

COLLEGE LIFE

College Life
Student Services
Student Rights and Responsibilities

COLLEGE LIFE AND STUDENT SERVICES

South Georgia State College is committed to promoting a supportive campus environment that educates the whole person and meets the needs of students, faculty, staff, and citizens of the region. Student services are designed to facilitate a well-balanced college experience by strengthening the teaching/learning environment and promoting the ideals of an open, democratic, and global society.

Student services that support the college's core academic function are academic advising, athletics, campus recreational activities and intramural programs, counseling and disability services, first-year experience course, Honors Day programs, new student orientations, residence life and housing, student activities and cultural experiences, student clubs and organizations, student conduct, student government association, and tutoring. Other services include College post office, Department of Public Safety, food services, online bookstore, SGSC libraries, and vehicle registration.

ACADEMIC ADVISING

Faculty advisement provides an appropriate academic support service for students in their respective academic pathways. Each student is assigned a faculty advisor according to faculty disciplines and student interests. Faculty members serve as advisors to students during times of registration to help students plot their programs of study and take the necessary prerequisites/requirements for graduation (for example, learning support classes and Georgia Required High School Curriculum classes). Faculty advisors also assist students with transfer information as well as career advising appropriate to students' academic pathways. Faculty members hold at least ten (10) hours of posted office hours per week for student consultation. These office hours are for advising purposes as well as tutoring and questions/answers concerning academic course work.

ATHLETICS

The athletic programs at SGSC are members of the Georgia Collegiate Athletic Association (GCAA) and the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA). SGSC supports nine intercollegiate athletic programs: men's baseball, women's soccer, women's softball, men's swimming, women's swimming, men's basketball, and men's and women's cross country. The ultimate goal is to make SGSC's intercollegiate athletic program the best among comparable institutions by recruiting quality student-athletes who will excel in the classroom as well as in sports. Developing the student athlete as a successful individual is one of the main objectives of the program.

CAMPUS RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND INTRAMURAL SPORTS

The College's campus recreational activities and intramural sports program are designed specifically for students and include activities such as volleyball, football, basketball, and softball. In addition, both the College's swimming pool and community golf course on the Douglas campus are available to enrolled students for recreational use. The strength of these programs is drawn from the high levels of student leadership and participation. The School of Sciences works closely with the Director of Campus Life and the Student Activity Coordinator in administering the intramurals program.

COUNSELING AND DISABILITY SERVICES

SGSC's Counseling Program is designed to help students achieve their academic goals by providing short-term counseling services for personal problems, stress, depression, time management, and adjustment to college. Off-campus referrals are made for those students with needs outside of the realm of services provided by short-term counseling. Students may self-refer by completing a Counselor Referral form on the SGSC website or from the Counselor's Office.

All students at SGSC with a documented disability or students who suspect that they have a disability are strongly encouraged to register with the Disability Services Office at the time of making application. Students must self-identify in order to pursue academic accommodations. System accommodations require approval from the Regents Center for Learning Disorders (RCLD). Upon approval, students are responsible for requesting the Disability Services Coordinator's assistance in working with the faculty to devise reasonable classroom accommodations based on the recommendations from RCLD.

FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE COURSE

Because many of the students entering into SGSC have never been in a college learning environment, they do not understand how this milieu differs from their previous classroom experiences. The College has implemented this course to provide students with the tools needed to be successful not only at SGSC but also at other institutions should the student desire to continue his or her education elsewhere. The course provides students with much needed skills to be successful in their daily lives and chosen careers.

First-time full-time students are required to take the course. The course is designed to equip each student with the necessary tools to achieve academic success, provide each student with the means to develop a personal strategy for achieving that success, make each student aware of the specific challenges that every college student faces, and help each student feel comfortable and energized as a member of an intellectual community.

HONORS DAY PROGRAMS

For students who have accomplished notable academic achievement, the College holds an annual Honors Day Program on each campus. This program recognizes students who have excelled in areas of academics, athletics, or other co-curricular activities. By recognizing these students and their achievements, the College supports their academic success and helps further their college careers.

NEW STUDENT ORIENTATIONS

During the summer semester before each academic year, there are two highly-concentrated college-wide programs, Resident Orientation and Registration (ROAR) and Student Orientation and Registration (SOAR), designed to introduce new students to SGSC. Students are provided information on academic and student support services. Workshop topics include academic standards, the *SGSC Student Code of Conduct*, policies and procedures, student clubs and organizations, financial aid, and advising.

RESIDENCE LIFE AND HOUSING

The Office of Residence Life exists to advance the educational mission of the College through its diverse programs and services. The Office of Residence Life seeks to provide a well-maintained and well-managed living and learning environment. The Douglas campus is a residential campus and currently operates two residence halls: Tiger Village I and Tiger Village II. The on-campus residential life options offer contemporary suites with all the amenities of home. SGSC's residence halls feature private furnished bedrooms, computer labs with high-speed Internet access, private and group study rooms, multipurpose entertainment spaces, laundry/vending, 24-hour security, free tutoring within the residence halls, and Resident Assistants on each floor. In addition, Tiger Village I & II are adjacent to the Clower Student Center. Each residence hall has individual ADA-accessible rooms on each wing and each floor.

The College policies for residential living are described in the *Residence Hall Handbook*. The central goal of the residence hall staff and the residence hall programming board is to create and maintain a safe, pleasant, and successful living/learning environment. Further information is available through the Residence Life & Housing Office.

Housing is also available at the SGSC Entry Programs at Georgia Southwestern State University in Americus and Valdosta State University in Valdosta. For more information, contact Tomnica Pines at tominica.pines@sgsc.edu or phone 912.260.4682 in Americus, or Jo Anne Jones at joanne.jones@sgsc.edu or phone 912.260.4664 in Valdosta.

Freshman Residency Requirements

Any student requesting exemption from the Douglas Campus Freshman Residency Requirement must complete the online form found in the Residence Life & Housing subsection of the Current Students section of the College website.

If a student wishes to reside off-campus, then one of the following criteria must be met:

- 21 years of age by the 1st day of the fall semester
- Married (must provide a copy of the marriage license)
- Caring for a dependent child (must provide a copy of the birth certificate)
- Veteran with at least 1 year of active service (must provide a copy of discharge documents)
- 30 or more earned credit hours (not including advanced placement)
- Dual enrollment
- Enrolled in fewer than 11 credit hours
- Medical conditions for which the College cannot achieve reasonable accommodations (condition must be on file with the Office of Disability Services)
- Waiver based on extreme hardship (case by case decision)
- Claims residency in the following counties: Atkinson, Bacon, Ben Hill, Berrien, Coffee, Irwin, Jeff Davis, Telfair, or Ware (must provide a copy of driver's license)

STUDENT ACTIVITIES AND CULTURAL EVENTS

Social and cultural activities at SGSC include dances, plays, concerts, exhibits, lectures, movies, trips, tournaments, contests, and other events. Campus life is enriched through the efforts of individual students and organizations that initiate recreational and educational activities. Most events are offered without cost to currently enrolled students.

STUDENT CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS

SGSC's student clubs and organizations exist to assist students in their personal and professional development. These groups have been recognized by the Office of Student Life at SGSC and are eligible for funding through the Student Fees Committee. Additional organizations may be created to reflect students' emerging interests.

STUDENT CONDUCT

SGSC strives to create an environment that advances teaching, learning, and service to society. The College seeks to create an orderly climate that promotes academic integrity, intellectual freedom, and individual thought and expression consistent with the rights of others. To the end that such a climate may be established and maintained, the College as an institution and each member of the College community have reciprocal rights and responsibilities. It is the obligation of the College to promote an optimal educational environment by protecting the rights of all members of the college community and by prohibiting acts that interfere with the rights of others.

Students subject to disciplinary expulsion, suspension, restitution, or forced withdrawal will be afforded an opportunity to have a hearing before the Student Conduct Board. Students subject to less severe sanctions will have an informal disciplinary conference with the Dean of Students.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

The SGSC Student Government Association establishes and maintains communication between students and the College's administration and faculty. It cultivates and preserves the ideals of responsible citizenship on campus and helps to create an atmosphere of learning. Each student is encouraged to address requests, questions, complaints, or suggestions to Student Government representatives, appropriate faculty members, or administrators. All officially enrolled South Georgia State College students may attend Student Government Association meetings. The SGA is also the student organization on campus that helps to plan student activity programming.

