

Reducing Incivility in the University/College Classroom, 5(4)

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Abstract

Uncivil student behavior against faculty in higher education has gained increased media attention. According to recent reports, such behavior may be increasing, thus jeopardizing the welfare of faculty, students, and the overall educational process. This paper identifies factors contributing to uncivil interactions between students and faculty and provides practical strategies designed to avoid or diffuse student-faculty conflicts.

Introduction

Anecdotal accounts of student incivility against university faculty are appearing more frequently in news reports and the popular literature ([Richardson, 1999](#)). Extreme examples of aggression leading to the murder of university professors include incidents at Simon's Rock College ([New York Times, 1994](#)), San Diego State University, San Diego ([Ristine, 1996](#)), Concordia University ([King, 1996](#)) and Wayne State University in Detroit ([The Washington Post, 1998](#)). Less extreme, but nonetheless troubling student incivility includes physical assaults and threats against faculty ([Watson, 1998](#); [Schneider, 1998](#)) and rude behavior ([Clayton, 2000](#); [Heinemann, 1996](#); [Monaghan, 1995](#)).

Despite these mounting reports, minimal attention has been devoted to understanding the precursors to student incivility, implications associated with such behavior, and prevention strategies. To begin filling this void, this paper contends that student incivility is an important issue that affects students and faculty and therefore, warrants attention. For the purpose of this paper, incivility is defined as the intentional behavior of students to disrupt and interfere with the teaching and learning process of others. This behavior can range from students who dominate and foster tension in the classroom to students who attend classes unprepared, are passively rude, or unwilling to participate in the learning process (e.g., [Richardson, 1999](#); [Sandora, 1998](#)).

Systemic Implications of Uncivil Behavior

Uncivil student behavior is a problem for faculty, students, and university/college administration. As discussed below, such behavior can directly impact faculty wellbeing, infringe on the rights and education of others, and involve university/college administration.

Effects on Faculty

Uncivil student behavior can contribute to additional faculty stress, discontent, and eventual burnout ([Appleby, 1990](#); [Schneider, 1998](#)). Faculty who realize that they will likely face inappropriate behavior during lectures may begin devoting time and energy to planning coping (survival) strategies rather than focusing on lecture material. Further, faculty who dread going to a particular class and having to deal with particular students can become demoralized and disillusioned with the overall teaching process. Reporting on his research findings, [Appleby \(1990\)](#) suggested that irritating and immature student behavior, "...pose a threat to the teaching/learning process because they are time consuming and often prevent a teacher from dealing with important materials and issues" (p. 42). What should not be overlooked are more intense encounters (e.g., verbal abuse, physical threats, intimidating remarks) that leave faculty stunned and shaken ([Schneider, 1998](#)).

Effects on the Learning Environment

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Uncivil student behavior can disrupt and negatively impact the overall learning environment for students who are uninvolved in the disruptive or inappropriate behavior ([Appleby, 1990](#)). Although expecting to attend a course with the intention of meeting the stated learning objectives, students are short-changed when lectures are needlessly derailed by disruptive and inappropriate behavior.

Inappropriate behavior that disrupts the learning process is a blatant violation of student rights. One colleague, for example, likened it to a form of bullying. Disruptive students purposefully interrupt the teaching process and interfere with student learning. As [Schneider \(1998\)](#) reported that, "Professors are complaining that their courses are being hijacked by classroom terrorists " (p. A 12).

Effects on University/College Administration

Issues regarding student incivility can reach beyond the classroom and can involve university/college administrators. As discussed later, student concerns regarding the time a faculty member spends attending to inappropriate behavior can portray faculty in a less than favorable way. When this occurs, heightened faculty anxiety and distress can leave them emotionally depleted. Rather than devoting their time to preparing lectures and student advising, for example, faculty become distracted and find themselves in a defensive position.

From the outset, it should be underlined that this paper does not suggest that college/university classrooms should be sterile environments that are void of passionate, lively, or intense debates and conversations. [Mills \(1998\)](#), for example, advocates for measured provocation to bolster student thinking and learning. Obviously, meaningful and lasting learning can occur when opinions are shared and discussed. What is suggested, however, is that inappropriate student behavior can be counterproductive and obstruct learning opportunities. In short, concern must be raised and appropriate intervention implemented when faculty wellbeing and student learning are jeopardized. It can be argued that uncivil student behavior is rare, unique to a small number of incompetent faculty, and undeserving of attention. Although this argument may hold some validity, the extant literature suggests otherwise and depicts student incivility as a growing problem.

