Guide to Faculty for Substance Abuse (Long Version)

The Student Under The Influence
Alcohol is the most widely used psychoactive drug. It is common to find alcohol abusers in college populations also abusing other drugs, both prescription and illicit. Currently we are seeing an increase in prescription drug abuse (Oxycodone) as well as heroin abuse.

The effects of alcohol on the user are well known to most of us. Alcohol abuse by a student is most often identified by faculty. Irresponsible, unpredictable behavior affecting the learning situation (i.e., drunk and disorderly in class), or a combination of the health and social impairments associated with alcohol abuse noticeably sabotages student performance. Speech will be slurred if a student is under the influence of alcohol.

The effects of opiate abuse (Oxycodone and heroin) may be less well known to the general public, but they are evident when a student is under the influence. These effects include pin-point pupils, lethargic demeanor, sluggish and perhaps nodding head, speech is not slurred, but may be slow. Student will be responsive and coherent if spoken to.

Because of denial that exists in most substance abusers, it is important to express your concern to the student in terms of specific changes in behavior/performance rather than terms of suspicions about alcohol/drug use.

Do:
- Confront the student with the behavior that is of concern. Examples:
  - “I am concerned for your safety because you are nodding off and may fall and hit your head.”
  - “Your loud voice and frequent interruptions are disruptive to the learning environment and I am asking you to leave the class.”
  - “Because you are unable to focus and contribute to your group’s discussion, I will ask you to leave the class.”
  - “I can smell alcohol on your breath and it is not okay to come to class after you have been drinking.”
- Address the substance abuse issue if the student is open and willing.
- Offer concern for the student’s overall well-being.

If you ask the student to leave your classroom because of this disruption you must also:
- Refer student to the Vice President of Student Services at Oceanside, or the Associate Dean of Student Services at San Elijo.

If you have immediate concerns for the student’s personal safety or well-being please use the phone in your classroom to call the Police 6-911 and ask them to send an officer to your class room. Be sure you give the room number and campus you are teaching at. Simply ask the dispatcher to “Send someone to check on the welfare of a student.” Your call will be answered as a first priority and an officer will come to your classroom to assess the student and escort them to the appropriate service on or off campus.

Don’t:
- Convey judgment or criticism about the student’s substance abuse.
- Make allowances for the student’s irresponsible behavior.
- Ignore signs of intoxication in the classroom.

If you need to you can refer to the Student Code of Conduct, which states: “Using, possessing, or distributing alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs or narcotics while on the college campuses. (Students should be aware that possession, use, or distribution of drug and alcohol substances on a campus violates California Health and Safety Codes §§11350, 11357b, and 11377 and California Business and Professional Code §25608, with the exception of the use, distribution and/or sale of alcohol at MiraCosta College Foundation-sponsored events. Students serving as representatives of the college are prohibited from using alcohol at said events).”

Policy:
https://www.miracosta.edu/OfficeOfThePresident/BoardOfTrustees/policy/downloads/5500BP-StandardsofStudentConduct-Adopted5-5-09.pdf

Procedure:
https://www.miracosta.edu/OfficeOfThePresident/BoardOfTrustees/policy/downloads/5500AP-StandardsofStudentConduct-Effective5-5-09_000.pdf