



## Proactive Prevention

In many situations involving disruptive students, it is learned that the student had exhibited other disruptive behaviors across campus in other offices, departments, or residential facilities. Those initial signs and examples of disruptive behavior had been overlooked or ignored and eventually the student increases the severity of their disruption. Those early incidents may have been overlooked for various reasons including fear of retaliation, downplay of seriousness, or uncertainty of outcomes. With appropriate notification and referral, the behavior can be addressed before it has a chance to escalate. We cannot expect the disruptive behavior to change without informing the student of clear expectations for their behavior. Sometimes it is helpful for the Dean of Students office to have a conversation with the student to let them know why their behavior is unacceptable.

## FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) protects the privacy of a student's educational record. The disciplinary/conduct record of a student is considered part of their educational record and, thus, is protected by FERPA. Any information gathered and documented while speaking with the disruptive student or involving disruptive behavior should be handled in a confidential matter. **This should not be a deterrent to talking with a student about your concerns nor should it be a deterrent to discussing with the Dean of Students office.** Referring a student to an appropriate resource or the Dean of Students is not a violation of FERPA.

## Other Pertinent Information

### Stressful times for students

- The start and end of semesters
- Mid-semester (mid-term exams)
- Dead Week and Finals Week

### Stressful issues for students

- Financial problems
- Legal problems
- Increases in assignments, exams, workload, etc.
- Family issues such as divorce or a death in the family
- Health problems
- Going home for holidays and breaks
- Roommate and relationship conflicts

### Tips when you are concerned

- Speak with them and tell them you are concerned
- Be familiar with and understand campus resources
- Ask questions and genuinely engage with the student
- Know your limits and refer when appropriate

## Resources

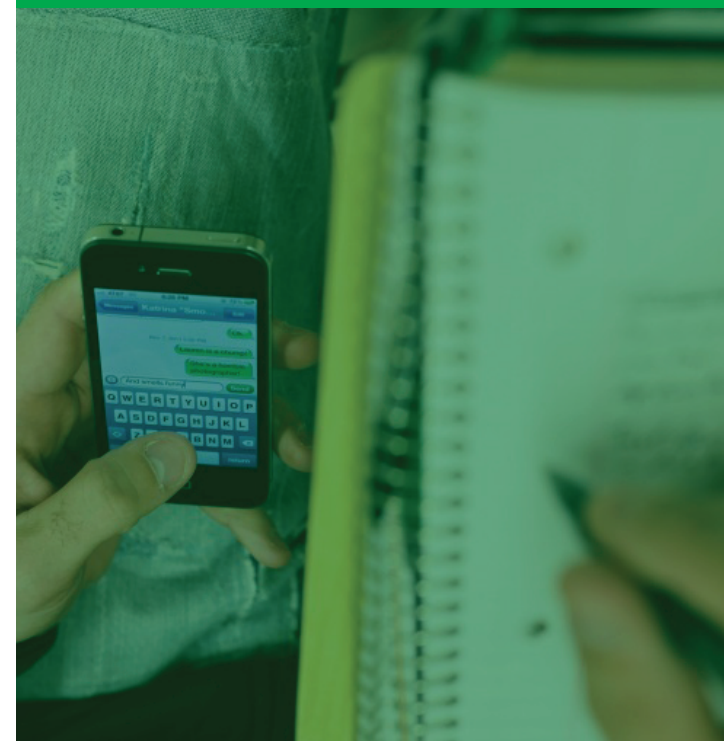
### Dean of Students

<http://deanofstudents.unt.edu>  
940/565.2648  
[deanofstudents@unt.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@unt.edu)

### UNT Police Department

1700 Wilshire Street  
<http://www.unt.edu/police/>  
940/565.3003 or (911 in an emergency)

# Responding to Disruptive Student Behavior



DEAN OF STUDENTS  
Division of Student Affairs

UNT®

A green light to greatness.®

## Disruption Defined

Among the Four Bold Goals, the University of North Texas is committed to providing the best undergraduate educational experience in the state of Texas, superior graduate education, strong student support, and operational effectiveness and service to its constituents. Additionally, UNT promises to provide a supportive environment where all students can successfully learn and grow. On occasion, there are students who disrupt that environment through their behaviors

Disruptive behavior is behavior that interferes with the learning and teaching environment and/or the administrative student services function of the university. Some examples of disruptive behaviors include:

- Refusal to comply with faculty or staff
- Challenges to authority
- Actions that distract the class from the subject matter and/or discussion
- Continually and persistently speaking without being recognized in the classroom or in the office
- Repeatedly leaving and entering the classroom without authorization while class is in session
- Loud, distracting, or erratic behavior inappropriate to the setting
- Answering cell phones or allowing them to continuously ring in class, or in the office
- Overt hostility, defiance, or insults on Blackboard and email
- Excessive e-mails, phone calls, and other means of communication demanding attention outside of class times or business hours

Not only may these behaviors be disruptive, they may also be violations to the Code of Student Conduct. Accurately documenting and referring the student will then be appropriate in order to hold the student accountable for their actions. (You can find the Code of Student Conduct at [conduct.unt.edu](http://conduct.unt.edu).)

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*If you have any questions, please contact the*  
**The Dean of Students Office**  
*at 940/565.2648*

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## Referring a Student

If a student exhibits disruptive, harmful, or threatening behavior they are potentially violating the Code of Student Conduct and, in order to most effectively hold them accountable to the Code, should be referred to the Dean of Students office. If the behavior is severe enough and the danger is immediate, please contact the Police by calling 911 or 940/565.3003.

If you are unsure if the behavior is a violation of the Code of Student Conduct we are always willing to assist by coaching any faculty or staff member through this process or coming up with ways to address the behavior before you refer it to our office. Please do not hesitate to contact us at 940/565.2648 to discuss.

Proper and appropriate documentation will be helpful throughout this process. Without much time passing, please write a statement that includes as much detail as possible regarding the student, their behavior, witnesses, location, time, date, and your response. That documentation may prove critical throughout the process which makes its accuracy and thoroughness of great importance.

You can reach the Dean of Students Office at 940/565.2648 or [deanofstudents@unt.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@unt.edu) and they can be found in the Stovall Temporary Union Building, Suite 150.

## Responding to Disruptions

In effort to quickly and effectively put an end to the disruption, promptly and privately address the student regarding their behavior. Approach that conversation with a calm, courteous, and direct manner before the disruptive behavior has the chance to escalate. There will be times when the situation can be diffused by offering to speak outside of the office/classroom. The conversation should include an opportunity for the student to be heard as well as an opportunity for the staff/faculty to effectively draw boundaries, guidelines, and expectations.

If the disruptions are not happening face-to-face (i.e. e-mail, over the phone, etc.) contact the student to set up a time where their concerns may be heard as well as behavioral expectations may be established. Someone from the Dean of Students office is more than willing to be present during any meetings to help both the instructor and the student.

Depending on the details of the disruption (i.e. severity, accompanying behaviors, recurrence, etc.), it may be pertinent to document the situation and refer the student to the Dean of Students office. Please do not hesitate to contact our office even if you want to discuss and not report anything. It is much better for us to assist you through the process than to wait to the point you want them removed from class and we may not be able to.