As described below, it is suggested that uncivil student conduct in the college/university classroom can be reduced and/or eliminated when faculty assume a proactive stance, reflect on their contributions to hostile interactions, and employ practical prevention strategies. Information for this paper is based on a comprehensive review and synthesis of the extant literature, anecdotal reports of colleagues, and personal experiences in both Canadian and American undergraduate and graduate programs.

Tracking Uncivil Student Behavior

It is difficult to document cases of student incivility against faculty in a precise manner because no centralized and standardized reporting system for tracking student transgressions exists. Since postsecondary institutions are required to standardize their reporting to fit the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) categories, data are not categorized or reported on the prevalence of faculty being threatened with injury or assault by students. The [U.S. General Accounting Office \(GAO\) \(1997\)](#) recognized this shortcoming and issued the report *Campus Crime* addressing the inadequacies of current campus crime reporting.

Only in the past decade did government agencies begin to track university classroom aggression statistics. The most recent report on violence statistics in the workplace for the years 1992-96 issued by the Bureau of Justice Statistics of the U.S. Department of Justice, records 149,000 reported incidents of violence directed against teachers of all grade levels (Warchol, 1998), including 6,600 reported against university classroom teachers. Information in *Workplace Violence* ([Warchol, 1998](#)) merely begins to highlight the problem of assaults against faculty. Because of the survey categories, however, it is difficult to distinguish the number of assaults against faculty perpetrated by students from those perpetrated by co-workers or others. As a result, faculty members are left with anecdotal stories and statistical surveys that merely hint at the possibility of student incivility.

The Underreporting of Student Incivility

According to [Boice \(1996\)](#), little is said about student incivility in higher education despite growing concerns among faculty. He noted that, although troubling classroom behavior has attracted informal study and faculty workshops, it remains underpublicized. [Boice \(1996\)](#) suggested that the absence of data regarding student incivility can be attributed to (1) teacher/university embarrassment in acknowledging misbehavior, (2) the fact that

misbehavior is more studied/publicized among teachers who work in lower grades and who experience less status and privacy, (3) the fact that misbehavior is acknowledged more frequently among other doctoral-level professionals (e.g., physicians, psychotherapists), and (4) the lack of empirical evaluation regarding incivility in the classroom.

Boice (1996) raises interesting points and highlights the reluctance of faculty to disclose uncivil student behavior. Colleagues who have experienced uncivil student behavior have reported being caught off guard and without adequate training to handle such behavior. Some colleagues stated that, although they were aware of incidents involving disruptive or oppositional student behavior, personal experiences served to raise their sensitivity and appreciation regarding this issue.

In general, faculty may be reluctant to discuss discipline problems fearing that they will be perceived as incompetent and unable to manage the classroom environment ([Downs, 1992](#)). This may be especially true for junior faculty who worry about poor teaching evaluations and the ongoing promotion/tenure review process. Colleagues have revealed that disclosing problematic student conduct may result in questions regarding their teaching ability and suitability for the university/college classroom. The private nature of teaching can contribute to a silence regarding instruction, faculty-student interaction, and student behavior. Consequently, what transpires in classrooms is rarely discussed and faculty may feel that it is their duty to resolve issues independently.

Faculty members who are trained in the helping professions may be more prepared to discuss problems that emerge in the classroom due to their experience and familiarity with unexpected client behavior. For example, it is not unusual for helping professionals to experience client resistance, confrontation, or anger within a counseling context. Therefore, faculty with clinical experience who encounter similar behavior in the classroom may be better equipped to employ their clinical skills in handling or diffusing troubling situations.

In terms of disruptive student behavior, [Amada \(1992\)](#) suggested that faculty were generally reluctant to report a disruptive student because they (1) hoped that benign inaction would lead to some form of spontaneous resolution, (2) they believed that they would not be supported by administration or would be perceived as inadequate, (3) they believed that students were too psychologically fragile to withstand the pressure of a disciplinary measure, and (4) they feared student reprisal. Amada's view effectively underscores how faculty can isolate themselves when encountering uncivil student behavior. Colleagues have reported ignoring inappropriate behavior in hopes that it would fade before escalating and extending beyond the bounds of classroom (e.g., complaints to department chairs and/or deans).

Faculty who do not feel supported by colleagues or administrators may be inclined to ignore troubling classroom situations to avoid student agitation and potential rebellion. By responding this way, however, students can begin to capitalize on their new sense of power within the classroom and attempt to intimidate faculty ([Clayton, 2000](#)). One student, for example, openly questioned a professor's experience and teaching ability and proceeded to disrupt lectures with sarcastic remarks that often drew laughter from her peers. Over time, the professor felt increasingly impotent, dreaded teaching the class, and questioned his competency. This sentiment was eventually reflected in the overall student teaching evaluations.

Factors Contributing to Incivility: A Review of the Literature

Some attention has been devoted to identifying variables that may contribute to student incivility. [Amada \(1992\)](#) noted the increase in the number of emotionally disturbed students attending higher education institutions. She attributed this increase to several factors, including the retention and treatment of psychiatric patients within communities, advances in the use of psychotropic drugs to stabilize patients in non-institutional settings, and the hospitable qualities of campuses. Following Amada's theory, as individuals diagnosed with psychiatric disorders are medically stabilized and/or integrated into the community, they may choose to pursue advanced education. Consequently, there may be an increased likelihood that faculty will have to contend with unanticipated and inappropriate behavior from students who are adjusting to the college or university context ([Berman, Strauss, & Verhage, 2000](#)). By no means does this imply that students who are diagnosed with psychiatric disorders should be considered as problematic or at high risk of jeopardizing a learning environment. It merely suggests that psychiatric disorders may be intensified by the additional stress of university/college life and that a student's response to such stress may manifest via inappropriate behaviors. [Berman, Strauss, and Verhage \(2000\)](#) commented that because of their frequent contact with students, faculty might be the first to observe changes in a student's wellbeing and may be in a position to direct students for appropriate help. In short, knowing that

universities and colleges are accommodating an ever-increasing diverse student population, professors need to remain vigilant and adjust to the demands of the classroom accordingly.

In addition to agreeing that personal problems can negatively effect a student's ability to learn, [the California Community Colleges Academic Senate \(1996\)](#) remarked that campuses are composed of students who lack awareness regarding the values and customs of others and who compete for seats in over-crowded classrooms. [Levine \(1997\)](#) noted that administration responses to budget cuts and taxpayer accountability have, in some cases, resulted in down-sizing faculty, the creation of larger classes, and greater competition for admission into courses required for degrees.

Finally, according to some authors ([Horning, 1998](#); [Levine, 1997](#); [Woo, 1996](#)) the changing characteristics of college students have amplified conflict in higher education. For example, students' need to obtain a degree to secure employment or advance their careers is stronger than ever. Some students also seem to expect to receive a desired grade, regardless of performance ([Fram & Pearse, 2000](#); [Goode & Maier, 1998](#)). This particular issue is related to the contentious *student-as-consumer* debate. Although beyond the scope of this paper, [Share \(1997\)](#) pointed out that the notion of student-as-consumer has become influential within secondary education institutions. Within this model, education is a product to be sold and students exchange money for knowledge ([Clayton, 2000](#)). From his perspective, [Share \(1997\)](#) believed that, among other things, the student-as-consumer model lowers quality and effectively undermines social and civic values. Students who expect a passing grade in exchange for their tuition can become oppositional and/or hostile when this exchange does not transpire.

Despite the lack of accurate recording, faculty continue to voice their concerns about rising stress and aggression in university/college classrooms ([Heinemann, 1996](#); [Woo, 1996](#)). [Trout \(1999\)](#), for example, stated, "...many students who now enter college are devoid of anything resembling an intellectual life. Some are actually hostile to scholastic achievement and academic values and think nothing of disrupting classrooms with boorish behavior" (p. 5). Although some universities and colleges are implementing a zero-tolerance policy for workplace violence ([Carpenter, 1998](#)) and other institutions have expelled students for aggression toward faculty ("[Agency determines,](#)" 1996), in general, faculty are responsible for developing strategies to minimize uncivil behavior. Toward this end, the following practical strategies have been developed and are presented for consideration.