TUTORING

SGSC has established Academic Support on each campus to provide services in the form of peer tutoring, supplemental materials, and programs that address all aspects of learning to support students' matriculation, continued enrollment, personal and professional development, and career preparation. Academic Support offers multiple locations and modalities to meet the needs of students:

- Douglas Academic Support Center (Powell Hall, Room 216)
- Douglas STEM Center (Stubbs Hall, Room 125)
- Waycross Academic Support Center (Dye Building, Room 100)

- 148) Waycross STEM Center (Dye Building, Room 141)
- Online tutoring is available through GeorgiaVIEW with tutor.com

Free tutoring services are also available at the instructional sites listed below:

- Georgia Southwestern State University – Academic Resource Center, ACE Building (#16 on GSW campus map)
- Valdosta State University – Student Success Center, Langdale Hall

When visiting any center, students must sign in and out for each visit. Staff members and tutors are available to assist with this process. For more information about Academic Support and the resources available, please visit <http://www.sgsc.edu/current-students/academicsupportcenter.cms>.

COLLEGE POST OFFICE

Each student living on the Douglas campus must have a post office box in the Clower Center, and incoming mail is delivered to an assigned mailbox. Outgoing mail may be deposited in the Clower Center.

All correspondents should use the following form in addressing mail to students:

- Name
- SGSC Box Number
- South Georgia State College
- 100 West College Park Drive
- Douglas, GA 31533-5098

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Douglas Campus

Public Safety is staffed 24 hours a day with personnel who will respond to a variety of requests and emergencies. Offices are located in Shannon Hall. The Public Safety telephone number for non-emergencies is (912) 260-4401, and (912) 260-4444 for emergency and after working hour requests. Callers should note that some incoming calls are automatically forwarded to the college's handheld radio network, which is not limited to public safety personnel.

Waycross Campus

Security of the campus is the responsibility of Physical Plant. Daytime security is accomplished by normal Physical Plant personnel. Each Physical Plant employee is trained to be aware of security concerns and will contact appropriate supervisory authority if required. Cooperation is maintained with local law enforcement personnel also.

FOOD SERVICES

The SGSC Dining Hall, located on the Douglas campus, offers one meal plan option for residential students and a commuter meal plan for non-residential students who wish to use

their ID cards to purchase meals in the Dining Hall or in the café. Since the student population on the Waycross campus consists of only commuter students and no residential students, the food service available on this campus is through vending machines.

ONLINE BOOKSTORE

Students can buy their textbooks from the online bookstore. With this system on the SGSC website, students can click on their class listings and see exactly what they'll need. Students can access the bookstore, allowing them to purchase both new and used books. The online bookstore provides the SGSC course listings, list of instructors, and the required textbooks. Students pay for textbooks through the Nebraska WebPrism system, a network that automatically tracks all student purchases and credits, allowing students to place a secure order with their credit card or any available financial aid.

SGSC LIBRARIES

SGSC's students, faculty, and staff have full access to and borrowing privileges at the two college libraries and the collections of all other colleges and universities in Georgia that are members of the GALILEO Interconnected Libraries (GIL) system and Georgia's Virtual Library, GALILEO (Georgia Library Learning Online).

The SGSC libraries provide a variety of print, audiovisual, and electronic collections through direct and shared ownership, membership, and subscription. These resources reflect and support the mission of SGSC. The College maintains a collection of print and non-print items composed of more than 120,000 bound volumes of books and serials and over 4,500 physical audiovisual items, which include videos and sound recordings. Additional non-print items include approximately 341,000 electronic books and videos. Subscriptions to serials titles, both print and electronic, provide approximately 95,000 titles to SGSC library users through web access.

SGSC maintains libraries with full services to students, faculty, staff, and community users in two locations – Douglas and Waycross. As the learning resources centers for the College, the libraries provide 21st century library services with modern computerized technology and an environment conducive to research and study for both independent and collaborative learning.

The William S. Smith Library

The William S. Smith Library occupies a 32,000 square foot facility with ample space for expanding collections to support the College's educational programs. Students have access to three group study rooms, each equipped with a study table and six chairs, a blackboard, and video viewing equipment. Twenty-nine additional study tables are stationed throughout the library that seat up to 118 people. Eight other collaborative learning spaces are arranged with soft seating for forty. Fifty-three study carrels and ten single-seating chairs are located in quiet areas throughout the library as independent study spaces. The special collections rooms offer a conference/research table and seating that can accommodate up to eight. Another room, equipped with modern teleconferencing equipment, seats up to fifteen around a conference table with an extra five chairs offering additional seating space in this room. The William S. Smith Library's smart classroom provides individual computer workstations for an instructor and thirty students.

Two printer workstations are networked to thirty additional Internet-accessible computers for student use. These computers provide access to the SGSC networks, library catalogs, online databases, Microsoft Office Suite applications, the Internet, and course-related software such as MyITLab. Wireless Internet access is also available in the facility. The Circulation Desk is located just inside the entrance of the library and is staffed during all hours of operations. The Reference Area is located in the research area. Staff members are available in this area during all hours of operation to provide assistance.

Waycross Campus Library

The Waycross Campus Library is located in the Administrative Building on the Waycross Campus. The Library was renovated in 2010, increasing the square footage to about 13,600 square feet. The Library currently provides soft seating for forty-five, study table seating for 103, and computer workstation seating for thirty-five. Study tables of various sizes are located in several locations throughout the Library. The Library provides two study rooms, each containing a conference table/chairs and a computer terminal. The Audio Visual room has a small conference table/seating and a computer terminal. The Circulation Desk, located in the front of the library, serves as the primary service point and is manned at all hours the Library is open. An Information Desk is located in the back of the Library adjacent to the student computers. This desk is manned during library peak hours in the morning and most of the evening hours.

Regardless of campus, faculty and students have access to the full range of library and learning information resources. Books and media resources can be requested by students on either campus. The courier service for pick up and return of requested library materials between the two campuses and other University System of Georgia institutions is provided by the USG GIL STAT courier service. Journal articles that are not readily available in full text may be picked up at the campus library, sent electronically to student and/or faculty e-mail accounts, or sent by US mail upon request.

A student's College ID card serves as the SGSC Library card and provides access to student's library accounts. Printing services are provided in the SGSC libraries through students' WEPA accounts. While overdue fines are not charged, materials checked out to a student's card are his/her responsibility. Lost or damaged materials will incur financial obligations that must be met before future SGSC registration and before release of student academic records.

VEHICLE REGISTRATION

Douglas Campus

No one shall park or operate a motor vehicle on campus unless qualified to do so under applicable state, local, and SGSC regulations and law. Vehicles parked or operated on campus must be registered with the Department of Public Safety from the operator's home state or the State of Georgia.

All vehicles operated on campus must be registered and the permit be displayed on the vehicle no later than 5 p.m. the first day of scheduled classes.

Registration permits must be permanently affixed to the rear bumper or the back window. On a motorcycle, they should be on the rear fender or the windshield. Staff/faculty decals of the hang-up type should be hooked over the rear-view mirror.

Student parking permit fees are assessed each semester. The issued parking decal is valid for the current school year (fall semester through summer semester). Student decals/permits are not transferable from one vehicle to the other. If for any reason a student must drive a vehicle other than the one registered, a temporary registration permit will be issued, free of charge, at the Public Safety office.

When a student wishes to terminate a vehicle's registration and register another vehicle, the parking permit should be scraped from the vehicle and the remains brought to the Public Safety office, where a replacement will be issued.

To obtain a SGSC permit, all personnel must have the following:

- Current operator's permit.
- A receipt from the SGSC cashier indicating that the permit fee has been paid.
- Current state vehicle registration.
- A fully operable motor vehicle.

Waycross Campus

All motor vehicles, including motorcycles and motorbikes operated on the campus, must register officially with the Business Office. To register the vehicle, please furnish the following data at the time of registration:

1. Name
2. Address
3. Year, make, model, color of vehicle
4. State license number
5. Status: i.e., student, faculty, staff, etc.
6. Name of insurance company
7. The name of the owner of the car if different from the driver.

The parking permit for motor vehicles must be displayed. It consists of a pressure sensitive decal that must be placed on the left rear window for automobiles and on the rear fender of motorcycles or motorbikes. The parking fee is \$4.00 per term. The registration fee should be paid at the Business Office. All student parking permits automatically expire at the end of summer term of each year. No registration will be accepted by phone. No student may register the vehicle of another student. Temporary and visitor parking permits are available at no charge for short periods of time.

Persons participating in continuing education courses will be provided a temporary permit when they register for class. Visitors should obtain a temporary parking permit from the Business Office.

Parking decals are issued in different colors designating the individual's specific parking privileges. Parking decals must be attached immediately. All decals remain the property of SGSC and are nontransferable. Financial responsibility for each decal remains with the person to whom issued until completely removed from the vehicle and destroyed. Please remove decal prior to vehicle disposal.

