTION – The faculty member shall give the student a “0” or its equivalent on the paper, examination, or presentation in question. The faculty member will notify the student and explain the reason for the grade. A third infraction of the Academic Honesty Policy will also result in an automatic “F” in the course in which the third infraction occurred. Upon notification from the appropriate Division Chair that an academic honesty infraction has occurred and a determination is made that a third infraction has occurred, the EVP will notify the student of the “F” for the course and make faculty aware that a third infraction has occurred. The student will be dropped from the course and barred from further class participation. The EVP will also notify the Director of Records and Registration that the student is to receive an “F” for the course. A third instance of plagiarism or any behavior involving an infraction of the Academic Honesty Policy will result in disciplinary action as determined by the Student Judicial Process.