



POLICY STATEMENT

Responding to Students Experiencing Psychological Difficulty

SU Policy Number: 301-002.1

ORIGINATING OFFICE

Vice President for Student Affairs, Office of the Dean of Students

PURPOSE

To establish a protocol for use by the Counseling Center and the Office of the Dean of Students to manage an institutional response to students experiencing psychological difficulty.

SCOPE

The application of the policy is to all University students. The policy is to be followed by all administrators, staff, and faculty at the University.

OBJECTIVE

To clearly define a protocol that assigns management responsibility in situations where a student is experiencing psychological difficulty.

DEFINITIONS

Psychological Difficulty: Students who are not effectively functioning in the collegiate environment because they are disruptive to the normal operations of the University, cause significant damage to property, and/or are at risk of harming themselves or others based on psychological issues.

PROCEDURES

1. When faculty, administrators, or staff members encounter a student in psychological difficulty, they should contact either the Director of Counseling Services or the Dean of Students. They should not assume any case management responsibilities. Their role is one of referral.
2. The Dean of Students and Director of Counseling Services will communicate with each other about the case. Initial referrals will be made as necessary. If needed, the Dean of Students will conduct an investigation that may include talking to relevant witnesses and to the student.
3. Once the investigation (if conducted) is completed, the Dean of Students, the Director of Counseling Services, and the Vice President for Student Affairs will convene a staffing conference to discuss possible responses, including judicial and/or treatment options. Other individuals may be included in this meeting as appropriate, e.g. health center, residential staff, police, etc.
4. At the staffing conference two primary decisions will be made:

- a. First, are there a way to informally resolve this matter with the student? For example, is the student voluntarily willing to withdraw from the University? Is he or she willing to get the necessary psychological or medical assistance? Is he or she willing to participate in a psychological evaluation? Is he or she willing to voluntarily enter an in-patient treatment facility. The Dean of Students will meet with the student to determine openness to these voluntary approaches. If the student agrees to pursue an informal resolution, the agreement will be committed to writing by the Dean of Students and thus serve as a contract. The student will also be asked to sign a waiver allowing the Dean of Students and Director of Counseling Services to discuss the specifics of his or her case, including any therapeutic intervention.
 - b. Second, should we enter formally into the judicial process and conduct a hearing? A discussion about the appropriateness of invoking an interim suspension from the University or an interim removal from University housing should also occur.
5. At the conclusion of the staffing conference, it should be decided who will conduct what follow-up activities --- contacting professors, contacting parents, contacting police and residence life staff, etc. Only the Vice President for Student Affairs, the Dean of Students, or the Director of Counseling Services should contact the parents.
 6. The Dean of Students will serve as the central coordinator in these cases given judicial and administrative requirements.

RECISSION

APPROVALS

President's Cabinet; 2/98

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