Syllabus Guidance: Anticipating the Unanticipated and Partners for a Safe & Healthy Western (a Resource Guide)

This annual, and updated, issue of Praxis is designed to help you “anticipate the unanticipated” with two sets of resources. First, we provide suggestions for syllabus components that can prevent and mitigate the kinds of student difficulties—typically rare, occasionally legal, always awkward—that can result in complaints and grievances.

Next we provide advice from Prevention and Wellness Services, Counseling Services, the Student Health Center, the Dean of Students, and the Equal Opportunity Office regarding what to do and who to call for a range of student behavior and health issues.

Our intent is to be helpful rather than alarming. After all, most Western classes run smoothly. However, while the instances of difficulties have not increased, the complications surrounding them have. No one, of course, expects faculty to resolve non-academic student problems or provide therapeutic or legal advise or assistance. However, common-sense safeguards can prevent many of these difficulties from occurring. And faculty have asked for more guidance regarding what to do and who to call when they have concerns for the health and well being of their students. To these ends, we offer this Praxis. (Please note our “Quick Links” to the right.)

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Quick Links

University Police Emergency: 360-650-3911

University Police Non-emergency: 360-650-3555

Health Center: 360-650-3400 / Web

Alcohol & Other Drug Issues: 360-650-6865 / Web

Violence, Physical and/or Sexual Abuse Issues: 360-650-3700 / Web

Casas: 360-650-3700 / Web

Safe Campus (anonymous reporting): 360-650-7233

Counseling Center: 360-650-3164 / Web

Equal Opportunity Office/Title IX Coordinator 360-650-3307 / Web

Dean of Students: 360-650-3450 / Web
A WELL-PREPARED SYLLABUS CAN “HAVE YOUR BACK”

A syllabus serves many functions. In addition to answering basic questions about course logistics, responsibilities, and grading, a well-conceived syllabus sets academic and behavioral standards for students while documenting your department’s adherence to state and accreditation guidelines. In this way a well-prepared syllabus prevents problems, clarifies what students should do if a problem arises, and “has your back” should a larger or unforeseen problem arise.

This doesn’t mean you need to turn your syllabus into a tome. Instead, you need to simply cite or provide the following information:

**Grading Method**

A clear, explicit statement of evaluation processes and measurements assures students that grading is fair, reduces objections, and protects your authority. If, for instance, attendance is a component of grading, be sure the syllabus says so. Otherwise the “A” student who only shows up for exams has grounds for objecting to his “B.” In addition, be sure to include statements regarding extra credit, make-up tests, and deadlines.

**Student Responsibilities**

Clarifying student responsibilities regarding attendance, due dates, homework, presentations, and participation will thin your in-box, prevent objections, and help students meet deadlines. Also be aware that requiring medical documentation of absences due to illness can create a significant hardship for students as Western’s Student Health Center policy does not provide excuses for short term absences. (See Medical Excuses.)

**Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)**

Students, accreditors, the State of Washington, and the federal government expect a syllabus to state what students will learn or be able to do upon completion of a course. Many departments have established course objectives that can be listed. If not, simply note 1-2 suitable departmental outcomes met by your course. These are available on each department’s web site. In addition, GUR courses should note which of the 11 GUR competencies the course meets. (See GUR Competencies.)

Examples:

- Geo 212: Upon completion of this course you should be able to describe how plate tectonics has influenced continental evolution and deposition (course SLO #2).
- Eng 238: Upon completion of this course you should be able to analyze and communicate ideas effectively in oral, written, and visual forms (GUR competency #1).

**Integrity**

As a community, Western is committed to integrity in all aspects of academic and campus life. An excellent resource on integrity for faculty and students is the Western Coalition for Integrity. (See Integrity.) In addition to providing resources concerning common problems related to academic integrity, such as plagiarism and cheating on exams, the Coalition website also addresses related issues such as collaborative work, the use of language translators, and submitting the same paper in different classes.

