



24.002: Assisting Emotionally Distressed Students

Responsible Executive: Vice President for Student Affairs
Responsible Office: Counseling Center
Related Policy: Policy 24.001: Parental Notification of Tax-Dependent Students in Instances of Psychological Emergency
Approved-On Date: August 25, 2008 and August 27, 2008 University General Counsel
August 25, 2008 Executive Cabinet
August 29, 2008 Board of Visitors
Effective Date: September 1, 2008
Revision Date:

Policy Statement

§ 23-9.2:8 of the Virginia Code requires that all governing boards of each public institution of higher education develop and implement policies that advise students, faculty, and staff, including residence hall staff, of the proper procedures for identifying and addressing the needs of students exhibiting suicidal tendencies or behavior. The policies shall ensure that no student is penalized or expelled solely for attempting to commit suicide, or seeking mental health treatment for suicidal thoughts or behaviors.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the university is in compliance with § 23-9.2:8 of the Virginia Code.

Procedures

- I. The University's procedure to assist an emotionally distressed student who either attempts suicide, makes a threat or gesture of suicide, harms or attempts to harm him or herself, or undergoes severe emotional distress (i.e., student reports having hallucinations and/or discloses delusional thought content) that compromises the student's or others' safety are outlined below:
 1. **If faculty or staff becomes aware of such behavior, immediately report such behavior to the NSU police department (757-823-9000).**

2. The NSU Police Department will assess the situation and take appropriate action to ensure the safety of the student and others.
 - a. The police department may file a student summons and/or incident/offense report to the NSU Office of Judicial Affairs.
 - b. The Chief of Police or designee may recommend an emergency hearing to the Office of Judicial Affairs.
 3. The student will be required to undergo evaluation by a university counselor at a location determined by the police department.
 4. The university counselor conducting the evaluation will make recommendations regarding the student's care.
 5. The student will be required to follow these recommendations until he/she receives a decision from the Vice President for Student Affairs on his/her status.
 - a. The student will face university judicial action if she/he does not comply with these recommendations.
 6. The university counselor will submit recommendations to the Medical Clearance Committee regarding the student's care.
 7. The Medical Clearance Committee will meet and make recommendations to the Vice President for Student Affairs on the student's case.
 8. The Vice President for Student Affairs or designee will inform the student of the requirements he/she has to fulfill in order to continue as a student.
 - a. The student will be expected to comply with these requirements or face university judicial action.
- II. Students who are absent from the University because of mental health problems, psychiatric hospitalization and/or interim suspension will be required to do the following:
1. Student will attend counseling with a mental health counselor.
 2. Student will attend an evaluation with a psychiatrist to determine if she/he might benefit from the use of medication.
 - a. Student will follow the recommendations made by the psychiatrist.

3. The student must submit a letter from the psychiatrist noting treatment recommendations and an opinion about the student's readiness to participate successfully in the university environment.
 - a. **The letter will be submitted by mail or by facsimile to the Medical Clearance Committee.**
4. Student must attend a clearance evaluation with a university counselor that has been scheduled through the Medical Clearance Committee.
5. Student is NOT permitted on the NSU campus and may NOT participate in university sponsored off-campus activities until cleared to do so by the Vice President for Student Affairs.
6. Student may be administratively withdrawn from the university because of medical reasons.
7. Restrictions may be imposed on the student in regards to the student's involvement in student activities and/or residing in on-campus housing.
8. All inquiries to the Medical Clearance Committee should be made through the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs.