Syllabus Guidance and Resource Advice: Anticipating the Unanticipated

This 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. Nearly all 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.)

Table of Contents

| A Well-prepared Syllabus Can “Have your back” | 2 |
| Partners for a Safe & Healthy Western | |
| Health & Wellness Services | 4 |
| Counseling Center | 6 |
| Student Health Center | 8 |
| Equal Opportunity Office/Title IX Coordinator | 9 |
| Dean of Students and Office of Student Life | 10 |
| “What’s a Professor to Do?” | 11 |

Quick Links

- **University Police Emergency:** 650-3911
- **University Police Non-emergency:** 650-3555
- **Health Center:** 650-3400 / Web
- **Alcohol & Other Drug Issues:** 650-6865 / Web
- **Violence, Physical and/or Sexual Abuse Issues:** 650-7982
- **Casas:** 650-3700 / Web
- **Safe Campus:** 650-7233
- **Counseling Center:** 650-3164 / Web
- **Equal Opportunity Office/Title IX Coordinator:** 650-3307 / Web
- **Dean of Students:** 650-3450 / Web
A WELLPREPARED 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.

**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 for guiding students is the Faculty Senate’s Integrity website. (See Integrity.) This site is a clearinghouse of resources about integrity. Besides covering more common problems related to academic integrity, such as plagiarism and cheating on exams, it also addresses ambiguous areas, 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. (See Appendix D.) 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 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: 650-3400 or visit Student Health.
- In the case of an emotional or psychological concern or question, please contact the Counseling Center: 650-3400 or visit Counseling Center.
- In the case of a health and safety concern, please contact the University Police: 650-3555 or visit University Police.
- In the case of a family or personal crisis or emergency, please contact the Dean of Students: 650-3775 or visit Dean of Students.

**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:

“Mutual respect for everyone is key to ensuring a safe environment that promotes learning for all students.”

If you wish the full monty, here is the recommended formal statement:

“Western is committed to an environment free of discrimination and harassment. Federal and State laws, as well as University policies, protect faculty, staff, and students against discrimination based on the following legally protected characteristics: Race, Color, Creed, Religion, National Origin, Sex, (including pregnancy and parenting status), Age, Disability, Marital Status, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, Genetic Information and Veteran Status (See Equal Opportunity and Western’s Policies on Providing Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination and Preventing Sexual Harassment).”

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 investigate and help resolve their complaint either through informal mediation techniques or by filing a formal complaint. 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.

**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**

Course syllabus guidelines at the Center for Instructional Innovation and Assessment (CIIA):

- Course Syllabus Guidelines
- Harvard’s history of the syllabus:
  - Harvard Syllabus History
- Books available at the CIIA:
  - The Course Syllabus: A Learning-Centered Approach.
  - The Graphic Syllabus and the Outcomes Map: Communicating Your Course.

For more information, contact the Center for Instructional Innovation and Assessment @ 650-7210, or visit: http://pandora.cii.wwu.edu/cii/
PARTNERS FOR A SAFE & HEALTHY WESTERN: HEALTH & 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 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 of personal substance use patterns; individual discussion of personal use issues or concerns about friends, family members, partners, or roommates; and referral to appropriate support, counseling or treatment resources.

- For violence, physical and/or sexual abuse issues, call 650-7982 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 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 academic performance.
- Frequently turning in assignments late, or not at all.
- Frequently arriving late to class, or not at all.
- Missing classes, especially early morning.
- 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 him or her.
- Refer the student to ADCAS, Old Main 560C.
- To ensure follow through, during your meeting with the student call 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 650-6865 for consultation with a professional 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 risk.
- Individualized personal feedback on alcohol and/or drug use patterns and consequences.
- Skills training to reduce risks related to current and future choices about alcohol and/or drug 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 the 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 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 attendance problem.
- A sudden change in classroom participation.
- Missing assignments.
- Signs of bruising or injuries.
- Appears fearful, depressed, anxious, vigilant.
- Leaves the room or cries during discussions related to abuse.
- Friends report that she/he is in a “bad” relationship.
- She/he has frequent, unexplained medical appointments.

What You Can Do

- Be supportive and non-judgmental.
- Listen with concern.
- 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.
- Do whatever you can to insure the student’s continued safety.

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, if any, 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

- Ask if the student has a safe place to stay. If not, CASAS can assist with changing rooms or finding temporary housing.
- CASAS can help students victimized by relationship violence, stalking, harassment, sexual assault or fear of reprisal create a Safety Plan.

Health Concerns

- In the case of a sexual assault that 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 crisis intervention, advocacy, personal counseling, and support in understanding, evaluating, and choosing available resources, including: individual advocacy, academic support, support groups, Judicial Affairs options, reporting options, medical concerns, financial services, and safety issues.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES TO RAISE AWARENESS

In addition to assisting students who may have problems, faculty members have a unique opportunity to raise awareness about violence and sexual assault 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.

If you would like to discuss integrating these issues into course material or discuss Western’s prevention approaches, or if you would like to schedule a presentation addressing these issues, or if you would like information about campus and community resources, call:

Director of Prevention & Wellness Services • Elva Munro 650-3643
ADCAS: Alcohol/Drug Risk Reduction Specialist • Scott Martinez 650-6865
CASAS: Violence Prevention Specialist • Katie Plewa 650-7982
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 (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 depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety, eating or body image concerns, suicidal thoughts, as well as significant family issues that take students’ attention away from academics. 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 comments in class discussion, physical or verbal aggression, disturbing content in assignments, 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.

• 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. It will remind them of your 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, an immediate call to the Counseling Center (650-3164) to set up an “urgent” appointment is appropriate. In such a case it will be helpful if you can walk the student over to the Counseling Center (Old Main 540).

• 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. Our service is so confidential we cannot even let the faculty member who referred the student know that the student has kept the appointment without 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

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.
and Career Development Services, disAbility Resources, Student Health Center, etc.) on campus.

- Ask if they would like more information. See our webpage: www.wwu.edu/counseling/.

- Encourage the student to call the Counseling Center to make an appointment. (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. 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, 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 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.

- If you know other students who have had a good experience with counseling, that may be helpful to share with the student.

- 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 Dean of Students Office. 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 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.

- We also assist students by referring them to other services on campus and to community resources that can offer more specialized or longer-term help with problems and concerns.

- We work closely with the Student Health Center (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.

Western’s Counseling Center is accredited by the International Association for Counseling Services and is a member of the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers.
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.

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 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 but we will treat and monitor students on stimulant and non-stimulant ADHD medications. We are able to do drug screening in the clinic if needed.

We do online screening for depression, anxiety and suicidal ideation and actively address urgent issues that are uncovered by that screening.

The Student Health Center maintains a thorough and easily navigated web site (www.edu/chw/student_health/). 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 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.

**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 = 650-3400**

**Web site =** [wwu.edu/chw/student_health](http://wwu.edu/chw/student_health)
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.

PARTNERS FOR A SAFE & HEALTHY WESTERN:
EQUAL OPPORTUNITY OFFICE

PREVENTING AND RESPONDEING TO SEXUAL ASSAULT

Western is committed to ensuring an environment free of discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual violence, and 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 a number of 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; 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. As noted previously, confidential support can be found in the Counseling Center and, during the academic year, CASAS (Consultation and Sexual Assault Support). Additionally, students may choose to report sexual violence to University or Bellingham Police, the Title IX Coordinator in the Equal Opportunity Office, and/or the Office of Student Life.

• 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,
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 650-3307.
After hours: sue.guenter-schlesinger@wwu.edu.

PARTNERS FOR A SAFE & HEALTHY WWU:
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 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 650-3911 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.

resources, and reporting options. Please email eoo@wwu.edu if you would like materials for your office. 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.
A relatively new consultative resource available to faculty who are concerned about a student is the Network Group. The group—chaired by the Associate 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 necessary). Standing members of the Network Group include the Dean of Students, Director of the Counseling Center, Director of the Health Center, Chief of University Police, Associate Director of Residence Life, Student Conduct Officer, Director of disAbility Resources for Students, Coordinator of Crime and Sexual Assault Support Services, and Title IX Coordinator/Vice Provost, Equal Opportunity. If you have any questions about the Network Group, or would like to request consultation on a specific student concern, contact Ted Pratt at 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 650-3706. You are welcome to contact Michael Sledge, Assistant Dean of Students, directly at 650-3706, or by e-mail at michael.sledge@wwu.edu.

What’s a Professor to Do?”
This brochure out of the University of California, Irvine, has excellent tips for addressing rude and disruptive classroom behavior. It is really quite well done and very informative.
You can download it at:
www.counseling.uci.edu/pdf/uci_disrupt_behav.pdf

Praxis is published throughout the academic year by the Office of the Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education. Praxis promotes the exchange of ideas and provides information on upcoming events and topical issues in teaching and learning at the undergraduate level.

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