



**WKU**<sup>®</sup>

# ADVICE FOR NEW FACULTY

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## The issues faculty may encounter:

- A student in a course has become overly needy, or disruptive, or simply “disturbing” on some level.
- A parent / partner / significant other has contacted the faculty member seeking information about a student or wants to act as an advocate for the student.
- A student or parent, etc., is threatening to file a grievance, complaint, “call my lawyer,” or take “legal action.”



# *Best practices* based on twenty+ years as legal counsel in higher education...

Your **Syllabus** is **critical and should clearly outline your expectations:**

- Classroom **conduct** (constructive participation, discussion, peer evaluation)
- Type / quality of course work (ex: typewritten, accepted electronically, deadlines, etc.)

Keep up with **rolls and attendees:**

- If someone is there who shouldn't be this should be addressed ASAP.
- Non-attendance should be noted, even if it is not used as a factor in the grade.

**Address conduct** issues **promptly, firmly and without apology.**

- Your time and talent in delivering course content produces a valuable product; other students will expect you to be in control and will respect you for it.

# ***Best practices*** based on twenty+ years as legal counsel in higher education...(continued)

**Keep notes and records** of perceived “potential problems” for at least a calendar year – longer if possible.

- Records will most likely be Emails to/from a student, phone messages, etc.
- Notes can be any type of notation that memorializes an event for future reference.

**Take other students’ complaints / concerns seriously.**

- If a particular student is making you feel uncomfortable or is disrupting the class, chances are he/she is making other students in the course feel the same.
- Even if you are not aware of any problem, one may exist – you should direct concerned students to appropriate individuals on campus for assistance:

Title IX Coordinator

Directory of Equal Opportunity

Dean of Student Life / Office of Student Conduct

WKU Police

# The “disruptive” student



- ◆ Tardiness
- ◆ Cell phone usage
- ◆ Sleeping
- ◆ “Bovine” behavior (snorting, huffing, or blowing)
- ◆ Disruptive, rude behavior (laughing, interrupting)
- ◆ Use of obscenities or other off color / offensive language
- ◆ Body odor, inappropriate attire

# The “disruptive” student

Student classroom misconduct is a violation of University policy: **WKU**  
***Student Code of Conduct – Rights and Responsibilities.***

- **Disrupting the Academic Process.**  
Interference or disruptive activity which impedes, impairs or obstructs teaching...or other University missions, processes, functions...or which inhibits full exercise of rights by others.
- **Unruly Conduct.** Disorderly conduct or lewd, indecent or obscene conduct or expression...
- **Harassment.** Physical abuse, threatening, or intimidation of any person on University owned or controlled property or at University sponsored or supervised event.

# What I do when **parents, spouses, “significant others,”** contact **me** to talk or ask about a student?

As a faculty member, you have several options:

- **Don't talk to them** about the student. *There is no legal requirement or university policy that requires you to do so.* Forward the message to your department head or to me.
- If you talk to them, be **courteous**, but explain that federal law (**FERPA**) prohibits disclosure of any part of a student's academic record without the student's written consent.
  - If they say, “I have their consent,” direct them to your department head or me and explain that one of us will verify the consent and get back to them.
- If it is a **life safety** issue, direct them to contact the WKU Police Department or the Bowling Green Police Department.
- If they **persist**, you can direct them to me or to the University Registrar.

# The “needy” student

## Needy students:

- Require frequent reinforcement, feedback, etc., concerning classroom performance;
- Engage in frequent communication - in person, via E-mail and/or telephone;
- Question lecture content, assignments, due dates, exam questions and grades awarded;
- May well believe you are his/her new best friend.

## You should consider:

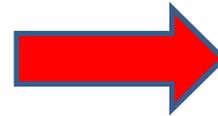
- Providing **only as much assistance / feedback as you deem appropriate** for the curriculum.
- **Directing them to other campus sources of academic assistance** – the student’s Academic Advisor, Academic Advising & Retention Center, Student Accessibility Resource Center.
- **Keeping a log or notes of contacts** with the student, samples of the student’s requests, and assistance provided, in the event of student academic complaint or grievance.

## Sexual Assault, discrimination and/or harassment...

You become aware or have reason to believe:

- A student has been **assaulted or harassed**, or is a **victim of discrimination**, on or off campus, by another student, employee or third party.
- A colleague / employee has been **assaulted or harassed**, or is a **victim of discrimination**, on or off campus, by another colleague / employee, a student or third party.

- Contact:



Title IX, Student  
Conduct officials.



Title IX, Equal  
Opportunity

## **Responding to concerns of harassment and discrimination...**

- WKU requires you to do only one thing: REPORT THE INFORMATION IMMEDIATELY via email, phone or in person to one of the following:

**Andrea Anderson** – WKU Title IX Coordinator

[andrea.anderson@wku.edu](mailto:andrea.anderson@wku.edu)

270-745-4929

**Michael Crowe** – Director, Student Conduct / Title IX Deputy

[michael.crowe@wku.edu](mailto:michael.crowe@wku.edu)

270-745-5429

**Joshua Hayes** – Director, Equal Opportunity / Title IX Deputy

[joshua.hayes@wku.edu](mailto:joshua.hayes@wku.edu)

270-745-5121

**OR, any of the following deputies:**

<https://www.wku.edu/eoo/titleix/coordinatordeputies.php>

## Don't hesitate to ask for help – it is not likely you'll experience an new issue or problem. You can reach out to:

- Your Department Head / Dean
- Student Conduct Office / Dean of Student Life
- Counseling Center – to refer a student to the Center, or request assistance, advice for yourself
- Provost / Vice President for Academic Affairs – Student Ombuds Officer
- Police – If you believe a student **poses a threat** to you or anyone else.
- Office of General Counsel – Anytime, or if you just don't know who to call (or Email).

## Contact information:

Deborah Wilkins, General Counsel

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Cell: (270) 991-8555

[deborah.wilkins@wku.edu](mailto:deborah.wilkins@wku.edu)