In addition to this site, the University Catalog in Appendix D—Academic Honesty Policy and Procedure—delineates rights and responsibilities. (Go to University Catalog and scroll down to Appendices.) As part of a broader effort to promote integrity at Western, please urge students to consult the Integrity website and perhaps even explore it with them in a discussion on academic integrity.

**Reasonable Accommodation**

Federal and state guidelines guarantee the right of students to “reasonable accommodation” for documented disabilities. However, difficulties occur if students misunderstand the process, request disability accommodations late, or fail to provide proper documentation. For these reasons, we strongly recommend that a concise, “Reasonable Accommodation” statement be included in each syllabus. Such a statement helps demonstrate faculty compliance with state and federal guidelines and provides students with the information they need to seek out assistance. The following statement is sufficient:

“Reasonable accommodation for persons with documented disabilities should be established within the first week of class and arranged through Disability Resources for Students: telephone 360-650-3083; email drs@wwu.edu; and on the web at Disability Resources.”
State regulations, definitions, and Western’s policy and procedure for providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities can be found at Disability Policies.

**Student Services**

Statements like the following can reduce difficulties by matching students with assistance as early as possible:

“Western encourages students to seek assistance and support at the onset of an illness, difficulty, or crisis.

- In the case of a medical concern or question, please contact the Health Center: 360-650-3400 or visit Student Health.
- In the case of an emotional or psychological concern or question, please contact the Counseling Center: 360-650-3400 or visit Counseling Services.
- In the case of a health and safety concern, please contact the University Police: 360-650-3555 or visit University Police.
- In the case of a family or personal crisis or emergency, please contact the Dean of Students: 360-650-3450 or visit Dean of Students.
- To seek confidential support related to sexual violence, please contact CASAS (360-650-3700), the Student Health Center, and/or the Counseling Center. To report sexual violence, please contact University Police, Bellingham Police, and/or the Title IX Coordinator in Western’s Equal Opportunity Office (360-650-3307). Faculty are responsible employees who are required to report sex discrimination, including sexual violence that they learn about to the Title IX Coordinator.

**Advice from the Equal Opportunity Office**

To help set a positive equal opportunity classroom tone, faculty may wish to add a statement about respect in their syllabus. One example might be:

“I am committed to establishing and maintaining a classroom climate that is inclusive and respectful for all students. Learning includes being able to voice a variety of perspectives, and classroom discussion is encouraged. While students’ expressed ideas may vary and/or be opposed to one another, it is important for all of us to listen and engage respectfully with each other.”

For smaller classes, the statement might continue with:

“In this class, I expect all students to make their best efforts to pronounce one another’s names correctly, and to respect one another’s personal pronouns. If you have questions or concerns related to these expectations, please speak with me.”

It can also be helpful to communicate to students about their civil rights in the educational context. Such a statement could read as follows:

“I am committed to an environment free of discrimination and harassment—as is Western. Law and Western’s equal opportunity and sexual misconduct policies protect everyone against discrimination based on: Race, Color, Creed, Religion, National Origin, Sex (including pregnancy and parenting status), Age, Disability, Marital Status, Sexual Orientation, Genetic Information, Veteran Status, and Gender Identity and Expression. (Contact EOO at 360-650-3307 and/or see Equal Opportunity)

“If you feel the classroom climate does not reflect this commitment, I encourage you to discuss this with me. I can also provide you with information about reporting options and confidential support resources. Like other Western employees (except counselors and medical staff), I am required to report instances of discrimination or sexual violence to the Title IX Coordinator. For confidential support, contact CASAS and the Counseling Center.”

If a student informs you that they feel they have experienced inappropriate behavior based on one of the categories above, please refer them to the Equal Opportunity Office. Students, faculty or staff who believe they are subjects of discrimination or harassment may ask the EO Office to help resolve their complaint either through informal mediation techniques or by conducting a formal investigation. Any faculty, staff or student complaining to the EO Office is protected against retaliation by either the alleged offender or anyone involved in an EO Office investigation.

The Equal Opportunity Office also encourages faculty to provide information in their syllabus about the location of the gender neutral restroom nearest the classroom, which may be located in a different building. A map showing the locations of gender neutral restrooms is available from the Campus Maps website. (See Maps.)
FLEXIBILITY STATEMENT
A flexibility statement is a safeguard worth considering. Something along these lines might serve you well in a quarter that goes unexpectedly awry—positively or negatively—for whatever reasons:

“This syllabus is subject to change. Changes, if any, will be announced in class. Students will be held responsible for all changes.”

OTHER RESOURCES FOR CONSTRUCTING A SYLLABUS
Among other resources, the Center for Instructional Innovation and Assessment (CIIA) has Course Syllabus Guidelines.

For syllabus language referring to the use of social media, see the FERPA Toolkit at CIIA’s Resources page.

The CIIA also has a quite useful Lending Library. Some of the books available include:

The Course Syllabus: A Learning-Centered Approach.
The Graphic Syllabus and the Outcomes Map: Communicating Your Course.

Prefer linking to syllabi materials? Go to: Syllabi Policies for Students

Did you know Western has an extensive collection of teaching and learning strategies at your fingertips? The Teaching Handbook is full of ideas and best practices to support your teaching endeavors. Be sure to check out Quick Start Essentials, Syllabus Guidelines, Active Learning, the Inclusive Teaching Toolkit, and so much more!

TEACHING HANDBOOK

For more syllabus information or instructional support, contact the Center for Instructional Innovation and Assessment @ 650-7210, or visit: CIIA.

Following Next:
Partners for a Safe & Healthy Western
(a Resource Guide)
Partners for a Safe & Healthy Western: PREVENTION & WELLNESS SERVICES

Western faculty are likely aware that alcohol abuse, drug use, and violence can negatively affect a student’s ability to succeed academically. During the course of a term, faculty may notice changes in a student’s classroom behavior that may indicate alcohol abuse; moreover, faculty are likely to be one of the first points of contact for a student who has experienced sexual assault, relationship violence, or stalking. Faculty may not, however, be comfortable addressing these problems or making a referral if a problem is identified.

Help in these areas is available through Western’s Prevention and Wellness Services. Indeed, two referral services can be easily accessed:

• For alcohol and other drug issues, call 360-650-6865 to reach Western’s Alcohol and Drug Consultation and Assessment Services (ADCAS). ADCAS offers confidential consultations to help faculty assist Western students.

  **NOTE:** ADCAS also offers students confidential assessment and individual discussion of personal use issues or concerns about friends, family members, partners or roommates; referral to additional support, counseling or treatment resources; and support services.

• For issues involving sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, or stalking, call 360-650-3700 to reach Consultation and Sexual Assault Support Services (CASAS). CASAS, too, offers confidential consultations to help faculty assist Western students.

  **NOTE:** In addition, CASAS offers confidential support, advocacy services, and resources to Western students at 360-650-3700.

Some faculty may choose to be a student’s initial source of information and support when dealing with these issues. If so, here are some suggestions about how to help.

**ALCOHOL & OTHER DRUG ISSUES**

Possible indicators of an alcohol and/or drug issue may include:

• Declining or erratic class participation.
• Problematic behavior in group work situations, possibly reported to you by other group members.
• Attending class “hung over” or very tired.
• Drastic mood changes.

While these signs may alert you to the possibility of alcohol and/or drug abuse, they are not exclusively indicators of such problems. They may also indicate an impact created due to use by a friend or family member, or by some other significant problematic event. Whichever case, these indicators may prompt you to initiate a supportive conversation with the student.

**Talking With Students**

• Ask to talk with the student privately.
• Tell the student that you are concerned and use concrete examples of behavior(s) to describe those concerns.
• Tell the student that professional, confidential resources exist on campus to assist them.
• Refer the student to ADCAS, Old Main 560C.
• To ensure follow through, during your meeting with the student call 360-650-6865 to arrange an appointment.
• Ask the student to commit to keeping the appointment; follow-up with the student later.

At any time, faculty may call 360-650-6865 for consultation with a professional staff member on how to proceed.

**What Students Can Expect From ADCAS**

• Confidential discussion with a professional trained to address alcohol and drug issues and problems.
• Respectful environment.
• Useful, nonjudgmental information.
• Assessment of individual alcohol and/or drug risks.
• Individualized personal feedback on alcohol and/or drug use patterns and risk consequences.
• Skills training to reduce risks related to current and future choices about substance use, or strategies to assist coping with the substance use by a friend or family member.
• Referral to appropriate campus and community resources, including support and treatment options.
• Students are also reassured that they will not be forced or required to do anything, and, regardless of their substance use choices, police are not notified.
• For all services, the primary focus is on decreasing unwanted/unexpected outcomes and maintaining personal safety.
SEXUAL ASSAULT, RELATIONSHIP VIOLENCE OR STALKING

Again, if you are not comfortable discussing these issues, please refer the student to CASAS at 360-650-3700. If, on the other hand, you choose to be the student’s initial source of information and support, here are some suggestions about how to help.

Warning Signs
• An abrupt change in attendance.
• A sudden change in classroom participation.
• Missing assignments, failing grades or withdrawing from classes.
• Signs of physical abuse.
• Appears fearful, sad, depressed, anxious, vigilant.
• Leaves the room or shows distress or discomfort during discussions related to abuse.

What You Can Do
• Be supportive and non-judgmental.
• Listen with concern and compassion.
• Validate the student’s feelings and concerns. Do not dismiss his/her reactions or experiences.
• Provide information, options and referrals.
• Avoid making decisions or choices for the student.
• Refer the student to CASAS to insure they are aware of all assistance and support options.

What You Can Expect
When someone is victimized, several key issues surface:
• Concerns about confidentiality.
• Fears for personal safety.
• Health concerns.
• Loss of a sense of control.

Concerns About Confidentiality
• Explain the limits of confidentiality as defined by your position in your department.
• Let the student know that no records of reports of sexual assault, relationship violence, and/or stalking are kept in permanent academic records.

Fears for Personal Safety
For students who have experienced dating/relationship violence, stalking, sexual assault or fear of reprisal, CASAS can help them create a Safety Plan and, if needed, assist with changing rooms or finding temporary safe housing options.

Health Concerns
• If a sexual assault has occurred within the past five days, students can go to St. Joseph’s Hospital or the Student Health Center for a forensic exam.
• Students are encouraged to seek follow-up health care at the Student Health Center for physical injuries, a general physical exam, and testing for sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy, and HIV.

Regaining a Sense of Control
Encourage the student to contact CASAS for confidential consultation and professional and peer advocacy to guide them through the details of identifying and accessing available campus and community resources, including: medical and legal assistance, reporting options, counseling and support services, additional advocacy services, academic support services, and general information.

Individual services are available to all students, including services for those who care for someone who has experienced violence. The After Silence (support group) is designed for women who have experienced sexual and/or dating violence. Services are also available for male-identified survivors of sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, stalking or sexual harassment.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES TO RAISE AWARENESS
In addition to assisting students who may have problems, faculty members have a unique opportunity to raise awareness about sexual violence and alcohol and/or drugs in course material. For example, a psychology class could discuss the impact of alcohol abuse on family dynamics, or a business class could discuss measures to take when domestic violence begins to affect employees at work.

