Managing Behavior Abroad

Disruptive

UVM Faculty-Led Courses
Agenda

- Introductions
- What is disruptive behavior?
- Preventing disruptive behavior
- Addressing disruptive behavior
- Due process; when to call OIE/CE
- What else do you need?
Definitions

- **Disruptive Students**
  - Students whose behavior makes teaching and learning difficult for others in the class

  November 2010 session

- **Distressed students**
  - Students who are experiencing emotional and/or psychological problems that are interfering with their ability to learn

  February 2011 session
What does disruptive behavior look like?

Why is disrespectful behavior as concerning as disruptive behavior?
Disruptive Behavior

Takes many forms, varying in severity

Reading the paper, sleeping

Being late, making noise, interrupting

Passing notes, playing with electronics

Physical violence

Personal insults, harassment, alcohol and other drugs
Disruptive Behavior

- Violations of syllabus expectations/rules
- Habitual interference with learning environment
- Persistent and unreasonable demands for time and attention
- Intimidating or harassing another person through words and/or actions
- Threats/intimidation of physical assault
What might seem like disruptive behavior but is something else?
Disruptive Behavior: What it Isn’t!

- Cultural differences
- Needing extra time or attention for a special reason/documented accommodation
- Disagreements or differences of opinion
- Situational frustration
- Dealing with stress and emotion
Distressed Students:

*Sometimes disruption might signal distress*

**Common Signs**

- **Emotional Indicators**
  - sadness, anxiety, tension; little or no emotionality; unexpected emotional outburst (crying); extreme mood swings; unusual agitation; little or no motivation.

- **Social Indicators**
  - lack of close friendships (almost always alone); intrudes on others' conversations; little or no communication during class discussions; avoids people (isolation).

- **Behavioral Indicators**
  - appears tired and listless; sleeps during class; unhealthy appearance; lack of interaction in class; lack of concentration; misses classes or disturbs the class; hyperactivity.

- **Academic Indicators**
  - change in writing style (rambling, incoherent); drop in quality of papers, tests, projects; turning in assignments late or not at all; unusual content in writing (death, violence, suicide); drop in grades

Come to the FLPA faculty session on distressed students in February to learn more.
Preventing disruptive behavior while abroad

It starts with the student selection process....

- Written application
  - “Have you had any judicial violations at UVM? If so, what was the violation? The consequence?”

- Interviews

- Behavioral-based questions
Preventing disruptive behavior while abroad

It continues with FLPA pre-registration....
What all students sign during pre-registration....

UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

WHEREAS, I wish to participate in this Study Abroad Program and I understand my participation in the program is to be part of my course work at the University of Vermont; I therefore acknowledge and attest to the following statements and I agree to abide by the following terms and conditions at all times during my participation in the Program:

I understand that I am subject to the laws of the country or state where I am studying as well as the rules and regulations of my Host Institution. I also understand that it is my responsibility to be informed about the laws of the country or state and to conduct myself in a manner that complies with those laws.

I understand that if I violate any of the requirements of the Cat’s Tale, Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities, or the rules of the program that I have been provided or about which I have been informed, I will be subject to appropriate sanctions which include but are not limited to revocation of privileges, imposition of a curfew or (in the event of serious or repeat offenses; behavior which poses a serious threat to the health or safety of self, fellow participants or others; behavior which threatens to seriously disrupt the operation of the program; behavior which may significantly diminish the program experience of others; or for other sufficient reason) expulsion from the program. I understand the faculty/leader/advisor of the Program has complete discretion to assess the severity of any violation I may commit and to impose, based on their sole judgment, the appropriate sanction, and I agree to abide by any such sanction. I also understand that any such violations may be reported to appropriate UVM student affairs or judicial officials by the faculty/leader/advisor or others participating in the program and may form the basis of a disciplinary proceeding against me at UVM upon my return there.

I assume full responsibility for any personal activities in which I participate that are outside the scope of required course work and for my personal conduct while participating in my required course work activities.

I have been informed of all State Department warnings pertaining to the country of my destination and am aware of the State Department website at http://www.travel.state.gov.

