

## POLICY ON DISRUPTIVE CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

### PROLOGUE

**STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES.** At California State University, Fresno, students enjoy the rights and privileges of adults in our society. Nevertheless, as in society at large, rights and freedoms are supported by a framework of responsible conduct, without which the rights and freedoms of all may suffer. Thus, the exercise of student rights and privileges entails the use of responsible judgment, conformity to the law, and respect for the rights, interests, and values of others.

**ACADEMIC FREEDOM.** Students and faculty must be free to pursue truth as well as personal and intellectual development. A necessary condition for such pursuit is an acceptance of the spirit of inquiry and an appreciation for diverse ideas, viewpoints, cultures, and life-styles. This condition must exist in both the classroom and the overall campus environment.

While the University gives great weight to the responsibility of preserving academic freedom, it does so within the context of respect for law and the reasoned consideration of others. Academic freedom and freedom of speech are intended to protect the expression and exploration of ideas; they do not protect conduct that is unlawful, disruptive of the classroom environment, or disruptive of the University itself.

**CLASSROOM CONDUCT.** 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. All members of the academic community should demonstrate respect for the classroom environment. Differences of viewpoint or concerns should be expressed in terms which are supportive of the learning process, creating an environment in which students and faculty may learn to reason with clarity and compassion, to share of themselves without losing their identities, and to develop an understanding of the community in which they live.

Faculty have a responsibility in the classroom to respect student diversity and diversity of viewpoint, but they also have the primary responsibility to maintain the orderliness and integrity of the learning environment. Students have the right to express ideas unpopular with the class or contrary to those of the instructor. However, students also have a responsibility to respect the learning environment and the integrity of others in the classroom setting. Student conduct which disrupts the learning process shall not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action and/or removal from class.

## PROCEDURES

- A. Faculty have both a professional responsibility and the legal authority to maintain order in the instructional setting. The instructor shall determine the time and manner in which a student may ask questions or express ideas or points of view in the instructional setting.<sup>1</sup>
- B. Student behavior disruptive of the instructional setting shall not be tolerated. Disruptive conduct includes speech and behavior that are clearly disrespectful of either the instructor or other students. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, physically or verbally abusive conduct, interruptions, failure to adhere to the instructor's rules or instructions, vulgar or obscene language, slurs and other forms of intimidation.
- C. Faculty are responsible for informing the department chair and School Dean about any incident of disruptive classroom behavior. Faculty are strongly advised to keep records of dates, times, names of all those present, and details of disruptive incidents.
- D. If, in the judgment of the instructor, the student conduct is seriously disruptive of the instructional setting, the instructor should immediately inform the Vice President and Dean of Student Affairs and file a Disruptive Classroom Incident Report (Report forms are available from Offices of School Deans and the Student Affairs Office.) After discussion with the faculty member, the Vice President and Dean of Student Affairs shall investigate and determine whether or not to initiate formal disciplinary action under Executive Order 148.
- E. Faculty may direct a student who is being disruptive to leave the class. If the student refuses to leave after being requested to do so, the instructor may summon University Police to remove the student.
- F. Removal of a student from class, either voluntarily or involuntarily, is a serious step and not one to be taken lightly. Any time a student is removed from class, either voluntarily or involuntarily, the instructor should (1) inform the Vice President and Dean of Student Affairs and (2) file a Disruptive Classroom Incident Report. The student shall be permitted to return to the class unless the Vice President and Dean of Student Affairs determines otherwise after discussing the matter with the faculty member. As appropriate, the Vice President and Dean of Student Affairs may (1) require the student to provide oral or written assurance that there will be no further disruptive behavior as a condition for the student to return to class; (2) initiate formal disciplinary action pursuant to Executive Order 148; or (3) order immediate suspension of the student pursuant to Executive Order 148 (see H. below).

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<sup>1</sup> For purposes of this policy, "instructional setting," class, or classroom means any laboratory, field, or other environment in which a faculty member is instructing or guiding students in a class scheduled or offered under the auspices of the University.

- G. The Vice President and Dean of Student Affairs shall keep the instructor and student informed of the status of the disciplinary proceedings, especially with regard to the student's attendance at further class sessions.
- H. Pursuant to Executive Order 148, the President may order the "immediate suspension" of any student for the interim period pending a hearing whenever it is determined that such action is "required in order to protect lives or property and to ensure the maintenance of order." If, in the instructor's judgment, immediate suspension is warranted or necessary, they shall contact the Vice President and Dean of Student Affairs immediately. A student so suspended must be provided an opportunity for a speedy hearing pursuant to Executive Order 148 with respect to the immediate suspension.
- I. For further information consult especially the California Code of Regulations (Title 5) Sections 41301-41304, the California Education Code Section 66017, and CSU Executive Order 148.

Approved by the Academic Senate

Approved by the President

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May 16, 1990  
October 11, 2023

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May 25, 1990  
October 12, 2023