Issue: New Regulation 3.025 – Disruption of Academic Process


Background information:

Florida Board of Governors Resolution (1/7/03) provides that each board of trustees may adopt amend or repeal regulations to implement the provisions of law conferring duties upon it. Such regulations must be adopted, amended or repealed pursuant to the Board of Governors Regulation Development Procedure (7/21/05) and must be consistent with law, regulations, resolutions and strategic plan of the Board of Governors. The BOG Procedure also calls for a university to monitor the effects of new regulations and periodically review existing regulations to ensure they are current and consistent.

The University proposes to repeal the current Academic Dishonesty and Disruption regulation (3.0015) and adopt two separate regulations—Disruption of Academic Process (3.025) and Academic Integrity of Students (3.026)—to more effectively define, administer and enforce these two separate academic processes. The procedures for each violation must be managed separately to set guidelines that clearly state the expectations and the intentions of the University, faculty and students.

The purpose of the Disruption of Academic Process regulation is to clarify what constitutes disruptive behavior in the academic setting, the authorized response of faculty and academic officers, and the authority of the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities to initiate separate disciplinary proceedings.

The proposed regulation has been reviewed and approved by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, the Graduate and Undergraduate Councils, the Academic Affairs Management Council and the Academic Integrity Committee.

Strategic Goal(s) Item Supports: II
Workgroup Review:
Supporting documentation: Regulation 3.025
Prepared by: OGC, Graduate School and Undergraduate Studies
USF REGULATION 3.025

DISRUPTION OF ACADEMIC PROCESS

(1) Disruptive students in the academic setting hinder the educational process. Although disruptive student conduct is already prohibited by the University of South Florida (University/USF) Student Code of Conduct, the purpose of this regulation is to clarify what constitutes disruptive behavior in the academic setting, what actions faculty and relevant academic officers may take in response to disruptive conduct, and the authority of the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities or designated office handling conduct issues in Student Affairs to initiate separate disciplinary proceedings against students for disruptive conduct.

(2) Disruption of the academic process is defined as the act, words, or general conduct of a student in a classroom or other academic environment which in the reasonable estimation of the instructor: (a) directs attention away from the academic matters at hand, such as noisy distractions, persistent, disrespectful or abusive interruption of lecture, exam, academic discussion, or general University operations, or (b) presents a danger to the health, safety or well-being of self or other persons. References to classroom or academic area include all academic settings (live or online, and including field experiences) and references to Instructor include the course instructor, USF faculty, administrators, and staff. Misconduct occurring in other campus areas on University premises or which adversely affects the University community and/or the pursuit of its mission is already prohibited by the Student Code of Conduct and will be handled by those procedures.
Academic discussion that includes disagreement with the course instructor during times when the
instructor permits discussion is not in itself disruptive behavior and is not prohibited.

Some disruptive students may have emotional or mental health disorders. Although such students
may be considered disabled and are protected under the Rehabilitation Act/ADA, they are held to
the same standards of conduct as any student.

The following applies to all campuses of the University of South Florida; however, non-
substantive procedural modifications to reflect the particular circumstances of each regional
campus are permitted. Information concerning these procedures is available through the Student
Affairs Office at those regional campuses.

(3) Procedures for Handling Disruption of Academic Process

(a) General Guidelines for Instructor:

1. If a student is disruptive, the Instructor may ask the student to stop the disruptive
   behavior and/or warn the student that such disruptive behavior can result in academic
   and/or disciplinary action. Alleged disruptions of the academic process will be handled
   initially by the Instructor, who will discuss the incident with the student whenever
   possible. It must be noted that the Faculty Senate considers the traditional relationship
   between student and instructor as the primary means of settling disputes that may arise.
2. The Instructor is authorized to ask a student to leave the classroom or academic area and desist from the disruptive behavior if the Instructor deems it necessary. If the Instructor does this, s/he will send an Academic Disruption Incident Report within 48 hours simultaneously to (a.) the department chair, (b.) the Assistant/Associate Dean of the College (as determined by the College), (c) the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (OSRR) or the regional campus’ designated office in Student Affairs, and (d.) the student. If the situation is deemed an emergency or circumstances require more immediate action, the instructor should notify the appropriate law enforcement agency, OSRR and other authorities as soon as possible. Any filed Incident Report can, and should, be updated if new information pertinent to the situation is obtained.

3. An Instructor may also further exclude the student from the classroom or other academic area pending resolution of the matter. If the Instructor recommends exclusion (temporary or permanent) from the classroom pending resolution, the student must be informed of the exclusion before the next scheduled class (either by phone, email or in person). That notice must: (a.) inform the student of the exclusion, (b.) inform the student of his/her right to request an expedited review of the exclusion within two days to the Chair of the Department. If such academic exclusion occurs, and if the student requests a review, Chair of the Department shall review the exclusion within two days of the date the student requests the review and decide if the student can return to the specific class and/or any academic setting. This decision may be appealed in writing by the student within two days to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies or Graduate Studies or the institutional designee (as appropriate) for review and decision within two days. Any
decision rendered at that point must be in writing and will serve as the final and binding academic decision of the University.

Each academic decision or sanction must be communicated to the Office of Students Rights and Responsibilities or the regional campus’ designated office as soon as possible.

(b) Possible Academic Sanctions and Grading Guidelines:

Authority of an Instructor and the appropriate Chair or Assistant/Associate Dean’s Office may result in any of the following sanctions:

- Warning to the student
- Voluntary withdrawal by the student from the class(es)
- Temporary exclusion and/or permanent dismissal from the instructor’s classroom or academic area, program, or college, pending an expedited appeal
- Academic sanction, including assignment of a final grade -- If the final determination is a dismissal from class, the grade assigned for the class will depend on the student’s status at the time of dismissal. If the student had a passing grade in the class at the time of dismissal, a grade of “W” will be assigned for the course. If the student had a failing grade in the class at the time of dismissal, a grade of “F” will be assigned for the course. These grades will become a part of the student’s permanent record. In addition, if the academic disruption results in dismissal from more than the classroom or academic area of the incident, this grading policy may be applied in all classes affected.
Instructors should be aware that notes of the dates, times, witnesses and details of the incidents of disruption and the impact of the disruption on those present may be important in any future proceedings which may be necessary. Referrals to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities or designated office in Student Affairs require written documentation containing factual and descriptive information. The student is entitled to see this documentation.

The Academic Disruption Incident Report must be submitted by hardcopy (not email) simultaneously within 48 hours to (a.) the department chair, (b.) the Assistant/Associate Dean of the College (as determined by the College), (c.) the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities or the regional campus’ designated office in Student Affairs, and (d.) the student. The form can be downloaded from the designated website in Student Affairs or completed by way of memorandum containing the following information:

- Date of report
- Student’s name
- USF Student ID number
- Instructor’s name
- Instructor’s phone number
- Instructor’s e-mail
- Title of course, course number and section
- Date/time/location of incident
- Detailed summary of the incident, including a description of the disruptive behavior
• Witnesses

• Action, if any, taken by the instructor (e.g., student warned, asked to leave the class, etc.)

• Recommended course of action and reasons for this recommendation

• Instructor’s signature

(d) Possible Disciplinary Sanctions for Conduct by the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities:

Upon receipt of the Academic Disruption Incident Report or other academic referral for disruptive conduct, the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities or designated office in Student Affairs may initiate the disciplinary process resulting in the imposition of any of the following sanctions in addition to any academic sanctions imposed (in section b):

• Educational sanctions to include but not limited to educational programs/classes and written assignments

• Disciplinary probation

• Provisional suspension

• Suspension

• Restriction from certain or all class(es), program, college, residence hall, or any part or all of USF campuses

• Expulsion

When an incident is being reviewed by OSRR or designated office in Student Affairs for possible disciplinary sanctions, current provisions affecting the student’s academic status
(temporary or otherwise) will be communicated by the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities or designated office in Student Affairs to the Instructor and appropriate academic administrators/instructors responsible for the student’s current academic standing as soon as possible, but within two weeks of the reported incident. Only final disciplinary sanctions that affect the academic status of the student will be communicated to the Instructor(s) and appropriate academic administrators after the disciplinary process is complete.

(e) Resources:

- University Police (813) 974-2628
- Advocacy Program (813) 974-5756
- Counseling Center (813) 974-2831
- General Counsel (813) 974-2131
- Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (USF Tampa) (813) 974-9443
- Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (USF-Sarasota-Manatee)(941)359-4330
- USF Polytechnic Student Affairs/Dean of Students (863) 667-7049
- USF St. Petersburg Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs (727) 873-4162
- Students with Disabilities Services (813) 974-4309
- Assistant/Associate Dean’s office in schools and colleges, department chairs

Specific Authority: Art. IX, Fla. Constitution and Resolutions issued by the FL Board of Governors, 1006.60, 1006.61 F.S. History—New_____.

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University of South Florida
Academic Disruption Incident Report Form

Reporting Person & Department  Date of report _____________

Note: Anonymous submissions of incident reports will not be processed by the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities

Reporting Person’s Name and title: ____________________________________________

Reporting Department & College/Unit: ________________________________________

E-mail: ___________________________ Phone: ________________________________

Student Information
Please provide any known information.

Student’s Name & U#: ______________________________________________________

Local Address: ___________________________________________________________

Email: ___________________________ Phone: ________________________________

Witness(s) Information

Witness’s Name & U#: _____________________________________________________

Email: ___________________________ Phone: ________________________________

Witness’s Name & U#: _____________________________________________________

Email: ___________________________ Phone: ________________________________

Title of Course, Course Number and Section:

________________________________________________________________________
Incident Description:

Date: ___________ Time: _______ Location: ___________________________

Specific Description of Incident & Disruptive Behavior:

___________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________

Action taken to date: (if any taken by incident reporter)

___________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________

University Police Involvement:  ____ YES  or  ____ NO  Case#:__________________

Recommended course of action and reasons for recommendation (for academic area only, not SRR):

___________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________

For Faculty/Staff: Due to FERPA regulations, the University can only disclose certain information regarding conduct cases. Based on these regulations, the Student Affairs Office will notify any instructors who have an educational need to know if a student of theirs has been suspended or expelled from the university.

___________________________________________________________________

Reporting Person’s Signature     Date of report

NOTE: Please send this report to a.) the department chair, b.) the Assistant/Associate Dean of the college, c.) the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities or the institution’s designated office in Student Affairs, and d.) the student.