The following pages relative to Student Rights and Responsibilities and the Code of Conduct for students have been copied directly from the SGSC Student Handbook (revised October 21, 2016).

STATEMENT OF STUDENTS' RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

The College seeks to create an orderly climate that promotes academic integrity, intellectual freedom, and individual thought and expression consistent with the rights of others. It is the obligation of the College to promote an educational environment by protecting the rights of all members of the college community and by prohibiting acts which interfere with the rights of others. Membership in the college community confers certain rights and imposes certain responsibilities. Students are expected to understand and exercise their rights, meet their responsibilities, and respect the rights of others. The College is expected to enforce these responsibilities and to afford these rights to students. The College will help students create a climate that promotes their development while not denying this opportunity to others. Upon their request, students have the right through their Student Government Association to be heard in matters that affect their rights and responsibilities. Students have the right to take stands on issues, to examine and discuss questions of interest, and to support legal causes by orderly means which do not disrupt college operations or interfere with the rights of others. Student publications and communications enjoy the rights inherent in the concept of freedom of expression. Individual students and organizations have the right to publish and distribute material on the campus provided that the materials are identified by the name of the student or organization. All publications shall be subject to the canons of responsible journalism, including the avoidance of defamation, indecency, obscenity, undocumented allegations, and harassment. All student organizations registered with the Office of Campus Life may meet on college premises if they make reservations in accordance with the established rules and regulations for room and space reservation. Students and/or student groups may not make reservations in their names for outside groups or organizations to use college space. Only student organizations registered with the Office of Campus Life have the right to invite persons of their choosing as speakers on college premises. The President of the College or the authorized representative may cancel a speaker's reservation where there is a clear and present danger to the orderly operation of the College. Such cancellation shall be communicated to the sponsoring organization at the earliest opportunity. Students shall have the right to have their academic and disciplinary records kept confidential subject to existing law. Students have the right to due process when accused of any violations of college regulations or rules of conduct. This right shall include the following:

- right to a notice in writing of charges.
- right to admit the alleged violation, waive a hearing, and accept the College's action.
- right to admit the alleged violation but request a hearing.
- right to deny the alleged violation and request a hearing.
- right to a fair hearing.
- right to appear in person at a hearing or not to appear .
- right to call witnesses and present evidence on their behalf.
- right upon request to a list of witnesses who will appear against them.
- right to confront and cross-examine witnesses and/or accusers who are present.
- right to request a copy of any available records or tape recording of a hearing if the offenses involve possible suspension or expulsion.
- right to appeal beyond the point of origin to the administrative officer, the Discipline Committee, then to the President of the College.

South Georgia State College
STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT
Revised and posted July 1, 2016

INTRODUCTION

South Georgia State College has established standards of conduct that are compatible with the academic mission of the institution. An educational approach to infractions of the student code of conduct is employed whenever possible.

Laws, statutes, and regulations at the national, state, and local levels grant public institutions the authority to establish standards reasonably relevant to the lawful missions, processes, and functions of the institution. Such standards are not intended to prohibit the exercise of a right guaranteed by the Constitution or a law of the United States to a member of the academic community.

Standards may apply to student behavior on and off the campus when relevant to any lawful mission, process, or function of the institution. The institution may prohibit any action or omission, which impairs, interferes with, or obstructs the missions, processes, and functions of the institution.

Institutional standards may require scholastic attainments higher than the average of the population and may require superior ethical and moral behavior. In establishing standards of behavior, institutions are not limited to the standards or the forms of criminal laws. [“General Order on Judicial Standards of Procedure and Substance in Review of Student Discipline in Tax-Supported Institutions of Higher Education,” 45 F.R.D. 133/145 (W.D. Mo.1968)].

The acceptance of these responsibilities is a prerequisite for enrollment at South Georgia State College. It is the responsibility of each student to know and understand the expectations and the established rules of conduct. Lack of awareness is not recognized as a legitimate reason for failure to comply. Consequently, the College publishes this Student Code of Conduct in the Student Handbook and informs students of institutional procedures governing student misconduct complaints and investigations as part of new student orientation (Board of Regents Policy Manual, hereafter referred to as BoR, 4.6.5).

Violators may be accountable to both civil and criminal authorities and to the College for acts of misconduct, which constitute violations of this Code. The Code is not intended to replace federal, state, or local legal activities. The College will decide whether to proceed with action before, during, after, or simultaneously with a legal proceeding. Determinations made or sanctions imposed under this Code shall not be subject to change because criminal charges arising out of the same facts giving rise to violation of College rules were dismissed, reduced, or resolved in favor of or against the criminal law defendant. An action involving the student in a legal proceeding does not free the student of responsibility from participation in a College proceeding. Sanctions may be imposed for acts of misconduct that occur on College property or at any College-sponsored activity. As further prescribed in these rules, off-campus conduct may be subject to student conduct adjudication.

Student conduct policies and procedures at the College are set forth in writing in order to give students general notice of prohibited conduct. The policies and procedures should be read broadly and are not designed to define misconduct in exhaustive terms.

South Georgia State College, an institution of the University System of Georgia (USG), expects students to adhere to USG policies and other South Georgia State College policies as outlined in the Student Handbook. All South Georgia State College regulations must be compliant with the policies of the Board of Regents.

The Student Code of Conduct consists of Part I: Definitions, Part II: Responsibilities and Part III: Student Conduct Procedures and Student Rights. **The Student Code of Conduct applies to student behavior excluding sexual misconduct and academic dishonesty, each of which is covered in separate South Georgia State College policies (BoR 4.6.5).**

PART I: DEFINITIONS

1. The term “College” means “South Georgia State College” and “the institution.”
2. The term “student” includes all persons taking courses at the College, either full-time or part-time, pursuing undergraduate, graduate, or professional studies. Persons who withdraw after allegedly violating the Student Code of Conduct, who are not officially enrolled for a particular term but who have a continuing relationship with the College or who have been notified of their acceptance for admission are considered “students” as are persons who are living in College residence halls. This Student Code of Conduct does apply at all locations of the College.
3. The term “faculty member” means any person hired by the College to conduct classroom or teaching activities or who is otherwise considered by the College to be a member of its faculty.
4. The term “College official” includes any person employed by the College, performing assigned administrative or professional responsibilities.
5. The term “member of the College community” includes any person who is a student, faculty member, College official, or any other person employed by the College. A person’s status in a particular situation shall be determined by the Dean of Students (Chief Student Conduct Officer).
6. The term “College premises” includes all land, buildings, facilities, and other property in the possession of or owned, used or controlled by the College (including adjacent streets and sidewalks).
7. The term “Recognized Student Organization” or “RSO” means any number of persons who have complied with the formal requirements for the College’s recognized student organizations process.
8. The term “Student Conduct Board” means any person or persons authorized by the College President to determine whether a student has or has not violated the Student Code of Conduct and to recommend sanctions that may be imposed when a violation has been committed. Student Conduct Board panels of three (3) persons may be comprised of faculty, staff, and student members.
9. The term “Appeals Board” means any person or persons authorized by the College President to consider an appeal from a Student Conduct Board’s determination as to whether a student has violated the *Student Code of Conduct* or from the sanctions imposed by the Student Conduct Officer.
10. The term “Dean of Students” means a College official who is Chief Student Conduct Officer authorized by the President to administer the Student Code of Conduct and to impose sanctions upon any student(s) found to have violated the Student Code of Conduct. The President may authorize the Dean of Students to serve simultaneously as the Chief Student Conduct Officer and the sole member or one of the members of the Student Conduct Board. The President authorizes the Dean of Students or the Vice President for Student Success to impose sanctions in all cases. The College President may authorize someone other than the

Dean of Students to serve as Conduct Officer as necessary.

