The Student Affairs Division is committed to working collaboratively with students in concert with other members of the Westminster community to enrich each student’s college experience. We facilitate opportunities for student growth and development through co-curricular involvement in the areas of spiritual, physical, intellectual, social, and emotional wellness. To promote and enhance their success, we challenge, support, and empower students through intentional and caring ways.

The Dean of Students Office (located in the Shaw Student Center) is one of the main student-advocacy offices on campus. Students can come here if they have questions about college policy, posting of notices on campus, residence life, student activities, student government, and/or the 70+ student organizations on campus.

The office serves as the information center for commencement, convocation, orientation, food-service inquiries, leadership, student conduct, campus concierge, posting, and vendors. The chief student affairs officer, dean of students, and director of student involvement, leadership, and orientation are housed in this office. Other student affairs offices are located on both the main floor and lower level of the Shaw Student Center.

Don’t hesitate to contact the various support services with any questions or concerns.

Karnell McConnell-Black, Vice President of Student Affairs & Dean of Students
Office: 801.832.2230

Traci Siriprathane, Assistant Dean of Students - Student Wellbeing and Support
Office: 801.832.2862

Daniel K. Cairo, Assistant Dean of Students - Student Engagement & Success
Office: 801.832.2826

Resident Director After Hours On-Call
After Hours: 5:00 PM–8:00 AM
Cell: 385.272.6273
QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE: RESPONDING TO A STUDENT IN DISTRESS

If the student:
• Seems markedly different in demeanor and attitude,
• Is demonstrating a decline in academic performance,
• Is not showing up to class or is habitually late,
• And/or is unresponsive or unreceptive to your efforts to help,

AND your concerns about the above behaviors are NOT urgent:

If the student:
• Talks or writes about imminently hurting themselves or others,
• Is acting or speaking irrationally,
• Appears to be unreasonably angry,
• And/or makes an overt threat towards you or others:

Stay with the student and call Campus Patrol immediately at 801.832.2525.

Campus patrol will notify the appropriate services and people immediately, including the Dean of Students Office.

Contact an individual below by email or phone.

Karnell McConnell-Black, 801.832.2231
kblack@westminstercollege.edu

Traci Siriprathane, 801.832.2862
tsiriprathane@westminstercollege.edu

Daniel K. Cairo, 801.832.2826
dcairo@westminstercollege.edu

You may also contact a Counselor at the Counseling Center at 801.832.2465 for a consultation or refer the student directly to the Counseling Center.

During regular business hours:
Contact the dean of students office. Do NOT rely on email.

Karnell McConnell-Black, 801.832.2231
kblack@westminstercollege.edu

Traci Siriprathane, 801.832.2862
tsiriprathane@westminstercollege.edu

Daniel K. Cairo, 801.832.2826
dcairo@westminstercollege.edu

Counseling Center at 801.832.2465.

On evening or weekends:
Contact the resident director on call for afterhours support (385.272.6273) or Campus Patrol (801.832.2525).
SECTION 1 - RECOGNIZING STUDENTS IN EMOTIONAL DISTRESS

As faculty and staff members, you may be the first to notice a student who is experiencing difficulty. However, faculty often have little training in counseling and mental health issues. You do not have to take the role of a counselor or diagnose a student. You need only notice signs of stress or distress and communicate these to the appropriate office. In many cases, a direct conversation with the student will allow you to gather a little more information, express your concern, and offer resources and referral information.

Often, there are indicators that a student is experiencing distress long before a situation escalates to a crisis. To assist our students in maintaining their well-being and maximizing their intellectual growth, it is important to identify difficulties as early as possible. The presence of one of the following indicators alone does not necessarily mean that the student is experiencing severe distress. However, the more indicators you notice, the more likely it is that the student needs help. When in doubt, consult with the Counseling Center or the Dean of Students.

INDICATORS OF DISTRESS

Typically, issues indicated in items 1 through 4 below should be addressed by speaking directly to a student or consulting a campus professional. Indicators of safety risks and emergencies as described in item 5 below will require more immediate response and intervention by the Counseling Center and/or Campus Patrol. (Section 2 of this guide offers more detailed information on all of these pathways for responding to students in distress.)

1. **Academic indicators**
   - Repeated absences from class or lab
   - Missed assignments, exams, or appointments
   - Deterioration in quality or quantity of work
   - Extreme disorganization or erratic performance
   - Written or artistic expression of unusual violence, morbidity, social isolation, despair, or confusion; essays or papers that focus on suicide or death
   - Repeated seeking of special provisions (extensions on papers, make-up exams)
   - Patterns of perfectionism: e.g., can’t accept themselves if they don’t get an A
   - Overblown or disproportionate response to grades or other evaluations

2. **Behavioral and emotional indicators**
   - Direct statements indicating distress, family problems, or loss
   - Angry, hostile outbursts, yelling, or aggressive comments
   - More withdrawn or animated than usual
   - Expressions of hopelessness or worthlessness; crying or tearfulness
   - Expressions of severe anxiety or irritability
   - Excessively demanding or dependent behavior
   - Lack of response to your outreach
   - Shakiness, tremors, fidgeting, or pacing