NOTE: As a faculty member you have the responsibility to report knowledge of sexual violence to the Title IX Coordinator. For more information: Title IX Coordinator

If you would like to discuss integrating these issues into course material, schedule a presentation for a class addressing these issues, or if you would like information about campus and community resources, call:

Director of Prevention & Wellness Services • Elva Munro 360-650-3643
ADCAS: Alcohol/Drug Risk Reduction Specialist • Scott Martinez 360-650-6865
CASAS: Violence Prevention Specialists • CASAS Coordinator 360-650-7982 • Jon Dukes 360-650-4689
Partners for a Safe & Healthy Western:  
COUNSELING CENTER

As a faculty member you may have a vantage point that allows you to see changes in a student’s behavior that indicate the student is struggling with significant personal concerns. Your relationship with the student may offer the opportunity to connect students with the campus services that can most help them. The staff of the Counseling Center (360-650-3164) can assist you in guiding the student toward the appropriate campus resources.

The psychologists and mental health counselors in the Counseling Center are experienced with issues common to students, such as family and personal issues impacting academic functioning, anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, eating or body image concerns, and managing suicidal thoughts. We are also experienced in helping faculty and staff think through how to respond to a student whose behavior or decline in academic performance raises concern for you.

Some signs of distress students may exhibit are: Uncharacteristic neglect of academic work, excessive absences, appearance of being alcohol or drug affected, frequent crying, irritability, inappropriate or disruptive comments in class discussion, physical or verbal aggression, disturbing content in assignments, bizarre statements or ideation, reference to personal or family problems that interfere with ability to concentrate, or pervasive pessimism or hopelessness. Any of these behaviors may indicate the student is struggling with concerns for which Western offers services for support and assistance.

Talking with the Student

• Set up a time to talk when you and the student can have some uninterrupted time and a place where your conversation is not going to be overheard.

• Specifically state your reason for concern. Emphasize your concern about the behavior you have observed rather than criticism. (For example: “You haven’t been in class and you are late with the assignment. I’m concerned about you.” OR “You have seemed really distracted the past few weeks. That makes me wonder if something serious is on your mind.”)

• Listen carefully to understand the situation from the student’s perspective. Refrain from making judgmental or critical comments. Reiterate your concern and desire to help the student connect with services that can best assist the student with his/her specific concerns. Remind them that you want them to be successful with the academic expectations for your class by helping them find the support they need.

• If what the student tells you gives you cause for concern about suicide, it is very reasonable to ask specifically about suicide risk. This will not cause someone to be at greater risk, but is an indication of your genuine concern. (For example: “What you are saying about feeling discouraged about so many things in your life causes me to wonder if you are having thoughts of suicide?”) If the student indicates that suicide has been on his/her mind, it is appropriate to make an immediate call to the Counseling Center at 360-650-3164 (option 1 for help after hours) to set up a crisis appointment. In such a case it will be helpful if you can walk the student over to the Counseling Center (Old Main 540).

• Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) is designed to help faculty and staff build the confidence, knowledge, and skills to support students exhibiting signs of distress. The 60-minute training is provided at no cost to faculty and staff and is available by request or through the WWU training site. For more information or to request a training, email at suicideprevention@wwu.edu.

• Even if a student’s concerns are not urgent, the Counseling Center can be a helpful resource. Remind the student that the service is free and confidential. It is important to understand that because our services are confidential we cannot confirm to a faculty member making a referral that the student has kept the appointment without

In emergency situations, or situations where you are concerned about your safety or the safety of others, call University Police immediately by dialing 3911 from a campus phone, or 360-650-3911 from an off-campus or cell phone.

To reach the after-hours on-call counselor, dial 3164 from a campus phone, or 360-650-3164 from an off-campus or cell phone, and select Option 1.
explicit written permission from the student.

- Set up a time to have a follow-up conversation with the student to check on what he/she has done to access help as well as how the student is doing since you last spoke.