11. **The term “investigator” means the person designated by the Dean of Students to collect, review, document, and report the facts resulting from the thorough investigation of alleged student misconduct. The investigator may also be required to testify at the student conduct hearing but shall otherwise have no part in the hearing process and shall not attempt to influence the proceedings outside of providing testimony. The investigator shall not be a member or chairperson of the Student Conduct Board or an Appeals Board (BoR 4.6.5.2).**
12. The term “shall” is used in the imperative sense.
13. The term “may” is used in the permissive sense.
14. The term “policy” means the written regulations of the College as found in, but not limited to, the *Student Code of Conduct*, *Residence Life Handbook*, *Student Handbook*, the College web page and computer use policy, and College Catalog.
15. The term “Complainant” means any person who submits a charge alleging that a student violated this Student Code of Conduct. When a student believes that he/she has been a victim of another student’s misconduct, the student who believes he/she has been a victim will have the same rights under this Student Code of Conduct as are provided to the Complainant, even if another member of the College community submitted the charge itself.
16. The term “accused student” means a student against whom there is a written complaint alleging violation of the student code of conduct. An “accused student” is not a “charged student.”
17. The term “charged student” means a student accused in writing of a student conduct violation against whom there is sufficient evidence of violation of the *Student Code of Conduct* to bring formal charges that may result in a sanction or sanctions.
18. The term “Clery Act” means the federal statute requiring all colleges and universities participating in federal financial aid programs to keep and report information about crime on and near their campuses in order to notify campus communities of crimes representing a potential threat to the safety of students or employees.
19. The term “Board of Regents” (BoR) means the State of Georgia governing and management authority of the University System of Georgia, of which South Georgia State College is a member institution.

PART II: RESPONSIBILITIES

The primary expectations of all South Georgia State College students are integrity and civility. Each student should approach his/her academic endeavors, relationships and personal responsibilities with a strong commitment to personal integrity and interpersonal civility. These responsibilities apply to students individually, as well as collectively to members of recognized student organizations. These responsibilities are as follows:

1. Individuals will respect and foster the academic climate for other members of the College community.

Examples of prohibited behavior include but are not limited to: harassing a member of the College’s faculty; disrupting teaching or research; creating excessive noise that disrupts classes, studying, or College activities; other activities that seriously disrupt learning. **Academic dishonesty issues are addressed in the College’s separate Academic Dishonesty Policy.**

2. Individuals will protect and support the personal safety of all members of the College community.

Examples of prohibited behavior include but are not limited to: stalking (persistent unwelcome contact or observation); threatening with a weapon; fighting; battery; physical violence; unsolicited physical contact with another person; endangering the health or safety of another person; actions taken with disregard for the harm that may ensue. South Georgia State College observes a strict policy with regard to acts of physical violence. Any person perpetrating an act of physical violence is automatically subject to the severest penalty provided in the “Student Conduct Sanctions” section of this Code. **Personal safety issues related to sexual misconduct are addressed in the College’s separate Sexual Misconduct Policy.**

3. Individuals will respect other members of the College community.

Examples of prohibited behavior include but are not limited to: disruptive noise; terroristic threats; verbal or written intimidation; verbal or written harassment; e-mail or telephone harassment; harassment based on group membership; falsely accusing another; verbal abuse – beyond a reasonable statement of opinion -- that may cause humiliation or stress to another; hazing (defined as mandating undesirable activities, a pattern of banter/ridicule/criticism and/or the use of humiliation, as a form of initiation); calumny (making false statements with the intent to harm another); slander; any unauthorized use of electronic or other devices to make an audio or video record of any person while on College premises without his or her prior knowledge, or without his or her effective consent when such a recording is likely to cause injury or distress. This includes, but is not limited to, surreptitiously taking pictures of another person in a gym, locker room, or restroom; actions that unduly interfere with another student’s right to learn and participate.

4. Individuals will show regard for the property of the College, its community members, and visitors to the campus.

Examples of prohibited behavior include but are not limited to: vandalism, theft; destruction of property; acting fraudulently to obtain goods, services, or funds from College departments, student organizations, or individuals; using one’s leadership position for personal gain; misuse and/or wrongful use of College facilities, equipment; failure to comply with policies regarding timely return of materials or equipment checked out or on loan to the student; wrongful sale or use of another’s property; knowingly possessing or using stolen property; failure to report knowledge of an infraction; unauthorized possession or duplication of a College key(s) or key card(s); providing a key or key card to another person without proper authorization; not reporting a crime committed on campus.

5. Individuals will respect the integrity of the College’s academic and administrative records.

Examples of prohibited behavior include but are not limited to acting alone or with others to: misrepresent academic status, performance, awards, or graduation material; omit material from or manipulate records; falsify a signature; falsify, alter, steal, or destroy College documents; alter, forge, or misuse College academic records; obtain grades, course access, awards, or endorsements dishonestly; commit computer fraud (**academic integrity is addressed in the separate academic dishonesty policy**).

6. Individuals will contribute to a safe environment within the College community.

Examples of prohibited behavior include but are not limited to: possession of weapons, incendiary devices, or explosives; possession of articles or substances that are used as

weapons or simulated weapons unless prior authorization is received from the Chief of Police; misuse of College keys or keycards; willful failure to identify or false identification of oneself or one's guest(s); failure to assume responsibility for the actions of one's guest(s); misuse or damage of firefighting, safety, or other emergency equipment; interference in the provision of emergency services; failure to comply with appropriate requests from Campus Police, College Security or College staff members; intoxication that disrupts other individuals or the College's activities/administrative responsibilities; failure to comply with restriction from areas on campus. Students may not participate in any activity that could cause harm to themselves or others.

7. Individuals will adhere to federal, state, local, State College Board, and College law/regulations that govern individual actions and relationships among community members.

Examples of prohibited behavior include but are not limited to: sexual assault; physical assault; unauthorized possession of alcohol; possession, sale, or distribution of illegal substances; violation of College or department regulations, i.e. Drug-Free Campus policy; Residence Life Handbook; parking regulations; violation of College e-mail or computer usage policy; violation of any College or Board of Regents' policy; violations of laws.

8. Individuals will assist the College in fulfilling its administrative responsibilities.

Examples of prohibited behavior include but are not limited to: retaliation towards an individual for involvement in a College activity; disruption of programmatic, administrative, or public service activities of the College; harassment of College staff (including student staff); submission of a false or purposely incomplete statement/report; misuse, alteration, or transference to another person of the Student Identification Card; failure to appear, in response to a proper summons, when requested to do so by a College official; disruption of student conduct procedures and activities; dishonesty as part of a College hearing; misuse of one's position within the College; failure to comply with sanctions from a student conduct adjudication and/or hearing.

PART III: STUDENT CONDUCT PROCEDURES AND STUDENT RIGHTS

The purpose of this policy is to establish student conduct procedures to guide the fair and uniform enforcement of the Responsibilities listed in Part II. These procedures are applicable to any student or student organization when charged with a violation of the Responsibilities. These procedures allow for fact finding and decision making in the context of an educational community and encourage students to accept responsibility for their own actions. The intent is to provide adequate procedural safeguards to protect the rights of the individual student and the legitimate interests of the College.

JURISDICTION

All students are members of the College community. **South Georgia State College takes necessary and appropriate action to protect the safety and well-being of its community. Accordingly, student conduct is addressed when such acts occur on institution property or at institution-sponsored or affiliated events, or otherwise violate the institution's student conduct policies at non-institution-sponsored events. If the student has admitted responsibility and has voluntarily decided to participate in the informal process, the procedures outlined in this section will not apply (BoR 4.6.5.2).** Students, faculty, staff and individuals not associated with the College may submit complaints regarding alleged violations

that may have occurred on campus or off campus for review and action by the College. All complaints of alleged violation of the Student Code of Conduct shall be made in writing to the Dean of Students or submitted electronically through the College's Maxient incident report system.

The College may initiate judicial proceedings for off-campus incidents when:

1. Hazing is involved. Hazing is defined as an act which endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a person, subjects a person to public humiliation or ridicule, or which destroys or removes public or private property for the purpose of initiation, admission into, affiliation with, or as a condition for continued membership; or
2. The violation is committed while participating in a College-sanctioned or sponsored activity; or
3. The victim of the violation is a member of the College community; or
4. The violation constitutes a felony under state or federal law; or
5. The violation adversely affects the educational, research, or service function of the College.

FAILURE TO COMPLY

Failure to comply/respond as directed by the Student Conduct Board, the Dean of Students, or the Vice President for Student Success on any matter including, but not limited to, a request to meet concerning an issue or a notice concerning or alleging a violation of the Student Code of Conduct may result in the immediate placement of a hold on the involved student's records **but will not result in automatic findings or sanction(s) against the student.**

After the conclusion of a student conduct hearing or administrative resolution, failure to comply with sanctions imposed by the Student Conduct Board, the Dean of Students, or the Vice President for Student Success will be a further violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION (Mediation)

Unfortunately, formal grievance and appeals procedures usually require a great deal of time and energy, may result in high levels of frustration, and produce a less than satisfactory outcome for either or both parties. If a hearing must be conducted, both parties must spend time preparing their statements, presenting witnesses and other data, and relying on another person or committee of persons to decide the outcome. At the end of the process one party "wins" and the other party "loses." This almost always further erodes the relationship between the parties. In addition, records of the proceedings are prepared and kept on file, limiting the confidentiality of the nature of the dispute. Therefore, prior to filing a formal grievance or appeal, persons with a complaint may consider using the College's Alternative Dispute Resolution Program. Alternative Dispute Resolution, commonly referred to as ADR, involves using one or more dispute resolution processes as an alternative to traditional grievance and appeals procedures.

