ADDRESSING DISRUPTIONS
IN THE CLASSROOM OR AUDIENCE SETTING

Issues related to classroom disruptions and incivility in the academic environment can arise from time to time. While these incidents are rare, it is important to be prepared when they arise to ensure the integrity and safety of our academic community is preserved. The following information is intended to provide you with guidance on how to address disruptive behavior and when to report an incident to Student Conduct and Community Standards (SCCS) or Columbia University Public Safety.

Please note, if you or your students are ever in a situation where you feel that your physical safety is in jeopardy, call CUPS immediately.

ADDRESSING STUDENT DISRUPTIONS

Disruptive Activity is a behavior that interferes with or compromises the well-being of the University community.

1. Identify what the disruptive activity is.
   Examples
   • Texting openly in class
   • Talking loudly with their neighbor
   • Interrupting the instructor repeatedly

2. Request that the behavior stop and articulate its impact on the class. Doing this privately is typically recommended; however, addressing the entire class is sometimes appropriate.
   “Please stop doing [XYZ], because it is disruptive to other students.”

3. Establish or re-establish expectations.
   “As I stated in the syllabus, and at the beginning of the semester...”

4. Follow up in an email with the student and copy your Student Affairs liaison.

EXAMPLES OF BEHAVIORS AND WHO TO NOTIFY:

- **Student Affairs Liaison**
  Shouting at a classmate, texting in class, repeated tardiness

- **SCCS**
  Repeated disruptive activity, yelling at faculty or other students, non-compliance

- **PUBLIC SAFETY**
  Refusal to leave class after your request, aggressive/hostile behavior, immediate threats to physical safety

If disruptive behavior continues to occur, inform your Student Affairs Liaison and inform SCCS by filing an incident report.

If after addressing the behavior, you identify that its root cause is the result of another concern, refer to the student to the appropriate resources. Also, notify SCCS through an incident report.

If the behavior is so severe that it poses a threat to your safety, or the safety of others, call Public Safety immediately.