

FACULTY TIPS

for Addressing Student Concerns



- Contact your department chairperson for guidance. Document and describe the circumstances and behavior of the student at issue (e.g., actions, quotes or language used, witnesses, etc.).
- Be proactive and communicate your behavioral expectations clearly and directly. Intervene early and address negative behavior before it escalates and creates larger consequences.
- Communication is critical. Make sure you consult with your chairperson and/or the appropriate department (e.g., Student Affairs). Be mindful that electronic communication such as email may constitute an educational record associated with the student.
- Remain open to strategizing solutions that hold students accountable for their behavior, but also protect the rights of all TU students, faculty, and staff.

TIPS FROM...

STUDENT CONDUCT & CIVILITY EDUCATION

- Set clear policies for behavior in your class via the course syllabi. Uphold those boundaries.
- Communicate your expectations for things like technology use, class participation, tardiness, disruptive behavior, and academic honesty. Explain how you will respond if students fail to meet those expectations.
- When a student's behavior disrupts your class, promptly tell the student that their behavior is not acceptable and ask for cooperation. Contact your department chairperson or our office if a student continues to be disruptive or if you need assistance with engaging in a conversation with or responding to the student.
- When reporting to Student Conduct & Civility Education (SCCE) about an incident, include as many details of the behavior or words used as possible. Reports can be submitted our office in person, via phone, or online at towson.edu/reportit.

IF... you have questions about a student's behavior and are unsure how to navigate a situation, **THEN...** call SCCE (410-704-2057) to consult regarding whether the behavior may have violated the Code of Student Conduct or if other responses should be taken.

IF... you believe a student has violated the Academic Integrity Policy (towson.edu/academics/resources/procedures.html), **THEN...** follow the policy and copy studentconduct@towson.edu on your notice to the student for recording purposes. Call to consult or for resources. Individual academic colleges may have a concurrent conduct policy.

STUDENT AFFAIRS

- In the event of an emergency (i.e., you fear for your safety or the safety of others), please call TUPD immediately at 410-704-4444 or Baltimore County Police by dialing 911.
- If you are concerned about the well-being of a TU student, please contact the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs at 410-704-2055, or submit an online CARE Form (<https://www.towson.edu/studentaffairs/care/>).
- Be as specific as you can when filing a report about a student who concerns you (e.g., nature of the behavior, quotes or language used, etc.).
- Check out www.kognito.com/maryland, an avatar-based online experience for faculty and staff to learn how to discern sources of difficulty in students and make quality referrals.

IF... a student is demonstrating emotional and/or behavioral markers of distress, **THEN...** contact the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs at 410-704-2055, or submit the online CARE Form (towson.edu/studentaffairs/care/).

IF... a student is navigating the loss of a loved one or extended medical absences or food security issues, **THEN...** refer them to the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs at 410-704-2055.

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES

- Every student must meet essential program/course standards and abide by the Code of Student Conduct. Medical issues or concerns (including a disability) do not excuse disruptive misbehavior.
- Accommodations are designed to mitigate the effects of a disability so the student has an equal opportunity to meet essential program/course standards, not to change or circumvent them. While accommodations level the playing field, they do not guarantee success for students.
- Faculty must implement the accommodations listed in the student's DSS memo. Do not allow unapproved accommodations. Contact DSS to discuss/resolve questions or concerns about an accommodation rather than act in isolation or without guidance.
- Accommodations are not provided retroactively. Therefore, encourage students to contact DSS about an accommodation as early as possible (e.g., include a statement in course syllabi directing students to DSS (see Syllabus Guidelines at <http://bit.ly/2wlaqCB>)).

IF... a student of concern is registered with DSS, **THEN...** contact the student's assigned DSS specialist listed on the student's DSS memo. The specialist usually knows the student best.

IF... a student of concern is not registered with DSS, or you are not sure, **THEN...** contact the DSS Director or DSS Associate Director at 410-704-2638 with questions and concerns.

COUNSELING CENTER

- Do not hesitate to refer students to the Counseling Center. The Counseling Center helps any student dealing with an issue that interferes with or impedes their ability to succeed academically or personally.
- Be alert to students whose behavior indicates distress or disengagement. Faculty are often the first to notice that a student is struggling. Frequently students are in academic difficulty for non-academic reasons (e.g., disorganizing personal crisis or trauma, family or relationship problems, financial and job stresses, mental illness, or other medical issue).
- Faculty members should ask about obstacles a student may face with regard to academic success. This includes general questions that allow a faculty member to determine that a referral for additional help or support may be useful. Encouraging students to make use of the Counseling Center or follow up on another referral for help or support is often instrumental to student success and the resolution of difficulty.