Alternative methods of dispute resolution may include one or more of the following:

1. Frank and open discussion between parties to dispel any miscommunication that may have occurred;

2. Determining the issues to be resolved and negotiating with each other to reach an acceptable conclusion;
3. Participating in a mediation session with a trained objective third party.

Mediation is a voluntary process in which an impartial third party facilitates communication and negotiation between the disputing parties in order to reach a mutually acceptable agreement. The mediator does not maintain a record of the session – the only written document is the negotiated agreement that is given to both parties. Mediation is not appropriate for cases of academic misconduct.

INITIATION OF COMPLAINT OF ALLEGED VIOLATIONS

Reports of Student Misconduct (BoR 4.6.5.1)

Complaints addressed to the Dean of Students should include as much information as possible—such as: (1) the type of misconduct alleged; (2) the name and contact information of both the complainant and the accused student; (3) the date(s), time(s), and place(s) of the misconduct; (4) the name(s) and contact information of any individual(s) with knowledge of the incident; (5) whether any tangible evidence has been preserved; and (6) whether a criminal complaint has been made. The Student Conduct Officer shall assure that all appropriate information is secured.

Information from complaints may be shared as necessary to investigate and to resolve the alleged misconduct. Complaints shall be investigated and resolved as outlined below. The need to issue a broader warning to the community in compliance with the Clery Act shall be assessed in compliance with federal law.

When appropriate, complainants may file a law enforcement report along with an institutional report. Whatever the nature of the complaint, the complainant has the following expectations:

1. **Confidentiality:** When a complainant or alleged victim requests that his or her identity be withheld or the allegation(s) not be investigated, the College shall consider whether or not such request(s) can be honored while still providing a safe and nondiscriminatory environment for the institution. The requesting party shall be informed that the institution generally cannot guarantee confidentiality. Further, honoring the request may limit the institution's ability to respond fully to the incident and may limit the institution's ability to discipline the charged student.
2. **Retaliation:** Anyone who, in good faith, reports what she or he believes to be student misconduct, participates or cooperates in, or is otherwise associated with any investigation, shall not be subject to retaliation. Anyone who believes he or she has been the target of retaliation for reporting, participating or cooperating in, or otherwise being associated with an investigation should immediately contact the Dean of Students or the Vice President for Student Success. Any person found to have engaged in retaliation in violation of the student conduct policy shall be subject to College disciplinary action.
3. **False Complaints:** Individuals who intentionally give false statements to an institution official, or who submit false complaints or accusations, including

during a hearing, in violation of policy shall be subject to disciplinary action.

4. **Amnesty:** Individuals should be encouraged to come forward and to report student misconduct notwithstanding their choice to consume alcohol or to use drugs. Information reported in good faith by an individual during an investigation concerning use of drugs or alcohol will not be used against that individual in a disciplinary proceeding and will not be voluntarily reported to law enforcement; however, individuals may be provided with resources on drug and alcohol counseling and/or education, as appropriate.

5.

Not all matters covered under this policy will necessarily involve alleged victims; however, where they are involved, it should be noted that a complainant will not always be the alleged victim but instead may be a third-party witness. The institution may also respond to issues raised by third-party complaints (such as referrals by police) or discovered by staff or through its own investigations.

COMPLAINT REPORTING AND INITIAL RESPONSE PROCEDURES

1. Complaints of alleged violations shall be submitted in writing to the Dean of Students or electronically through the College's Maxient incident reporting system.

2. Complaints must be submitted within fifteen (15) College business days after detection of an alleged violation unless special conditions for delay can be documented.

3. Complaints addressed to the Dean of Students should include as much information as possible—such as: (1) the type of misconduct alleged; (2) the name and contact information of the both complainant and the accused student; (3) the date(s), time(s), and place(s) of the misconduct; (4) the name(s) and contact information of any individual(s) with knowledge of the incident; (5) whether any tangible evidence has been preserved; and (6) whether a criminal complaint has been made. The Student Conduct Officer shall assure that all appropriate information is secured (BoR 4.6.5.1).

4. When the alleged misconduct is related to discrimination or harassment, the Dean of Students will consult with the Affirmative Action Officer to determine whether an affirmative action investigation is warranted.

5. The Dean of Students shall make an initial determination as to whether there is sufficient basis to believe that a violation of the Code of Conduct may have occurred. If the reported conduct does not violate College policies, including the *Student Code of Conduct*, the complaint shall be dismissed. Otherwise, the Dean of Students shall ensure that a prompt, fair, thorough, and impartial investigation and review are conducted into each complaint to determine whether charges should be brought against the student (BoR 4.6.5.2).

6. Prior to and finally including a formal charge or dismissal of a charge of student misconduct, the following procedures shall be followed:

- a. **The accused student shall be provided with written notice of the complaint/allegations, pending investigation, possible charges, possible sanctions, and available support services. The notice should also include the identity of any investigator(s) involved. Notice should be provided via institution email to the address on file. Where applicable, a copy shall also be**

- provided to the alleged victim via the same means.
- b. Upon receipt of the written notice, the accused student shall be given at least three (3) business days to respond in writing. In that response, the accused student shall have the right to admit or to deny the allegations, and to set forth a defense with facts, witnesses, and to admit or to deny the allegations, and to set forth a defense with facts, witnesses, and documents—whether written or electronic—in support. A non-response will be considered a general denial of the alleged misconduct.
 - c. Based on this response, the investigation shall consist of interviews of the accused student, the alleged victim (where applicable) and witnesses, and the collection and review of documents or other physical or electronic information, as well as other steps as appropriate. The investigator will retain written notes and/or obtain written or recorded statements from each interview. The investigator shall also keep a record of any proffered witnesses not interviewed, along with a brief, written explanation.
 - d. The investigation shall be summarized in writing in an initial investigation report and provided to the accused student and the alleged victim (where applicable) in person or via email. This summary should clearly indicate any resulting charges (or alternatively, a determination of no charges), as well as the facts and evidence in support thereof, witness statements, and possible sanctions.
 - e. To the extent the accused student is ultimately charged with a violation, he or she shall also have the opportunity to respond in writing. The charged student's written response to the charge(s) shall be due no earlier than three (3) business days following the date of the initial investigation report. The charged student's written response should outline his or her plea in response to the charge(s), and where applicable, his or her defense(s), and the facts, witnesses, and documents—whether written or electronic—in support. A nonresponse to the charge(s) by the charged student will be interpreted as a denial of the charge(s).
 - f. The investigator shall conduct further investigation and update the investigative report as warranted by the charged student's response.
 - g. The final investigative report should be provided to the student misconduct panel or hearing officer for consideration in adjudicating the charges brought against the charged student. A copy shall also be provided to the charged student and alleged victim (where applicable) before any hearing. The investigator may testify as a witness regarding the investigation and findings, but shall otherwise have no part in the hearing process and shall not attempt to otherwise influence the proceedings outside of providing testimony during the hearing (BoR 4.6.5.2).

7. Unrelated charges and cases shall be investigated separately, unless the charged student consents to having them aggregated (BoR 4.6.5.2).

8. The Dean of Students may arrange a Preliminary Conference with the student accused of violating the *Student Code of Conduct* to review the procedures in items 1 – 7 above.

PROCEDURES FOR ADJUDICATING CASES INVOLVING RECOGNIZED STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS (RSOs)

Should a complaint be filed against an RSO, the Dean of Students will conduct an investigation and hearing, and the Vice President for Student Success may impose the following sanctions, if necessary:

1. Cancellation of recognized status,
2. Imposition of monetary fines, withholding or withdrawal of allocated COA funds and or Dues Account funds,
3. Imposition of restitution for damages,
4. Removal of any of the RSO's officers or members from the RSO or its activities,
5. Restriction of any of the privileges or rights enjoyed by the RSO.

An RSO may appeal any finding and/or sanction imposed provided relevant grounds for appeal are cited. Written notification of the decision to appeal and the grounds for appeal must be received by the Dean of Students within two (2) College business days after the original decision is communicated to the RSO. The appeal will be a review of the record only. The Dean of Students will be responsible for notifying the RSO of the outcome of the appeal within two (2) College business days of the conclusion of the appeal proceedings. This is the final appeal at the institutional level.