**Tips for Referring a Student to the Counseling Center**

- Find out if the student is aware of counseling and other relevant support resources (Academic and Career Development Services, disAbility Resources, Student Health Center, etc.) on campus.
- Ask if they would like more information. Encourage them to visit the Counseling Center website at: [Counseling Services](#).
- Encourage the student to call the Counseling Center to make an appointment. (360-650-3164; M-F, 8:30-5:00) You may also offer to call the Counseling Center while you and the student are talking so you are sure the student makes the appointment. (The student will need to talk to us directly.) Make sure the student writes down the date and time of the appointment as well as location of the Counseling Center (540 Old Main).
- If the student has shared information with you that you believe would be helpful for the Counseling Center to know, please call us later to give us the pertinent information. If the student has spoken to you about potential harm to themselves or others, it is very important that you share that information with the Counseling Center. Keep in mind that we cannot answer questions about our clients unless the student gives us written permission to do so. Our webpage has more information on confidentiality and its limits.

**Test Anxiety Support**

The Counseling Center supports students who are experiencing test anxiety by helping them build skills to successfully manage testing situations. Through workshops, self-help materials, or a session with a counselor, students can develop study strategies and anxiety management skills to help them remain focused and on-task in stressful testing situations.

The Counseling Center is not able to arrange accommodation for students or provide psychological testing for learning disabilities. Students with academic accommodation needs due to a diagnosed disability must initiate a request for services through disAbility Resources for Students (OM 120), and students are required, by law, to furnish written documentation of their disability from a qualified professional before services can be provided.

**If a Student is Reluctant to Seek Help**

- Be direct in letting the student know you believe a counselor would of help in this situation.
- If the student says he/she does not want to speak with a counselor, it may be helpful to ask about the student’s perceptions, fears, or concerns.
- It may be helpful to share that many students who have sought out and received services through the Counseling Center have had good experiences.
- Let the student know that it is acceptable to schedule a single appointment to find out more about what counseling has to offer.

Any time you have a concern about a student, you may consult with professionals in the Counseling Center and/or Michael Sledge, Assistant Dean of Students, at 650-3706. If the student’s behavior is disruptive or disturbing, it is important that you inform the Dean’s office so appropriate intervention and follow-up can be initiated when needed.

**Additional Services of the Counseling Center**

- The Counseling Center offers short-term individual, couple, and group counseling, as well as educational services designed to help students improve their lives through healthier relationships, better communication, greater understanding of self, strategies for self-care, and making choices that are more consistent with their educational and personal goals. Our website includes a number of self-help resources, including videos focused on coping skills.
- We also assist students by referring them to other services on campus and to community resources that can offer more specialized or longer-term professional help with problems and concerns.
- We work closely with the Student Health Center (360-650-3400) when psychiatric evaluation, psychotropic medication or medical attention is needed.
- Our counseling staff includes psychologists, mental health counselors, and masters and doctoral level trainees who work under the supervision of our professional staff.
Partners for a Safe & Healthy Western:

STUDENT HEALTH CENTER

“We want to help students be well, get well, and stay well—life long.”

The Student Health Center is a primary care medical clinic with a specialty in college health. We provide a broad range of affordable health care to eligible students. Our team of physicians, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, and support staff work to educate and assist students with preventive health care, as well as evaluate, diagnose and treat physical and mental health concerns, illnesses and injuries, thereby minimizing their impact on academic progress. Yet also be aware that Western’s Student Health Center policy does not provide excuses for short term absences. (See Medical Excuses.)

The Health Center is available to all students currently enrolled with six or more credits on Western’s Bellingham campus. A student registered for three-to-five credits has the option to pay the Counseling, Health and Wellness fee and be seen during a quarter. We are unable to see former students or students on leave, dependents of students, Western faculty or staff, or Whatcom Community College students living on Western’s campus.

The mandatory, quarterly Health Services Fee provides eligible students with unlimited access to the Center, without charge for office visits. Same-day appointments are available are available every week day of the quarter and students are urged to call early for best access at a time that is convenient for them; however, they may need to miss classes in order to be seen for acute illness or injury.

