



Be a ROCK!

Dealing with Difficult Students
September 2021

ROCK

R – Relate

O – Organize

C – Communicate

K – Keep it factual!

Relate

Build relationships with the following:

- Student Affairs Administration or Academic Affairs Administration
- The faculty
- The student
- TCSG
- The College President

The Secret to Relating

“Keep the corners of your mouth turned up. Speak in a low, persuasive tone. Listen; be teachable. Laugh at good stories; learn to tell them...For as long as you are green, you can grow.”
Mother Teresa

Organize

When dealing with a difficult student, you must be organized.

- Keep a folder for information regarding that student.
- Develop a timeline to which you continuously add information.
- Print/file or electronically file all pertinent emails to the student, from the student, from instructors, from Deans of Academic Affairs, from Student Affairs staff, etc.
- Take notes at each meeting or record the meeting.
- File the notes.

Communicate

As you have seen and heard, communication is a key piece of relating as well as organizing.

- Send follow-up emails to the student after a meeting or after a proceeding.
- Send notes of the meeting to the pertinent college personnel and to TCSG.
- Meet with your President in case he/she hears from the student and/or TCSG.
- Communicate with the staff involved; meet with the staff face-to-face if possible.

Keep it factual!

When dealing with a situation involving your faculty or staff and a student, it is extremely important that you remain neutral.

- Gather the facts – not inferences, interpretations, etc.
- Look at the college procedures.
- Interview everyone involved.
- Avoid hearsay.
- Avoid previous situations that are not part of the college's file on that student.

Tips

1. Introduce yourself to the student. Have a face-to-face meeting.
2. Ask the student to tell you what is going on before you tell the student what you know.
3. Actively listen. Ask questions to ensure you understand the situation.
4. Help the student/staff member/faculty member see the discrepancy between where he/she is now and where he/she wants to be.
5. Avoid argumentation.
6. Help the student find a solution. Explain why you cannot do what the student is asking.
7. Help the faculty or staff member find a solution to prevent the occurrence in the future.

Conclusion

“People are often unreasonable and self-centered, forgive them anyway. If you are kind, people may accuse you of ulterior motives, be kind anyway. If you are honest, people may cheat you; be honest anyway. If you find happiness, people may be jealous; be happy anyway. The good you do today may be forgotten tomorrow; do good anyway. Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough; give your best anyway.”

Mother Teresa

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