The right of provisional organizations to operate may be revoked upon an adverse finding by the Dean of Students, in conjunction with the Director of Campus Life. In cases of revocation of provisional status, there is no institutional appeal of the decision.

DUE PROCESS AND STUDENT RIGHTS (BoR 4.6.5.2)

When a student is charged with violating the rules and regulations of the College, disposition of the case will be according to the Constitutional requirements of due process. These rights include entitlement to:

- 1. A written notice of the complaint/allegations, pending investigation, possible charges, possible sanctions, and available support services. The notice shall also include the identity of any investigator(s) involved. Notice shall be provided via College email to the address on file. Where applicable, a copy shall also be provided to any alleged victim via the same means.**
- 2. A prompt, thorough, and impartial investigation of the complaint.**
- 3. A fair and impartial hearing.**
- 4. Being informed of the nature of the evidence against him/her and names of witnesses scheduled to appear.**
- 5. Present evidence and witnesses in his/her behalf.**

6. Be accompanied at a hearing by an advisor (including an attorney) of the student's own choosing and at the student's own expense for the express purpose of providing advice and counsel. The advisor may advise his or her advisee in any manner, including providing questions, suggestions, and guidance on responses to any questions of the advisee, but shall not participate directly. If requested, a maximum of two (2) family members of both the charged student and the victim(s) shall be allowed to attend a hearing but shall not participate directly. Advisors may be present during meetings and proceedings during the investigatory and/or resolution process at which his/her advisee is present.

The complainant may also be accompanied by an advisor (including an attorney) acting in the same capacity as described in #6 above.

7. Be present at the hearing during the presentation of any evidence or material on which a decision will be made. If the student fails to attend the hearing, the hearing will be held in the student's absence.

8. Remain silent and refrain from answering questions without inference of guilt.

9. Submit questions for witnesses to the Dean of Students, who, in cases involving adjudication by the Student Conduct Board hearing panel serves as Chairperson of the panel. The Chairperson will determine if the charged student's questions are appropriate and if the charged student's questions will be posed verbally or in writing.

10. An audio recording of the hearing made by the Chairperson of the hearing panel. The deliberation/sanctioning phase of the proceeding will not be taped. The charged student will be provided, upon request, a copy of the hearing recording. Written transcripts of the hearing will not be available.

11. A decision based solely on a preponderance of the evidence presented.

12. A written notice of the results of the hearing and an explanation of the decision and sanction assessment. If a student is found not to be in violation of the charge(s), all related documents and records will be destroyed.

13. Appeal the finding and/or sanction. See the section on appeals below.

WHEN POTENTIAL SANCTIONS INVOLVE SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION: ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES TO PROTECT STUDENT RIGHTS (BoR 4.6.5.2)

When the potential sanctions for the alleged misconduct may involve a suspension or expulsion (even if such sanctions were to be held "in abeyance," such as probationary suspension or expulsion) the institution's investigation and resolution procedures shall provide these additional, minimum safeguards:

1. The charged student shall be provided with written notice of the complaint/allegations, pending investigation, possible charges, possible sanctions, and available support services. The notice should also include the identity of any investigator(s) involved. Notice should be provided via institution email to the address on file. Where applicable, a copy shall also be provided to the alleged victim via the same means.

2. Upon receipt of the written notice, the charged student shall be given at least three (3) College business days to respond in writing. In that response, the charged student shall have the right to admit or to deny the allegations, and to set forth a defense with facts, witnesses, and to admit or to deny the allegations, and to set forth a defense with facts, witnesses, and documents—whether written or electronic—in support. A non-response will be considered a general denial of the alleged misconduct.
3. Based on this response, the investigation shall consist of interviews of the charged student, the alleged victim (where applicable) and witnesses, and the collection and review of documents or other physical or electronic information, as well as other steps as appropriate. The investigator will retain written notes and/or obtain written or recorded statements from each interview. The investigator shall also keep a record of any proffered witnesses not interviewed, along with a brief, written explanation.
4. The investigation shall be summarized in writing in an initial investigation report and provided to the charged student and the alleged victim (where applicable) in person or via email. This summary should clearly indicate any resulting charges (or alternatively, a determination of no charges), as well as the facts and evidence in support thereof, witness statements, and possible sanctions.
5. To the extent the charged student is ultimately charged with a violation, he or she shall also have the opportunity to respond in writing. The charged student's written response to the charge(s) shall be due no earlier than three (3) business days following the date of the initial investigation report. The charged student's written response should outline his or her plea in response to the charge(s), and where applicable, his or her defense(s), and the facts, witnesses, and documents—whether written or electronic—in support. A nonresponse to the charge(s) by the charged student will be interpreted as a denial of the charge(s).
6. The investigator shall conduct further investigation and update the investigative report as warranted by the charged student's response.
7. The final investigative report should be provided to the student misconduct panel or hearing officer for consideration in adjudicating the charges brought against the charged student. A copy shall also be provided to the charged student and alleged victim (where applicable) before any hearing. The investigator may testify as a witness regarding the investigation and findings, but shall otherwise have no part in the hearing process and shall not attempt to otherwise influence the proceedings outside of providing testimony during the hearing.

ADJUDICATION OPTIONS

The Dean of Students will present the student charged with violation(s) of the Student Code of Conduct with a written document describing the charges filed against him/her. The student will respond in one of the following ways to each charge:

1. Admission of responsibility for the violation(s) and waive the right to a hearing and an appeal. The Dean of Students will determine appropriate sanction(s).
2. Denial of responsibility for the charge(s) and request for a Student Conduct Board hearing or administrative hearing for resolution/adjudication of the charge(s).

METHODS OF ADJUDICATION (BoR 4.6.5.2)

- 1. Administrative Hearing for Behavioral Misconduct: The Dean of Students will serve as the hearing officer for all behavioral misconduct cases in which the possible sanctions of suspension or expulsion are not involved and for cases involving suspension or expulsion when the charged student does not request a hearing by a panel of the Student Conduct Board in a timely manner.**
- 2. A panel of the Student Conduct Board: Members of the Board will serve as a panel for resolving Student Code of Conduct involving students. Each panel may be composed of three voting members drawn from faculty, staff, and students. The Dean of Students serves as non-voting Chairperson of the hearing panel.**

The Student Conduct Board and appellate board members shall be provided training on responsibilities and procedures. **Such training shall not be the responsibility of the institution's individual(s) tasked with investigating allegations of student misconduct.**

ABSENCE OF ACCUSED OR LACK OF COOPERATION

If the charged student is absent from the College community while a student conduct case is pending or declines to participate in the student conduct process, the student is not absolved of responsibility.

Students who have been properly notified of a scheduled hearing, and who fail to appear at the hearing after proper notice has been given, will have their cases adjudicated in absentia at the scheduled hearing time and will be bound by the findings.

NOTIFICATION

In all cases relative to written notification of students, such notification will be considered complete once a message has been sent to the student's college e-mail address and mailing address contained in the Banner Student Information System.

THE HEARING PROCESS

In no case shall a hearing to resolve charge(s) of student misconduct take place before the investigative report has been finalized or before the charged student has had an opportunity to respond in writing, unless the charged student has chosen to go through an informal process or otherwise provided a written waiver of rights to these procedures. Further, unrelated charges and/or cases shall be heard separately unless the charged student voluntarily consents to the charges/cases being heard jointly.

If the charged student indicates that he or she contests the charges, and once the investigative report has been finalized and copies provided to the charged student and alleged victim (where applicable), the case shall be set for hearing, unless the charged student and alleged victim (where applicable) have chosen mediation as a possible resolution in certain student misconduct cases where they mutually agree, except where deemed inappropriate by the Vice President for Student Success or his/her designee (BoR 4.6.5.2).

The focus of the Hearing Process in student conduct proceedings shall be determining the responsibility of those accused of violating the Student Code of Conduct. Hearings are not open

to observers. **Decisions shall be based upon the preponderance of all available evidence in each case; however, any decision to suspend or to expel a student shall also be supported by substantial evidence at the hearing (BoR 4.6.5.2).**

1. If a charged student denies responsibility for alleged violation(s), he/she may request a hearing before a Student Conduct Board. The request shall be in writing and shall be made to the Dean of Students within three (3) College business days of the date on which the Dean of Students has sent notification of formal charges to the charged student via the student's College email address or within three (3) College business days of the scheduled date of a Preliminary Conference between the charged student and the Dean of Students. The hearing will be scheduled within ten (10) College business days after the charged student requests it, **and the student will be given a minimum of five (5) days' notice prior to the hearing date.** Hearings will be held during normal College business hours on the campuses or entry program sites. The charged student may request, in writing, a continuance from the Dean of Students if circumstances are such that a delay is warranted. The charged student will be notified, in writing, of the date, time, and location of the rescheduled hearing.