Practical Strategies to Reduce or Eliminate Student Incivility

Despite the absence of attention devoted to the origin and reduction/elimination of incivilities in higher education, faculty can be instrumental in establishing boundaries, influencing student behaviors, and promoting civil learning environments ([Clayton, 2000](#); [Heinemann, 1996](#); [Monaghan, 1995](#)). Specific strategies addressed below include: the use of effective communication skills, spelling out expectations in the syllabus, defining appropriate conduct, using mid-term teaching feedback, establishing a collaborative learning environment, using peer observations, setting a good example, reframing potential conflicts, re-engaging students, using the student grievance process, and using a back-to-basics faculty orientation. Each strategy is briefly described below.

Effective Communication Skills

Faculty can remain respectful and manage student behavior through effective communication (e.g., active listening). To improve faculty-student communication and avoid incivility, [Heinemann \(1996\)](#) suggested that faculty (1) use civil language, (2) maintain inclusive attitudes, (3) teach the language of disagreement, (4) respectfully listen to students, and (5) serve as role models for respect and understanding. From the aforementioned suggestions, it can be concluded that faculty can exercise fundamental interpersonal skills and work toward *speaking with* rather than *speaking at* students. As pointed out by [Downs \(1992\)](#), faculty can sometimes flaunt their power and resort to authoritarianism. Although more will be said about establishing respectful relationships with students later, it should be underlined that practicing effective interpersonal skills and common courtesies is essential to achieve this end. Students who sense that faculty are genuinely trying to understand and honor their perspective are probably less likely to feel disregarded or belittled in front of their peers. Conversely, students who feel insulted or needlessly ridiculed may retaliate covertly (e.g., inviting other students to challenge the course requirements) or overtly (e.g., constantly challenging lecture content).

Attempting to clearly communicate may involve more effort with some students. What should not be underestimated, however, is the value in having other students observe one's concern and regard for a student

who may be struggling to articulate an idea or response. Moreover, setting a tone of respect can be invaluable when establishing an overall trusting rapport with students.

Spelling Out Academic and Behavioral Expectations in the Syllabus

Course syllabi can be introduced as contracts between faculty and students that describe realistic and achievable educational objectives ([Matejka & Kurke, 1994](#)). During the first class, rather than simply distributing a syllabus, faculty can carefully review the contents of the document to ensure that students understand course objectives, expectations, and evaluation criteria. A careful review with students can be useful in identifying a variety of common errors (e.g., assignment dates, exam times). For the most part, ambiguous or poorly constructed syllabi may contribute to student resentment and anger. [Downs \(1992\)](#) contended that faculty should continually evaluate syllabi to ensure that expectations are clear and concise. She further remarked that student anxiety and resentment grows when there is a lack of clarity.

A common concern among students pertains to faculty who arbitrarily and independently change course objectives and expectations. When such behavior occurs, students express anxiety regarding the direction of the course and newly established expectations. In short, students resent professors who abandon initial learning agreements, alter assignments, and redesign courses in mid-stream.

Syllabi can also be used to communicate appropriate social and inter-personal boundaries and classroom behavior. For example, to promote appropriate classroom behavior, faculty can spell out unacceptable behavior (e.g., chit-chatting and mindless talking during lectures) and stipulate guidelines in their syllabi. Faculty can also articulate student codes of courtesy regarding lectures by guest speakers (e.g., appropriate timing of questions, dismissal times).

To set standards and the desired tone for a civil classroom, [Moore \(1996\)](#) contended that faculty should establish their credentials early on and dress in a fashion that projects professionalism and leadership. Faculty who ignore important professional boundaries between themselves and students can quickly lose the respect of students and contribute to student confusion about their role. In an effort to gain support and form alliances, faculty may begin to fraternize with students. Although sounding innocuous, professors can experience difficulty when attempting to re-establish their credibility in the classroom. Further, students can become resentful toward professors who behave differently within social and classroom contexts.

Arranging for Mid-term Teaching Feedback

To assist faculty while providing students with an opportunity to share their opinions, mid-term teaching evaluations can be designed and instituted. In addition to quantitative information, such evaluations should include space for qualitative responses. When reviewing student feedback, faculty may detect patterns (both positive and negative) or blind spots that can be addressed to prevent or diffuse hostile student-faculty interactions. Demonstrating a willingness to evaluate one's own work while seriously considering student observations can contribute to an open and honest learning environment.