IF... a student is willing to seek help with problems, **THEN...** refer directly to the Counseling Center, either in a routine initial appointment or an immediate emergency appointment.

IF... a student has clear emotional and behavioral markers of distress and/or is causing disruption to others, and is unwilling to follow-through with help, **THEN...** contact the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs at 410-704-2055 or submit a CARE form (towson.edu/studentaffairs/care/).

IF YOU FEAR FOR YOUR SAFETY OR THE SAFETY OF OTHERS, CALL THE TUPD AT 4-4444 FOR IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE.

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TERMINOLOGY FOR STUDENT WELLNESS AND BEHAVIORAL ACTIONS

ACCOMMODATION

In the context of higher education, an accommodation is a modification or adjustment to a course or program that eliminates or minimizes disability-related barriers and enables a qualified student with a disability to participate. At the college level, the purpose of an accommodation is to correct or mitigate a functional impairment and “level the playing field” rather than to ensure a student’s success. Examples of reasonable accommodations include a blind student receiving print materials in an accessible format, and a student with a mental health disability taking exams in a reduced distraction space with extended time.

CARE FORM

An online form that serves as a primary mechanism to refer a student who is demonstrating emotional and/or behavioral markers of distress. The Division of Student Affairs. The CARE Form (located at towson.edu/studentaffairs/care/) requires basic information about the student, referrer contact information, and a description of the incident or behaviors that prompted the referral.

CARE TEAM

A cross-divisional group of unit leaders that meet every Monday morning during the academic year to discuss reports and information pertaining to concerning student behavior. This group identifies solutions and support resources for students, as well as for university units impacted by concerning student behavior.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Personal information shared with an attorney, physician, therapist, or other authorized individual that generally cannot be divulged to third parties without express consent being given or as otherwise specified by law.

DENIAL OF ACCESS

A formal status issued when a student is prohibited from coming onto University property.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The Code of Conduct applies to all student and student organizations. Review at: towson.edu/studentaffairs/policies/conduct.html. A code of conduct violation is determined and adjudicated by the Office of Student Conduct & Civility Education when a student’s behavior more likely than not violated one or more policies listed in the Code of Student Conduct.

CODE OF CONDUCT VIOLATION

A decision made by the Office of Student Conduct & Civility Education that a student is more likely than not responsible for a violation of the Code of Student Conduct.

DISABILITY

The ADA defines a “person with a disability” as someone with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. A condition in and of itself does not necessarily constitute a disability. The degree of impairment must substantially impact a major life activity, including, but not limited to, walking, seeing, hearing, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, working, and taking care of oneself

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

Behavior which obstructs teaching, research, administration, disciplinary proceedings, or normal university operations

EMERGENCY SUSPENSION

A temporary action taken by the Office of Student Conduct & Civility Education pending the outcome of a disciplinary process

EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL MARKERS OF DISTRESS

The following behaviors may be considered markers of distress: change in personal hygiene; dramatic weight gain or loss; frequently falling asleep in class; irritability; unruly behavior; impaired speech; disjointed thoughts; tearfulness; intense emotion; inappropriate responses; difficulty concentrating; physically harming self; destruction of property; anxiety and panic; inability to communicate clearly; loss of reality contact (e.g., hallucinations; poor thought connections)

EXTENDED MEDICAL ABSENCE

Two or more consecutive missed classes (i.e. a full week of classes) with official verification.

FERPA

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) prevents the University from disclosing education records without an eligible student’s consent. FERPA allows exceptions when TU can disclose a student’s education records with their consent. For example, school officials (e.g., TU employees, including faculty and staff) with a legitimate educational interest may disclose education records to one another, disclosure is allowed in connection with a financial aid application, and the school may share education records with another school for purposes of the student’s enrollment or transfer. Detail about FERPA (including applicable exceptions) available at: towson.edu/registrar/grades/ferpa.html.

FOOD INSECURITY

The state of being without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food.

KOGNITO

A series of engaging, interactive, online simulations in which faculty may practice responding to realistically presented student situations. This tool (<https://md.kognito.com/>) is helpful in identifying students who might be at risk and how to connect those students with professional help

SANCTION

A status imposed and/or assignment required as a result of a student being found responsible for violating the Code of Student Conduct.

TITLE IX

Sexual harassment, including sexual violence, is a kind of sex discrimination and is prohibited by Title IX and the University. Issues of student concern that involve sexual harassment or sex discrimination must be referred to the TU Title IX Coordinator at titleix@towson.edu or 410-704-0203.

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