The Dean of Students will serve as nonvoting Chairperson of the Student Conduct Board hearing panels and will select the members of each Student Conduct Board hearing panel. All procedural questions are subject to the final decision of the Dean of Students.

2. The Complainant has the right to be informed of these hearing procedures and the right to be present throughout the presentation of witnesses and evidence. The Dean of Students will inform the Complainant of these rights prior to the hearing.

The records of the student conduct process and of the sanctions imposed, if any, shall be considered to be among the education records of both the Complainant and the charged student(s) because the educational career and chances of success in the academic community of each may be impacted.

3. The charged student will enter a plea to all charges before the hearing body.

4. The Dean of Students will remind the charged student and each witness present of the importance of providing truthful and accurate information during the hearing process. If a witness fails to tell the truth during student conduct proceedings, student conduct action may result.

5. At the hearing, the Dean of Students will present the evidence and facts of the case to the hearing body. The Dean of Students will present witnesses in support of the case against the charged student.

6. The hearing body may question all witnesses or ask for clarification from the Dean of Students or any witness.

7. The charged student shall have the right to present witnesses and evidence to the hearing officer or panel, as well as to ask questions to any witnesses. At the determination of the hearing officer or panel, this questioning may take place through the submission of written questions to the panel or hearing officer for consideration; however, the parties' advisors may still actively advise and assist in drafting those questions. The hearing officer or panel shall ask the questions as written, and will limit questions only if they are unrelated to determining the veracity of the charge leveled

against the charged student. In any event, the hearing officer or panel shall err on the side of asking all submitted questions, and must document the reason for not asking any particular questions.

8. Where the hearing officer or panel determines that a party or witness is unavailable and unable to be present due to extenuating circumstances, the hearing officer or panel may establish special procedures for providing testimony from a separate location. In doing so, the hearing officer or panel must determine there is a valid basis for the unavailability, ensure proper sequestration in a manner that ensures testimony has not been tainted, and make a determination that such an arrangement will not unfairly disadvantage any party. Should it be reasonably believed that a party or witness who is not physically present has presented tainted testimony, the hearing officer or panel will disregard or discount the testimony.

9. Formal civil rules of evidence do not apply to the investigatory or resolution process.

10. The standard of review shall be a preponderance of the evidence; however, any decision to suspend or to expel a student must also be supported by substantial evidence at the hearing.

11. The College shall maintain documentation of the proceedings, which may include written findings of fact, transcripts, audio recordings and/or video recordings.

12. Following a hearing, both the charged student and alleged victim (where applicable) shall be provided a written decision via institution email of the outcome and any resulting sanctions. The decision should include details on how to appeal, as outlined below. Additionally, the written decision must summarize the evidence in support of the sanction. The same form will be completed, regardless of whether the student opts for a student panel or an administrative hearing (Items 7 – 12: BoR 4.6.5.2).

13. Concerns for the personal safety, well-being, and/or fears of confrontation of the Complainant, the charged student, and/or other witnesses during the hearing may be accommodated by providing separate facilities, by using a visual screen, and/or by permitting participation by telephone, videophone, closed circuit television, video conferencing, videotape, audio tape, written statement, or other means, where and as determined in the sole judgment of Dean of Students to be appropriate.

RECUSAL/CHALLENGE FOR BIAS (BoR 4.6.5.4)

Any party may challenge the participation of any institution official, employee or student panel member in the process on the grounds of personal bias by submitting a written statement to the institution's designee setting forth the basis for the challenge. The designee shall not be the same individual responsible for investigating or adjudicating the conduct allegation. The written challenge shall be submitted within a reasonable time after the individual reasonably should have known of the existence of the bias. The institution's designee will determine whether to sustain or deny the challenge, and if sustained, a replacement shall be appointed.

FINDINGS OF THE HEARING BODY

After hearing both sides of the case, the hearing body will, in a closed session, deliberate and

reach a decision regarding the responsibility of the charged student for violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

In cases heard by a Student Conduct Board panel, a majority vote is necessary to reach a decision regardless of the quorum.

BEHAVIORAL MISCONDUCT

- A. Upon finding a student responsible for a behavioral violation of the Student Code of Conduct, the Dean of Students will read the finding into the audio recording and will forward the finding to the Vice President for Student Success.
- B. The Vice President for Student Success will review the record of the case and any prior student conduct history of the adjudicated student and will reach a decision regarding appropriate sanctions to be imposed.
- C. The Dean of Students will read the sanction into the audio recording and will be responsible for notifying the adjudicated student of the finding and the sanction in writing within two (2) College business days (Monday-Friday) of the conclusion of the hearing.

At the request of the adjudicated student, the Dean of Students will meet with the student and provide clarification of the finding and sanction. At this time and at the student's request, information on and assistance with the appeal procedures as outlined in the Student Handbook will be provided.

The finding and sanctions are considered final unless appealed by the adjudicated student.

In cases where no decision can be reached, the Dean of Students may appoint another hearing panel or drop the charges.

SANCTIONS

In determining the severity of sanctions or corrective actions the following are considered: the frequency, severity, and/or nature of the offense, history of past conduct, an offender's willingness to accept responsibility, previous institutional response to similar conduct, and the institution's interests. The student conduct panel or hearing officer will determine sanctions and issue notice of the same (BoR 4.6.5.2).

The following are student conduct sanctions that may be imposed upon the student. This list is not exhaustive and the College reserves the right to modify or enlarge the list at any time depending on the nature of the violation(s).

Upon imposition of a sanction, the student is notified by email to his/her student email account. In cases of suspension or expulsion, the parents of a minor will be notified by mail.

1. Student Conduct Warning

A Student Conduct Warning is an official written reprimand.

2. Student Conduct Probation

Student Conduct Probation is a period of time during which further violations of the rules and regulations of the College may result in suspension or expulsion. Probation may be imposed

for a period of time ranging from the remainder of the semester in which the violation occurred to the remainder of the student's matriculation at the College. Restrictions may be imposed in conjunction with probation and may include:

- a. *Community Service Hours* – Students may be required to complete work at a designated location for a specified number of hours.
- b. *Educational Programs* – Students may be required to attend programs on special topics related to the offense. This does not include academic courses for credit.
- c. *Restricted presence on campus* – Students may be restricted on campus except to attend classes or complete coursework.
- d. *Special Projects* – Students may be required to write papers and/or present programs on topics related to the offense.
- e. *Substance Abuse Assessment* – Students may be required to submit to an assessment for substance abuse. Periodic drug testing, not to exceed two random tests per semester for a minimum of three semesters, may be required.
- f. *Restitution* – Students may be required to reimburse the College or other persons, groups, or organizations for damages incurred as a result of a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.
- g. *Confiscation* – The College reserves the right to confiscate goods used or possessed in violation of the Student Code of Conduct.
- h. *Fines* – Students may be required to pay an additional Student Conduct fine in relation to violations of alcohol and other drugs.

3. Loss of Student Office/Leadership Position

Students in elected/appointed positions may lose the position as a result of a violation of the Student Code of Conduct

4. Forced Withdrawal

Students may be withdrawn from the academic course(s) within which the violation of the Student Code of Conduct occurred without receiving academic credit for the course(s) or refund.

5. Removal from the Residence Life Program

Students found in violation of the Student Code of Conduct may be removed from the Housing/Residence Life Program with no refund of fees. Additionally, these students will be responsible for payment of any remaining costs associated with the housing contract. Removal from the Residence Life program does not equal suspension or expulsion from the College.

6. Temporary Suspension from a Course

Students may receive a temporary suspension from a particular course, not to exceed two class meetings. Students are still responsible for any material covered during the temporary suspension.

7. Interim Suspension

Interim suspensions—that is, suspensions while the investigation and adjudication process are proceeding—shall occur only when necessary to maintain safety, and shall be limited to those situations where the charged student poses a serious and immediate danger or threat to persons or property. In making such an assessment, the institution shall consider the existence of a significant risk to the health or safety of the campus community; the nature, duration, and severity of the risk; the probability of potential injury; and whether less restrictive means can be used to significantly mitigate the risk.