Students can be asked to complete mid-term evaluations in order to provide faculty with information that faculty can use to improve their teaching and interaction skills. Taking the initiative to secure this information, and eventually integrate it to enhance course delivery, can demonstrate faculty's openness to feedback, flexibility, and a willingness to make necessary changes. This process is collaborative in nature and can assist faculty in keeping a pulse on student needs. Faculty who remain oblivious to student feedback, or mistakenly assume that all is well, can encounter a rude awakening when reviewing their teaching evaluations.

Arranging for Peer Observations and Reviews

The peer observation and review process can provide faculty with invaluable insights into their teaching and interactional style. This process can be accomplished by inviting colleagues from different departments to review syllabi and observe classroom instruction. In addition to inviting feedback from university colleagues, the author has welcomed the input from respected community colleagues who possess expertise in a specific subject matter. These individuals can be especially helpful in providing important feedback about course content and the anticipated needs of future graduates. To assist in organizing the peer observation process (e.g., timing and delivery of feedback), [Mento and Giampetro-Meyer \(2000\)](#) have developed the *Colleague Observation Form*.

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Coupled with mid-term/final student evaluations, peer observations and reviews can be helpful in identifying and confirming patterns, strengths, and needs ([Osborne, 1998](#)). Faculty can be particularly helpful to reviewers by requesting feedback in specific areas of teaching and facilitation. Attempting to scaffold or build on suggestions from previous peer reviews may serve to fortify positive interactional styles and instructional methods.

Establishing a Collaborative Learning Environment

The [California Community Colleges Academic Senate \(1996\)](#) asserted that faculty members can be creative in designing classroom experiences that focus on student success by fostering a collaborative versus competitive learning environment. Consequently, the traditional lecture format, individual assignments, and examinations would need to be reconsidered. To encourage collaboration, a co-operative learning environment involving students and faculty could be instituted and reinforced. In essence, the traditional transmission model of education wherein students are perceived as empty vessels waiting to be filled with information would be replaced with learning environments influenced by constructivist learning principles (e.g., [Fisher, Taylor, & Fraser, 1996](#)). This latter approach values prior experience and knowledge and welcomes appropriate student challenge, questioning, and debate.

Although sounding reasonable in theory, establishing a co-operative learning environment is complex and involves several key ingredients such as effective social and team building skills. According to [Downs \(1992\)](#) when creating a co-operative learning environment, faculty role modeling can be a powerful tool. As alluded to earlier, the onus is placed on faculty to remain sensitive to the developmental needs of students and more importantly, their behavior and responses toward students.

Setting a Good Example

[Boice \(1996\)](#) stated that, "The most experienced researchers on classroom incivilities assume that students and teachers are partners in generating and exacerbating it" (p. 458). He echoed an earlier remark made by [Downs \(1992\)](#) who asserted that, whether faculty want to admit it or not, they can be the source of conflicts. In discussing student and teacher power in the classroom, [Kearney and Plax \(1992\)](#) emphasized prosocial and antisocial teacher behaviors and student responses. In terms of prosocial behaviors, faculty are perceived as warm, friendly, and motivational. More specifically, they maintain a positive attitude toward students and demonstrate an interest in them. Antisocial behaviors, on the other hand, include aloofness and disinterest on behalf of faculty.

Faculty can inadvertently provoke a violent cycle by publicly debasing, humiliating, or invalidating students (e.g., remarking that a question is ridiculous or unworthy of an answer) or by making snide remarks. From a systemic perspective, such antisocial behavior can invite hostile student reactions and retaliation.

The arrogance of some faculty can blind them to the fact that incivility often begets incivility. For example, students can feel unfairly criticized, embarrassed, and/or disrespected by faculty who are either unaware of or indifferent to their inappropriate behavior. Faculty can model appropriate behavior ([Mills, 1998](#)) starting with how they address students. Although some faculty expect to be addressed formally (e.g., Dr. Jones, Professor James), students rarely enjoy the same courtesy and are commonly referred to on a first name basis. To demonstrate respect, faculty can simply ask students how they would like to be addressed. Even colleagues who teach large classes make an effort to follow this practice.

Reframing Potential Conflicts

The purpose of reframing behavior is to side-step unnecessary power struggles. To reframe, faculty need to plan ahead and understand that such situations will arise despite their best efforts to create a respectful learning environment. The idea that student challenge behavior can be an attempt to seek additional information ([Jones & Simonds, 1994](#)) may be useful in helping faculty avoid personalizing ill-mannered student responses or reactions.