Free over-the-counter medications and first aid supplies are available. There are low cost charges to the student’s account for generic prescription medications dispensed at the Center, equipment, lab tests and special procedures.

Our mental health providers, including psychiatric consultants, are able to diagnosis, treat and monitor mental health disorders. ADHD evaluations must be up-to-date from an off-campus provider. We will treat and monitor students on stimulant and non-stimulant ADHD medications. We do online screening for depression, anxiety and suicidal ideation for all students who come to clinic and actively address urgent issues that are uncovered by that screening.

The Student Health Center maintains a thorough and easily navigated web site. (See below.) From this site students can link to their password-protected patient portal to view their electronic medical record and lab results, request medication refills, and securely message their health care provider. They can also find information on our range of clinical services, fill out symptom questionnaires and self assessment surveys, review the measles requirement and other vaccinations available, as well as insurance and billing.

A much valued service of the Student Health Center is the Travel Clinic, a good example of the kind of resource of particular interest to our academic community. The Travel Clinic offers pre-travel counseling, post-travel care, immunizations and health advice to Western students planning to travel to

Student Health Center
2001 Bill McDonald Parkway (Public Safety Building)

Clinic Hours
Academic Year = 8:30 to 4:00 (Thursdays = 9:30 to 4:00)
Summer = M-F 8:30 to noon & 1:00 to 4:00
(Note: Closed for medical care during the breaks between quarters.)
Telephone = 360-650-3400
Web site = Student Health Center
developing countries in Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, Africa and eastern Europe. The clinic is a Washington State Department of Health designated center for yellow fever vaccine.

The Student Health Center does not provide documentation of illness for a class absence if the student has not been seen in our clinic on the day in question. Due to the high volume of patients who need to be seen, we strongly discourage students coming to the clinic simply for documentation for a medical excuse requested by faculty, especially when their illness is brief and self-limited. We request that faculty respect this by not requiring medical excuses for missed classes.

An after-hours telephone nurse consultation service is available to students at no charge. Just call: 1-800-607-5501.

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**Partners for a Safe & Healthy Western:**

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITY OFFICE**

**Preventing and Responding to Sexual Assault**

Western is committed to ensuring an environment free of discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual violence. The University provides a coordinated effort to prevent and effectively respond to all forms of sexual harassment and sexual violence, including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence and stalking. With that, and in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Western provides resources and reporting options for all students and employees, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Unless you are a confidential counselor or health care provider, if you have knowledge that a student has experienced sexual violence while at Western, you are required to report the incident to Western’s Title IX Coordinator, Sue Guenter-Schlesinger, Vice Provost for Equal Opportunity (Old Main 345; 360-650-3307; sue.guenter-schlesinger@wwu.edu). This must be done so that survivors can be connected with resources and support they may desire, and so we can work to prevent future similar violence.

If the student communicates to you that they have experienced sexual violence, please also do the following:

- Avoid using language suggesting that the survivor is to blame for what happened.

- Tell the student that you are required to inform the Title IX Coordinator and that Western will respect a request for confidentiality to the greatest extent possible while also meeting its obligation to keep other students safe.

- Tell the student that a number of resources and reporting options are available. Confidential services can be found with CASAS (Consultation and Sexual Assault Support), the Counseling Center, and the Student Health Center. Additionally, students may choose to report sexual violence to University or Bellingham Police and/or the Title IX Coordinator in the Equal Opportunity Office.

- Tell the student that Western must support survivors whether or not they choose to report to the police or file a discrimination complaint.

Western also provides resources and reporting options for faculty and staff who are survivors of sexual violence. In addition to reporting to University or Bellingham Police and/or the Title IX Coordinator, employees may seek confidential support via the Employee Assistance Program and contact Human Resources to request leave related to domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking. Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services (DVSAS) in downtown Bellingham also provides a confidential 24-hour helpline at 360-715-1563.