Before an interim suspension is issued, the institution shall make all reasonable efforts to give the charged student the opportunity to be heard on whether his or her presence on campus poses a danger. If an interim suspension is issued, the terms of the suspension shall take effect immediately. When requested by the charged student, a hearing to determine whether the interim suspension should continue will be held within three (3) business days of the request (BoR 4.6.5.2). The following considerations apply to interim suspensions:

8. Suspension

A decision of suspension terminates the student's status as an enrolled student for a specific period of time and prohibits the student from attending classes. A suspended student may not participate in College sponsored activities or be present on campus without specific authorization from the Dean of Students. The Dean of Students may further impose a summary suspension in cases where a suspended student chooses to violate the terms of his/her suspension. Suspended students may not receive academic credit of any kind from another institution if earned during their period of suspension from the College. Students may not receive a refund of fees.

9. Expulsion

A decision of expulsion constitutes a permanent severance of the student's relationship with the College. An expelled student may not enter any part of the campus without specific authorization from the Dean of Students. Students shall not receive a refund of fees. Students shall receive the grade of "W" in any classes in which he or she is enrolled.

10. Revocation of Admission and/or Degree

Admission to or a degree awarded from the College may be revoked for fraud, misrepresentation, or other violation of College standards in obtaining the degree, or for other serious violations committed by a student prior to graduation.

11. Withholding Degree

The College may withhold awarding a degree otherwise earned until the completion of the process set forth in this Student Code, including the completion of all sanctions imposed, if any.

A student responsible for any type of violation of the Student Code of Conduct will not be permitted to avoid sanction by withdrawing from a class or the College.

Other than suspension, expulsion, or revocation or withholding of a degree, sanctions shall not be made part of the student's permanent academic record, but shall become part of the student's conduct record.

Students expelled or suspended for any behavioral reason will be entered into the University System of Georgia's Student Disciplinary Actions Reporting System (SDARS) and is subject to review by other institutions within the University System.

Students who are suspended or expelled from the College for any length of time should be aware of the impact this action may have on the following:

1. Tuition, Residence Hall costs and fees (suspension does not forgive financial obligations)
2. Student financial aid including HOPE scholarship and institutional scholarships
3. Athletic participation and eligibility
4. Health insurance
5. Participation in the Residence Life program
6. Meal plans
7. Use of College resources and access to College facilities/campuses
8. Immigration status for international students
9. Veterans and dependents of veterans
10. Internships, co-ops, and study abroad opportunities
11. Class withdrawal

This is not an exhaustive list.

ADMINISTRATIVE WITHDRAWALS

Students may be administratively withdrawn from classes and/or the College, after consultation with appropriate college personnel, when it is determined that because of physical, mental, emotional, or psychological health conditions, the student:

- a. poses a significant danger or threat of physical harm to the student or to the person or property of others, or
- b. the student interferes with the rights of other members of the College community or with the exercise of any proper activities or functions of the College or its personnel, or
- c. the student is unable to meet institutional requirements for continued enrollment as defined in this Student Code of Conduct or other publications of the College.

Students may make a request in writing for an appropriate hearing prior to the final decision concerning continued enrollment.

APPEAL PROCEDURES NOT INVOLVING SUSPENSION/EXPULSION (BoR 4.6.5.3)

Steps for filing and resolving an appeal in cases not involving suspension/expulsion are outlined below:

The charged student shall have the right to appeal the outcome on any of the following grounds: (1) to consider new information, sufficient to alter the decision, or other relevant facts not brought out in the original hearing, because such information was not known or knowable to the person appealing during the time of the hearing; (2) to allege a procedural error within the hearing process that may have substantially impacted the fairness of the hearing, including but not limited to whether any hearing questions were improperly excluded or whether the decision was tainted by bias; or (3) to allege that the finding was inconsistent with the weight of the information. Appeals may be made by the charged student for the above reasons in any case where sanctions are issued.

Written notification of the decision to appeal and the grounds for the appeal must be received by the Dean of Students (as designee of the Vice President for Student Success) within five (5) College business days after the original decision is communicated to the charged student. The appeal shall be a review of the record only, and no new meeting with the charged student or any alleged victim will be held. The Dean of Students will convene an Appeals Board comprised of Student Conduct Board members who were not involved in the original hearing. Appeal proceedings shall begin within five (5) College business days of the Dean of Students' receipt of the written notification from the student. The Appeals Board may affirm the original finding and sanction; affirm the original finding but issue a new sanction of lesser severity; correct a procedural or factual defect; or reverse or dismiss the case if there was a procedural or factual defect that cannot be remedied otherwise. The Dean of Students will be responsible for notifying the adjudicated student of the outcome of the appeal within two (2) College business days of the conclusion of the appeal proceedings. This is the final appeal at the institutional level.

APPEAL PROCEDURES FOR SUSPENSION/EXPULSION (BoR 4.6.5.3)

When the sanction imposed includes a suspension or expulsion (even for one held in abeyance), the following procedures shall be provided to the student. The alleged offender shall have the right to appeal the outcome on any of the following grounds: (1) to consider new information, sufficient to alter the decision, or other relevant facts not brought out in the original hearing, because such information was not known or knowable to the person appealing during the time of the hearing; (2) to allege a procedural error within the hearing process that may have substantially impacted the fairness of the hearing, including but not limited to whether any hearing questions were improperly excluded or whether the decision was tainted by bias; or (3) to allege that the finding was inconsistent with the weight of the information. Appeals may be made by the alleged offender for the above reasons in any case where sanctions are issued—even those in which such sanctions are held “in abeyance,” such as probationary suspension or expulsion (BoR 4.6.5.3)

Steps for filing an appeal in cases involving suspension/expulsion are outlined below:

1. Students who are appealing suspension or expulsion and feel that further action is warranted following a decision may appeal to the Vice President for Student Success of

the College. The appeal must be submitted to the Dean of Students in writing within five (5) College business days after the finding and sanction are communicated in writing to the adjudicated student. The Dean of Students is responsible for submitting the student's written appeal, along with other appropriate documentation to the Vice President for Student Success. At the discretion of the Dean of Students, an extension of no more than one College business day may be granted after notification of suspension or expulsion has been communicated to the student. Students appealing decisions involving suspension or expulsion may have their movements on campus restricted to academic endeavors or other restrictions deemed appropriate during the period of appeal. Otherwise, no sanction will be enforced until a final decision is reached.

2. The appeal shall be a review of the record only, and no new meeting with the charged student or any alleged victim will be held. The Dean of Students will convene an Appeals Board comprised of Student Conduct Board members who were not involved in the original hearing. Based on the findings of the Appeals Board, the Vice President for Student Success, or his/her designee, may affirm the original finding and sanction; affirm the original finding but issue a new sanction of lesser severity; remand the case back to the decision-maker to correct a procedural or factual defect; or reverse or dismiss the case if there was a procedural or factual defect that cannot be remedied by remand. The Vice President or his/her designee shall then issue a decision in writing to the charged student within a reasonable time period.

3. The decision of the Vice president for Student Success or his/her designee may be appealed in writing within five (5) business days (as determined by the date of the decision letter) to the President of the institution solely on the four grounds set forth above.

4. The President may affirm the original finding and sanction; affirm the original finding but issue a new sanction of greater or lesser severity, remand the case back to the decision maker to correct a procedural or factual defect; or reverse or dismiss the case if there was a procedural or factual defect that cannot be remedied by remand. The President's decision shall be issued in writing to the charged student within a reasonable time period. The President's decision shall be final decision of the institution.

5. Should the charged student wish to appeal the President's decision, he or she may appeal to the Board of Regents in accordance with the Board of Regents Policy 8.6.

6. The President may, at his or her discretion, review any student conduct case and take such action, as he or she deems appropriate.

REGENTS' APPEAL

Any student aggrieved by a final decision of the Vice President for Student Success or the College President may apply to the Board of Regents, without prejudice to his or her position, for a review of the decision, as provided in the Policies of the Board. Visit the Bylaws of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia at:

<http://www.usg.edu/policymanual/section8/C2363> .

RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Student conduct records, except those pertaining to suspension or expulsion, will be maintained for a minimum of five years after the student's date of graduation or last date of attendance. Records involving suspension or expulsion will be retained permanently.

INTERPRETATION AND REVISION

Any question of interpretation or application of the Student Code shall be referred to the Dean of Students or his or her designee for final determination, unless otherwise determined by the President.

The *Student Code of Conduct* shall be reviewed at least every 3 years under the direction of the Vice President for Student Success. Any revisions shall be subject to the approval of the President.

This Student Code of Conduct was adapted with the permission of Edward N. Stoner II and John Wesley Lowery from "A Twenty First Century Model Student Conduct Code," as well as from The University System of Georgia Board of Regents Policy Manual, 4.6.5 - 4.6.5.4.

Revised July 1, 2016, per USG