

Classroom Management

Dealing With Disruptive Behaviour and Student use of Technology



Overview

- Problematic student behaviour is a challenge for faculty at Mohawk:
 - Disruptive, harassing and threatening behaviour
 - Use of cell phones, tablets & laptops
 - Unauthorized recording and sharing of lectures
 - Unclear direction to faculty about classroom management
 - Variable College response to disruptive student behaviour and harassment of faculty



Overview

- Managing problematic behavior is not at all about being “anti-student”. It is about:
 - Creating a healthy and positive learning environment for **all** students and faculty.
 - Modeling mature and professional behavior for students (essential employability skills).
 - Getting students in crisis the help they need.



Overview

- The purpose of this workshop is to:
 - Identify legal frameworks that define and govern problematic student behaviours.
 - Realize the tools faculty have to manage the learning environment.
 - Survey legal frameworks that guide faculty rights in the classroom.
 - Suggest best practices to deal with disruptive, threatening, or harassing behavior.



Problematic Behaviour

- There are four sources that define problematic behavior:
 - Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC)
 - Ontario Health and Safety Act (OHSA)
 - The Collective Agreement (CA)
 - College policy



Human Rights / Health and Safety

The OHRC and OHSA drive language in College policy and in the CA.

- Both deal with harassment, defined as:
 - “a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome. Harassment can also result from a single comment or action and it does not matter whether the harasser was intending to harm or annoy the other person.”
- Harassment under both pieces of legislation is forbidden in College policy CS-1317-2012 (Harassment and Discrimination).



Human Rights / Health and Safety

- The OHRC deals with harassment related to any of the “Protected Grounds” under the Code, such as gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or religion.
- Examples of this type of harassment include:
 - Inappropriate or insulting remarks, gestures, jokes, innuendoes or taunting about a person based on a Protected Ground;
 - Unwanted questions or comments about an employee's private life pertaining to a Protected Ground; and/or,
 - Posting, displaying materials, or the electronic publication of articles or graffiti etc. that is offensive on the basis of a Protected Ground.



Human Rights / Health and Safety

- If the harassment does not relate to the Code's “Protected Grounds” then it amounts to harassment as defined by the OHSA and violates this policy.
- Examples of this type of harassment include:
 - Making remarks, jokes or innuendoes that demean, ridicule, intimidate or offend;
 - Displaying or circulating offensive pictures or materials in print or electronic form;
 - Bullying;
 - Making repeated offensive or intimidating phone calls or emails;
 - Gossiping or spreading rumours; and/or
 - Belittling an employee's opinions

Collective Agreement: Article 4

Article 4

NO DISCRIMINATION/BULLYING/PSYCHOLOGICAL HARASSMENT

4.01 A The parties agree that, in accordance with the provisions of the Ontario Human Rights Code, there shall be no discrimination or harassment against any employee by the Union or the Colleges, by reason of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, record of offences, marital status, family status or disability.

4.02 A 1 All employees covered by this Agreement have a right to freedom from harassment in the workplace because of sex by his or her employer or agent of the employer or by another employee. Harassment means engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome.

4.02 A 2 It is agreed that the responsibility of the College under clause 4.02 A 1 with respect to the conduct of an agent of the employer or of another employee shall be limited to the *taking of all reasonable means to ensure that the conduct complained of does not occur.*

Collective Agreement: Article 4

4.02 A 3 Every employee covered by this Agreement has a right to be free from:

- (i) a sexual solicitation or advance made by a person in a position to confer, grant or deny a benefit or advancement to the employee where the person making the solicitation or advance knows or ought reasonably to know that it is unwelcome; or
- (ii) a reprisal or a threat of reprisal for the rejection of a sexual solicitation or advance where the reprisal is made or threatened by a person in a position to confer, grant or deny a benefit or advancement to the employee.

4.02 A 4 The College shall make reasonable provisions to ensure that employees are free from bullying/psychological harassment as defined within this article.

The College and the Local Union shall cooperate to the fullest extent possible to ensure the work environment is free from bullying/psychological harassment.

Collective Agreement: Article 4

4.02 A 5 Bullying/psychological harassment refers to any vexatious behaviour that is known, or ought reasonably to be known, to be unwelcome and that:

- (a) Adversely affects an employee's dignity, or psychological or physical integrity, and/or
- (b) Takes the form of repeated conduct which could reasonably be regarded as intending to intimidate, offend, degrade or humiliate, and/or
- (c) Results in a harmful work environment.

Examples of bullying/psychological harassment include, but are not limited to, the following:

- berating/belittling an employee or an individual;
- making repeated unwarranted criticism;
- undermining or deliberately impeding a person's work;
- spreading malicious rumours or gossip;
- making physical gestures intended to intimidate, offend, degrade or humiliate an employee or an individual;
- making comments that are threatening, derisory or defamatory.

4.02 A 6 Actions which may be deemed to be bullying/psychological harassment could be carried out by a manager and/or a supervisor, *students*, employees, individuals or groups.