The Equal Opportunity Office provides brochures and wallet cards about students’ and employees’ civil rights, resources, and reporting options. Please email eoo@wwu.edu if you would like materials for your office.
The Equal Opportunity Office is located in Old Main 345 and is open Monday-Friday from 8 am to 5 pm. Please feel free to contact Sue Guenter-Schlesinger, Vice Provost, Equal Opportunity and Employment Diversity, at 360-650-3307. After hours: sue.guenter-schlesinger@wwu.edu.

Partners for a Safe & Healthy Western:

DEAN of STUDENTS and the OFFICE of STUDENT LIFE

We all have a lot of contact with students, both in and out of the classroom. Over the course of a year, it’s quite likely that you may encounter students in distress, in crisis, or who otherwise raise concerns. When those situations arise, the Dean of Students Office/Office of Student Life can help.

Both the Dean of Students, Ted Pratt, and the Assistant Dean of Students, Michael Sledge, are available to consult with faculty on a range of issues, including but not limited to:

- Student conduct policies and procedures.
- Disruptive or disturbing student behavior.
- Support for students dealing with personal or family crises.
- General concerns about student behavior.

Staff in the Dean of Students/Office of Student Life are also available to assist students with advice on university policies and procedures, referrals to campus and community resources, non-medical emergency leaves of absence, hardship withdrawals, and problem-solving within the university system.

- Concerns about student behavior may also be directed to Safe Campus hotline. The Safe Campus hotline is staffed 24 hours a day, and can be reached at 360-650-SAFE (7233).
- In emergency situations, or situations where you are concerned about your safety or the safety of others, call University Police immediately by dialing 3911 from a campus phone or 360-650-3911 from a cell phone.

A special note regarding the Counseling Center: In cases where a student’s behavior is disruptive or disturbing, a referral to Western’s Counseling Center (650-3164) is often appropriate. It may not, however, be sufficient. In those situations, faculty are encouraged to also notify the Dean of Students Office. Confidentiality laws prohibit the Counseling Center from revealing whether the student you referred actually attended counseling, or from sharing information with others on campus, without the student’s explicit permission. Notifying the Dean of Students Office helps staff create a more complete picture of the student’s situation (including information that may be provided by others on- or off-campus), review new information as it emerges, and develop plans for intervention and follow-up (when necessary).

A special note about FERPA: There is often confusion about the limitations and allowances of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) in conjunction with reports of concerning student behavior. FERPA relates only to the privacy of educational records; reporting observable behavior is not prohibited. If you are concerned about a personal interaction you’ve had with a student or a concerning behavior you’ve observed, you are encouraged to report and/or consult with appropriate colleagues, including the Dean of Students Office.

A consultative resource available to faculty who are concerned about a student is the Student Care/Concern Team. The group—chaired by the Assistant Dean of Students—meets on a weekly basis to assess student behavior that is concerning and/or unusual, and to develop plans for intervention and follow-up (when

Thank you for helping us to support our students and provide a positive equal opportunity climate for everyone at Western. Please don’t hesitate to contact us with any questions.
necessary). Standing members of the Student Care/Concer Team include the Director of the Counseling Center, Director of the Health Center, Chief of University Police, Associate Director of Residence Life, Conduct Officer/Case Manager, Associate Director of disAbility Resources for Students, and Prevention/Wellness Services. If you have any questions about the Network Group, or would like to request consultation on a specific student concern, contact Ted Pratt at 360-650-3450.

The Dean of Students and the Office of Student Life are open Monday-Friday from 8 AM to 5 PM. The main office phone is 360-650-3450. You are welcome to contact Assistant Dean of Students Michael Sledge at 360-650-3706, or by e-mail at michael.sledge@wwu.edu.

“What’s Professor to Do?”

This brochure out of Minnesota State University, Mankato, has excellent tips for addressing rude and disruptive classroom behavior. It is really quite well done and very informative.