Students are subject to:
- UVM policies
- YOUR rules

Faculty may:
- revoke privileges
- impose sanctions
- expel a student

Students also sign this...
UVM Policies

- Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities - www.uvm.edu/policies/student/studentcode.pdf
  - Offenses against persons
  - Offenses against property
  - Public order offenses – safety hazard, littering, etc.
  - Other offenses – breaking the law; disruption of classroom; violation of other policies

- Other relevant student policies: alcohol/other drugs; sexual harassment; sexual assault
What are your non-negotiable expectations for your course or program?
Faculty Non-negotiable Expectations *(shared at session)*

- Follow the host country’s laws
- Don’t put self, others or program at risk
- Students may only leave the group with notification of faculty; some groups also require that students may only do so in groups of 3 (if something happens to one student, one can stay and other can go for help) and one group also requires that students carry a cell phone if they go off on their own (if they don’t have one, they’re required to take one of faculty leader’s)
- Support one another
- Be on time and be ready to participate
Faculty Non-negotiables
(shared at session) continued

- Open and honest communication
- Leave no trace (Peace Parks course)
- Never leave a friend/classmate alone in a bar, with a stranger – even if they say ‘It’s OK.’
Preventing Disruptive Behavior while Abroad - Expectations

- Articulate your non-negotiable expectations before students commit to course
- Set clear community expectations about “class time” behavior and “out of class time” behavior
- Put expectations in writing
- Review expectations pre-departure and post-arrival
- Address disrespectful behavior starting with pre-departure
Preventing Disruptive Behavior while Abroad – Community Building

- Develop group expectations (community standards)
  - What I need from the group is...
  - Establish agreement about the community standards
  - Be clear about how the group would like to handle community standards that are violated

- Establish rapport with one another

- Demonstrate an interest in the students beyond the subject matter (If you’re only having discussions with students when things go awry, students may not be receptive.)
What are your approaches to addressing inappropriate behavior?
Intervention Options

- Interrupt behavior (nicely) in the moment
- Take a 5 minute break and talk with the student
- Ask the student to meet with you individually later
- Ask the student to leave (just for that session)
- FOLLOW UP all conversations in writing
Avoid…

- Offering any accommodations that are not documented
- Giving higher than earned grades out of fear/intimidation
- Put-downs or witty comebacks – they can escalate a situation.
- “It wasn’t that serious.” “It’s no big deal.”
- “It’s too busy/I’m too tired… I’ll deal with it later.”
Tips for addressing concerning behavior

- Use affective statements – Describe how a particular behavior is impacting you, the group, the broader community, etc.

- Use “I” statements: I am concerned about your behavior because...

- Revisit community standards and expectations: We previously agreed to ______. What ideas do you have to address not meeting this expectation?

- Enter the conversation from a place of concern rather than anger or frustration.
Due Process

...When a violation occurs

- In person conversation with student
  - Identify concerning behavior
  - Ask why the student failed to adhere to expectations
  - Determine appropriate sanction and/or issue warning
    - Sanctions should consider if student took responsibility for action; nature of offense; severity of harm/impact of action; past behavior
    - Options may include curfew, letter of apology, sitting out of an activity, other ideas?
    - Expulsion from course/program will be determined in concert with an on-campus staff member
- Follow up with student in writing (copy to OIE)
- OIE will notify CSES for possible university hearing
Due Process (for short-term only)

...If expulsion might be warranted

- Contact the FLPA staff on duty immediately
- Send written description of incident – who, what, where, when, how
- Send written course expectations
- Be prepared to set up a meeting by phone with the student and staff member on campus
- OIE/CE will conduct meeting and render decision, notifying the student of right to appeal if decision is to expel
- Dean of Students Office will conduct appeal process
- OIE will notify CSES for possible university hearing
When to Contact OIE

- If you have a situation you don’t know how to handle, OIE can connect you with the right campus resources.
- If you have a situation that you believe requires student expulsion, OIE will coordinate with the right campus contacts.
- Written reports should go to OIE as soon as you have access to email.

Note: Speaking about a student to other University faculty or officials is not a violation of that student’s FERPA/privacy rights.
Questions raised by faculty during Nov. 2010 session

- How do you ensure both trip leaders are in agreement about how to respond or handle a specific situation? (Suggestions included discussing hypothetical situations in advance, making agreement to not respond -- unless necessary to do so immediately – until both instructors have discussed)

- What do you do when the TA tells you that a student has shared something with the TA that the student doesn’t want shared with the faculty member? (Suggestions included clarifying with TA early on that ‘you and I are a team and there can’t be secrets’)

How do you maintain teaching relationships with students while also serving as disciplinarian?
What else?

- Intervene early and often (don’t wait until it is a crisis)

- Check-in regularly with the group
  - How are you doing?
  - What concerns or challenges are you experiencing?
  - How can we best support one another during our time together?

- Revisit expectations/community standards regularly

- Enjoy your experience!
Questions & Concerns