Faculty reframing can include responding non-defensively and respectfully to a student's comment or behavior. For example, when a student excessively criticizes the content and process of a course, his or her obvious disappointment can be acknowledged. Further, the student's commitment to acquiring information that is personally meaningful and his or her willingness to speak out for the betterment of the course can be noted. In essence, reframing can assist faculty in viewing student behaviors in a different light. The reframing process also

allows faculty to *respond* productively rather than *reacting* harshly to students. In order to effectively reframe situations, it is critical that faculty avoid personalizing student remarks (e.g., the text is useless!, this class time is bogus!). Rather than reacting and entering into feuds with students, faculty can simply acknowledge concerns and empathize with their disappointment.

Re-engaging Students

To repair strained relationships, faculty can take appropriate steps to re-engage students and resolve differences. Although faculty are encouraged to establish mutually rewarding relationships with students, faculty should only meet with uncivil students to resolve issues in the company of other staff (Amada, 1992). In cases where a male faculty wants to re-engage a female student, a female colleague should be invited to participate to reduce the possibility of student-directed allegations of faculty misconduct.

The re-engagement process provides faculty with opportunities to identify patterns or issues that would otherwise persist. Once again, a secondary benefit that can be gained from this process is student recognition and respect. Some faculty who have been encouraged to use this approach have been reluctant and have expressed a concern regarding their loss of status. On the other hand, faculty who invest in the re-engagement process can be perceived as individuals who are genuinely committed to student learning and personal growth.

Establishing Student Grievance Process

To prevent student-faculty conflict from escalating, a process needs to be established wherein student complaints and concerns are taken seriously and appropriately investigated. Students often report that their concerns are trivialized and are easily dismissed. Although most universities have a grievance process in place, it may only be symbolic and lack integrity. The grievance process is particularly important when considering:

In samplings of core courses at large public universities, as many as a third of faculty treated students with unmistakable rudeness and condescension. In a few cases, they physically assaulted students who pressed them for answers or help (Boice, 1996), perhaps about as often as students assaulted professors. In many more instances (we do not know the exact figures), professors take advantage of teaching dynamics to sexually and otherwise compromise students" (Amada, 1992, p. 458).

If fair and effective student grievance procedures are lacking, students and faculty must demand an institutional policy change. Training for faculty and students about the grievance procedure should be implemented. The institution must also make a determination about the privacy and right-to-know issues surrounding the grievance process.

Using a Back-to-the-Basics Approach

A back-to-the-basics approach to conflict resolution is recommended at the beginning of each semester during college/university or departmental gatherings. Although sounding simplistic, it is important that faculty be reminded of the potential ramifications of uncivil student behavior. The [California Community Colleges Academic Senate \(1996\)](#), lists several suggestions designed to avoid classroom conflict and this includes inviting or hiring experts to introduce conflict-management skills to faculty and staff. Although some faculty may scoff at the notion of discussing the importance of promoting civil behavior in the classroom, the negative ramifications of such behavior cannot be ignored.

Conclusion

Based on the extant literature and media accounts, incidents of student incivility against faculty are increasing. Consequently, faculty are encouraged to continually examine how their teaching styles, conduct, and interpersonal communication styles can inadvertently contribute to unruly (and potentially dangerous) classroom environments. In doing so, faculty can avoid unnecessary conflict with students and the personal distress associated with such conflict. In other words, rather than maintain a narrow perspective wherein students are viewed as culprits, faculty are encouraged to remain introspective regarding personal attitudes and behaviors.

Despite one's best efforts to communicate effectively and behave respectfully, there will likely be situations where conflict will persist between students and faculty. Knowing this in advance, faculty can remain cognizant of their

interactions with such students and communicate their concerns with trusted colleagues. In the case of severe situations (e.g., student threats or assaults), university administrators and security must be notified immediately. Remaining isolated, feeling trapped, or allowing matters to intensify can result in elevated faculty stress, job dissatisfaction, and personal harm. Discontent among students can also swell when issues remain unresolved.

It is also suggested that faculty remain vigilant to the changing landscape of the university/college classroom (e.g., larger student numbers in classes, student-as-consumer perspective, pressure to obtain degrees for employment, students diagnosed with psychiatric disorders). As universities and colleges attempt to remain competitive, admission standards may gradually shift and student numbers within classroom may increase. Consequently, faculty need to remain abreast with changing trends and the ramifications that such trends can have on the classroom environment.

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