Student Behaviour Policy

- The Mohawk Student Behaviour Policy (SS-3200-2006) lists several student behaviours that are not acceptable by the College and that directly impact classroom management:
 - Alcohol and drug violations
 - Disruptive and/or inappropriate questioning and commenting
 - Dissemination of slanderous, defamatory or libelous material regarding any member of the College community using any medium
 - Late arrival to class accompanied by noisy interruptions
 - Loud, disruptive interactions or activity
 - Swearing
 - Taunting/derogatory comments/inappropriate joking
 - Theft
 - Unauthorized, disruptive cell phone use
 - Unwanted physical contact such as pushing or shoving
 - Using online forums to complain about another class or defame staff
 - Vandalism
 - Verbal abuse including jokes, derogatory comments, cyber bullying
 - Violation of established learning environment rules



Managing the Learning Environment

- The Collective Agreement (CA) contains language that clearly establishes the responsibility and right of faculty to manage the learning environment.
- **Professor Class Definition (p. 128)**
 - “a professor is responsible for providing academic leadership and for developing an effective learning environment for students”
- **Article 13.04 (p. 25)**
 - “Every faculty member is able to exercise academic freedom in the performance of his/her duties. Academic freedom at the College includes the right to enquire about, investigate, pursue, **teach** and speak freely about academic issues without fear of impairment to position or other reprisal.”



Managing the Learning Environment

- The CA contemplates teaching faculty as being professionally responsible for ensuring an effective learning environment.
- The CA also provides us the freedom to do this work in accordance with our best professional and scholarly judgment.
- We have the ability to set the expectations of the learning environment and to enforce them, provided these rules are not:
 - Arbitrary
 - Discriminatory
 - In bad faith

Best Practices

- When an incident or pattern of disruptive or harassing behavior occurs, faculty should:
 - Contact your Associate Dean via email and inform them of the incident.
 - Contact the Faculty Union and inform them of the incident.
 - Contact Student Rights and Responsibilities and inform them of the incident.
 - Contact Security if the incident involves threatening behavior.
 - Consider referring the student to Counseling if they appear to be in crisis.
- If an incident is occurring real-time, faculty should:
 - Remain calm - do not escalate the situation.
 - Calmly ask the student to leave the classroom.
 - Call Security if the student is being aggressive or refusing to leave.
 - Follow the above protocol for notifying various parties of the incident.

Best Practices

Things to remain aware of:

- Know your rights and advocate for them, but in any conflict process remain respectful and cooperative.
- Be professional in your communications at all times. Your communication could be used as evidence in a Human Rights case.
- Save all email communications related to the incident on a non-College server.
- Request representation from the Faculty Union before attending a management meeting related to a student conflict.
- Maintain confidentiality during a complaint or conflict process.



Best Practices: Classroom Management

Things you can do to clearly communicate expectations in the classroom:

- Go over expectations and relevant policies on the first day of class
- Put links to policies and expectations in Learning Plan
- Create an eLearn module on behavioural expectations that students have to open before their course content opens.



When does the Grievance Process come in?

- Faculty can grieve conflicts over student behaviour under Article 4, Article 13, and other CA articles.
- The grievance process comes into play when College policies and procedures fail.
- Contacting the Faculty Union early in any complaint or conflict process ensures that your collective Agreement rights, including the right to grieve, are protected.
- Article 4 grievances have led to significant change at Mohawk and have ended serious incidents of bullying and harassment.



Student Use of Technology

- For classroom recording and technology use, there are two different conditions to consider – general classroom management, and the specific case of students with accommodations.
- For students with a Confidential Academic Accommodation Plan (CAAP), learning assistance technology can be an important part of academic accommodations.
- Teaching faculty should work collaboratively with CAAP students and counseling faculty in Accessible Learning Services (ALS) to determine academically appropriate accommodations.
- This workshop will only consider the general case of student recording and technology use. A subsequent workshop will deal with the complexities of academic accommodations.



Student Use of Technology

- **General classroom management**
 - Faculty **can** set guidelines around such things as recording lectures and the use of technology (cell phones, tablets, etc).
 - Can say that technology should only be used to take notes or facilitate participation in the class (i.e. looking up a term on Google).
 - Beyond ensuring an effective learning environment, faculty do not have to provide a reason to restrict recording of lectures and class discussion in general.
 - However, restrictions must not be arbitrary, discriminatory, or in bad faith.

Best Practices

For General Classroom Management

- Include a policy about recording and student use of technology in the course learning plan.
- Be sure to have a statement that exempts CAAP students from any general prohibitions against recording.
- Include a policy or module about recording and student use of technology on the course eLearn page.
- Make a clear statement on the first day of class about rules concerning recording and the use of technology. If they will not be permitted or limited, ensure that you mention that students with accommodations should contact the professor directly to discuss them.

Be Clear: Use Permission Signs



<https://www.palass.org/meetings-events/permission-signs-talks-and-poster>

Other Best Practices...

- **What are other strategies that have worked for faculty in the past?**