3. **Physical indicators**
   - Deterioration in physical appearance or personal hygiene
   - Falling asleep in class repeatedly; excessive fatigue, exhaustion
   - Statements about change in sleep or appetite
   - Extreme changes in weight
   - Noticeable cuts, bruises, or burns
   - Frequent or chronic illness
   - Disorganized speech, rapid or slurred speech, confusion
• Unusual inability to make eye contact
• Coming to class bleary-eyed or smelling of alcohol

4. Other factors
• A hunch or gut-level feeling that something is wrong
• Concern about a student expressed by another student, peer, or colleague

5. Safety Risk and Emergency Indicators

Indicators of a possible safety risk:
• Written or verbal statements that mention despair, suicide, or death
• Severe hopelessness, depression, isolation, and withdrawal
• Statements to the effect that the student is “going away for a long time”
• Demonstrated inability to care for oneself

Indicators of an emergency situation:
• Physical or verbal aggression that is directed at self, others, animals, or property
• Unresponsiveness to the external environment; i.e. the student is:
  • Incoherent or passed out
  • Disconnected from reality, exhibiting bizarre behavior, or showing signs of psychosis
  • Demonstrating extremely disruptive behavior

If a student is exhibiting any of the safety risk indicators above, they may pose a danger to themselves and should be assessed by a member of the Counseling Center. In these cases, you (or another faculty or staff member) should stay with the student while you call the dean of students office (801.832.2230) and/or Counseling Center during business hours at (801.832.2465). One of our staff members can help you determine next steps. When indicators lead you to believe the situation is an emergency, i.e. there is an imminent threat to self or others, immediate and decisive intervention is needed. If you are concerned about immediate threats to anyone’s safety, call Campus Patrol immediately at 801.832.2525. They will get a hold of the appropriate individuals.

24 Hour External Resources
• University of Utah Neuropsychiatric Institute After Hours Crisis Line, http://healthcare.utah.edu/uni: 801-587-3000, 24 Hour Emergency Contact
• Salt Lake Behavioral Health: 801-264-6000, 24 Hour Emergency Contact
• National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-8255, 24 Hour Emergency Contact
• Valley Mental Health Crisis Hotline: 801-261-1442 or 1-800-537-8739, 24 Hour Emergency Contact

SECTION 2 - RESPONDING TO AND REFERRING STUDENTS IN EMOTIONAL DISTRESS

You have several options once you have identified a student in distress and have differentiated between urgent and non-urgent issues. For issues that do not require immediate intervention due to safety concerns, you can speak directly with the student, and/or consult with a campus professional.

Below are some specific tips and action steps for making contact with students in distress, referring these students for support, and consulting with other campus professionals.

GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTION

If you have a relationship or rapport with the student, speaking directly to the student may be the best option. Begin your conversation by expressing your concerns about specific behaviors you have observed. You will not be taking on the role of a counselor. You need only listen, care, and offer resource-referral information.
Openly acknowledging to students that you are aware of their distress, that you are sincerely concerned about their welfare, and that you are willing to help them explore their alternatives, can have a profound effect. We encourage you, whenever possible, to speak directly and honestly to a student when you sense that they are in academic and/or personal distress.

1. Request to see the student in private. This may help minimize the embarrassment and defensiveness.
2. Briefly acknowledge your observations and perceptions of the situation and express your concerns directly and honestly.
3. Listen carefully to what is troubling the student and try to see the issues from her/his point of view without necessarily agreeing or disagreeing.
4. Attempt to identify the student’s problem or concern, as well as your own concerns or uneasiness. You can help by exploring alternatives to deal with the problem.
5. Comment directly on what you have observed without interpreting or judging. Strange and inappropriate behavior should not be ignored.
6. Involve yourself only as far as you want to go. At times, in an attempt to reach or help a troubled student, you may become more involved than time or skill permits. Extending oneself to others always involves some risk, but it can be a gratifying experience when kept within realistic limits. If the burden becomes too heavy, however, you may refer to the Counseling Center and we will provide direct intervention, and/or refer to an appropriate facility.

How to accomplish this will probably vary by the circumstances, and by the nature of the student’s distress. Although it is beyond the scope of this guidebook to go into depth on how to do this for all situations, this is discussed in a little more depth under the specific categories of student distress.

REFERRING A STUDENT FOR SUPPORT

Even though a student asks you for help with a problem and you are willing to help, there are circumstances when you should suggest other resources:
→ You are not comfortable in handling the situation.
→ The help necessary is beyond your expertise or reasonable area of responsibility.
→ Personality differences may interfere with your ability to help.
→ You know the student personally (friend, neighbor, friend of a friend) and think you may not be objective enough to help.
→ The student is reluctant to discuss the situation with you.
→ You feel overwhelmed or pressed for time.

