

Recognizing a Disengaged Scholar

Scholars can exhibit the same disengagement behaviors in an online and hybrid environment that they can in the physical classroom. To assist you in recognizing a disengaged scholar, the Office of the Provost has developed a summary of characteristics and resources to support you and the scholar.

Disengagement can manifest in multiple forms. Pay special attention to changes in behavior, including:

- A change in attitude from being highly engaged and active to quiet and disengaged
- Body language, such as not focusing on the class, being distracted by their phone or another device, repeatedly turning off their camera on Zoom
- Changes in energy level and late arrivals to class
- Late assignments
- Missed classes and appointments including office hours
- In-class disruptions or inappropriate behavior
- Negative interactions with peers
- Signs of violence, aggression, or withdrawal

Pathway Forward—Offer Support

If you recognize any of these behaviors, first contact the scholar to discuss what support and class accommodations you can offer to help their engagement and success.

As a reminder, scholars who become disengaged could be reacting to:

- Individual, family, or peer health issues, including physical, mental, and emotional challenges
- Financial insecurity
- Food or shelter insecurity
- Unemployment
- Domestic violence or abuse
- Learning difficulties, especially moving to online learning

If further action is needed, refer scholars to or contact the appropriate campus department for additional support and assistance:

- [Academic Success Center](#)—academic, attendance, or student engagement concerns; academic alerts; and referring scholars to the ASC
- [865-974-HELP](#) (4357)—mental health or well-being concerns (available 24/7)

References

Youngju, L., & Jaeho, C. (2011). A review of online course dropout research: Implications for practice and future research. *Educational Technology Research & Development*. Vol. 59(5), 593-618.

WBT Systems. (2020). *9 ways to increase online student engagement*. www.wbt systems.com/learning-hub/blogs/9-ways-to-increase-online-student-engagement.
