

## Safety

Any discussion of safety in the classroom, violent or disruptive students, or student mental health issues should include an acknowledgment that college and universities are comparatively safe environments. The incidence of violence and suicide are actually lower on campus than off campus. It is important to have safety discussions, but in the final analysis people must protect themselves, use their common sense, and trust their instincts. Discussions about safety tips, emergency plans, and protocols must always be viewed within a personal context.

### Recommended Department/Office Discussions

- ✦ Know the emergency phone numbers. Call UW-L Police at 789-9999; or 911 in life threatening situations.
- ✦ Discuss basic safety concerns including such items as summoning help – yell “FIRE”, or determine an office code word for assistance.
- ✦ Consider furniture arrangements and means of egress.
- ✦ Identify areas that have locks.
- ✦ Develop a “boiler plate template” for each syllabus that identifies acceptable classroom behavior.
- ✦ Ensure that each staff/faculty member has information about campus referral and consultation resources. At UW-L this would generally mean the offices in the Student Development Division and the Behavior Intervention Team (BIT).
- ✦ Plan for collegial backup, especially for an upcoming difficult student conversation.
- ✦ Acquire basic knowledge of troubled student behaviors, e.g. suicidal gestures, marked behavior change, repeated class absences, intimidation, etc.

**UW-L Police or the Division of Student Affairs are available for individual office consultations upon request.**

## Behavior Intervention Team—BIT

Examples of when to contact BIT (785-8062) regarding a student:

- Student is disruptive in class
- Student is displaying behaviors that may be helped by counseling or medical attention, i.e., depression, sudden weight loss, exhaustion, alcohol/drug use
- Other students voice concern about harassing behavior
- Observe significant changes in behavior
- Notice a student cries a lot or seems sad
- You are concerned that a student could potentially harm him or herself or others

### City Watch

UW-L has entered into an agreement with the City of La Crosse to contract with City Watch, Inc. The company will provide immediate message service via cell phone, fax, standard phone, and e-mail to any faculty, student, or staff member that has registered to receive messages. To register for City Watch go to:  
<http://www.citywatchonline.com/csbsignup/communitysignuplacrosse.asp>

### Web

In case of an actual campus emergency, initial information will be delivered via City Watch, followed by e-mail and web updates. A website for this purpose has been created, which would provide information regarding the emergency. If an emergency is in progress, the UW-L home page will have a blinking link steering you to this site: [www.uwlax.edu/emergency](http://www.uwlax.edu/emergency).

UW-La Crosse

## Classroom Management & Campus Safety Discussions



**Student Development  
& Academic Services  
Student Life Office**

**147/149 Graff Main Hall  
608-785-8062**

## Managing Classroom Disruptions

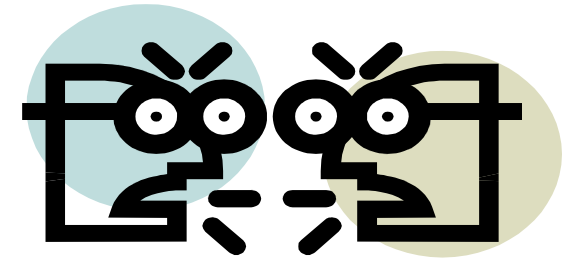
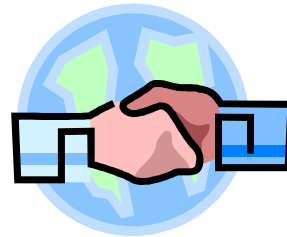
Perhaps the best way to ward off any disruptive student behavior is to set the tone in the first class meeting. The Office of Student Life offers the following strategies that may be of help to establish decorum and clarify your expectations.

- Determine your expectations regarding the use of cell phones or other electronic devices, eating, sleeping, reading other materials, talking, arriving late and any other behaviors that can disrupt the learning environment in the classroom, laboratory, or studio.
- Discuss and clarify your expectations on the very first day of class and include them in your syllabus should a student miss the first meeting. Specify consequences for such actions up to and including referral to the Student Life Office for potential disciplinary action.
- Spend time during one of the first classes in discussion with students related to their expectations. What do they expect of their classmates, what do they expect of you, what do they think you expect of students? Consider creating a learning community “contract” with these expectations that all students sign.
- Clarify your expectations regarding participation. Do students need to raise their hand to be recognized to speak? Is there a limit on how much time one may speak during a given class? Do you encourage disagreement or debate but done in an agreeable manner?

### Calming a Disruption

If a student does become disruptive, some of the following ideas may help to de-escalate the situation.

- Maintain a calm, soft voice. When you use a quieter voice, the disrupter generally will become quieter. Your “being in control” can, and often does, diffuse the matter.
- Unless your safety is threatened, stand closer to the disrupter. If necessary you may want to quietly encourage them to calm down.
- You may need to directly tell a student that he/she has contributed enough for that day and you need to hear from others.
- If possible, shift the topic of discussion or the activity. When a student is agitated or worked up over a particular topic, moving to another may calm the situation.
- Do not challenge or belittle the disruptive student. Your goal at this point is to de-escalate the situation. You may always follow up later.



### If Things Do NOT Calm Down

If a student persists in being disruptive, you have the responsibility to maintain a learning environment for the entire class. In this case, consider these options:

- You have the right to ask the disruptive student to leave class for that day. Any longer than a one class suspension would need to come to the attention of the Office of Student Life for adjudication under the misconduct process (UWS Chapter 17).
- If a student will not leave after you have asked, you may call University Police at 789-9000 or 911 and have the Police remove a disruptive student.

If a student is making threats of harm to self or others, call 911 immediately.

“Disrupting or obstructing a university-run or university authorized activity” is a violation of the code of conduct (UWS Chapter 17) and you may refer the student(s) for disciplinary action by calling the Office of Student Life (785-8062). Contact Dr. Mick Miyamoto, Assistant Dean of Students, at the same number if you have any questions or concerns.