HOW TO MAKE A REFERRAL:

Explain the limitations of your knowledge and experience. Be clear that your referral to someone else does not mean that you think there is something wrong with the student or that you are not interested. The referral source has the resources to assist the student in a more appropriate manner. Below are a list of points to consider when making the referral.

• Be frank with the student about the limits of your time, ability, expertise, and/or objectivity.
• Respect the student’s value system.
• Show the student that you are concerned about their well-being. Concern can be demonstrated by taking some time to listen and attempt to understand what the individual is experiencing. At the same time, however, respect the student’s right to privacy (i.e., don’t press the student for details, don’t talk about the student’s personal issues when others are around).
• Let the student know that you think they should get assistance from another source.
• Assure them that many students seek help over the course of their college career.
• Assist the student in choosing the best resource (on campus: Counseling Center; off campus: therapist/agency).
• Try to help the student know what to expect if they follow through on the referral.
• Finally, suggest that the student make the phone call to the Counseling Center for an appointment while in your office.

Consultation is available if you have concerns about a student. A counselor at the Counseling Center and/or the Dean of Students Office is available for consultation. Some of the ways they might help include:
→ Assessing the seriousness of the situation
→ Suggesting potential resources
→ Finding the best way to make a referral
→ Clarifying your own feelings about the student and the situation

SECTION 3 – ACADEMIC HONESTY & MEDICAL WITHDRAWALS

ACADEMIC HONESTY

The Dean of Students Office is able to assist faculty with Academic Honesty violations. When faculty suspect a violation has occurred, please first call the dean of students to ensure the student has not violated our policy in a previous semester. If this is the student’s FIRST OFFENSE, faculty have a number of options. Sometimes faculty fail the student for the course, sometimes for the assignment, and sometimes they only take a percentage off the assignment. Regardless of that outcome, the student’s name must be added to the master list compiled by the dean of students. If there is a second offense with the same student the dean of students then steps in, usually (but not always) resulting in the student being suspended for one semester.

Always email the dean of students when a student is caught violating our academic honesty policies to ensure that they have not previously been found responsible of violating our policy. Please do not negotiate if the student’s name should be on the list; this is an important step in our process.

PETITION FOR REVIEW OF TUITION CHARGES AND/OR RECORD CHANGES

Students sometimes face unusual or extenuating circumstances that prevent them from finishing a course or semester or otherwise complying with institutional deadlines. A Review Committee meets monthly to examine petitions made by students regarding retroactive record changes (e.g. medical withdrawal) and/or full or partial charges of tuition and fees. A student’s petition, which includes a detailed letter, completed form and documentation of the unusual or extenuating circumstances, can be submitted to the Registrar’s Office. All petitions must be submitted within six weeks after the end of the semester in question. Absent serious extenuating circumstances, requests submitted beyond six weeks after the end of the semester will not be considered. Because tuition insurance is
recommended, petitions for removal of tuition charges are rarely approved even if the committee decides to approve a change to the academic record. If a petition for refund is granted, changes will be made retroactive only to the last date of attendance, and tuition charges will be adjusted according to Westminster College’s posted refund schedule found on the Student Account Services webpage. Reevaluation by the student’s physician or counselor may be required prior to re-enrollment.

Following these guidelines, the Review Committee will either approve or deny all petitions. A student who thinks there has been unfair bias or encountered a procedural error made by this committee may appeal it in writing within ten calendar days to an Appeals Committee chaired by the Vice President for Finance and Administration. The decision reached by this committee is final.

NOTE: The Review Committee cannot change rules regarding the amount of federal financial aid that must be returned when a student does not fulfill program requirements. Students are encouraged to read “Withdrawing and Its Effect on Financial Aid” section in the academic catalog (https://catalog.westminstercollege.edu) and call or visit the Financial Aid Office to determine specific implications for anticipated registration changes. In many cases, if a student withdraws from classes both the federal and institutional financial aid award may be adjusted and all unpaid tuition resulting from the cancellation will become due immediately. Visit for the Registrars website for the Petition for Review of Tuition Charges and/or Record Changes form.

Medical Withdrawal Contact:
Karnell McConnell-Black, Dean of Students  kblack@westminstercollege.edu  801.832.2230

SECTION 4 – CAMPUS RESOURCES FOR STUDENT SUPPORT

Vice President & Dean of Students | Students Affairs
Karnell McConnell-Black
Contact: 801.832.2230

Assistant Dean of Students | Student Affairs
Daniel K. Cairo
Contact: 801.832.2230

Assistant Dean of Students | Student Affairs
Traici Siriprthane
Contact: 801.832.2862

Student Health Services
Contact: 801.832.2241

Counseling Center
Contact: 801.832.2465

Fitness, Wellness, & Recreation Department
Office of Residence Life
Office of Global Peace and Spirituality
Student Diversity & Inclusion Center
Student Involvement & Orientation
Title IX

Adapted from Wellesley College’s Supporting Students in Distress guide and Cal State University Long Beach Counseling Center