

Student Policies

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

STUDENT BILL OF RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Educational institutions exist for the transmission of knowledge, the pursuit of truth, the development of students, and the general well-being of society. Free inquiry and free expression are indispensable to the attainment of these goals. As members of the educational community, students engage in a sustained and independent search for truth. Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic liberty. The freedom to learn depends upon the appropriate opportunities and conditions in the classroom, on the campus, and in the larger community. Students must exercise their liberty with responsibility.

The responsibility to secure and to respect general conditions conducive to the freedom to learn is shared by all members of the educational community. HCC has a duty to develop policies and procedures that provide and safeguard this liberty. The purpose of this statement is to enumerate the essential provisions for student freedom to learn and the responsibilities that go with these liberties as established by the Board.

Protection of Freedom of Expression—Students will be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study in which they are enrolled.

Hate messaging will not be tolerated.

Improper Academic Evaluation—Students shall have protection through proper channels as established by the College against improper academic evaluations. At the same time, they are responsible for maintaining standards of academic performance established for each course in which they are enrolled.

Protection Against Improper Disclosure—Information about students' views, beliefs, and political associations which instructors acquire in the course of their work will be considered confidential to the extent permitted by law. Protection against improper disclosure is a serious professional obligation. Outside requests for judgments of ability and character may be provided with the consent of the student, at the discretion of the instructor, and after a formal request or recommendation has been made through the Dean of Student Development at the College the student attends.

STUDENT AFFAIRS

In student affairs, certain standards must be maintained if the freedom of students is to be preserved.

Freedom of Association—Students bring to the campus a variety of interests previously acquired and develop many new interests as members of the academic community. Students of the College System have freedom to organize and join associations to promote their common interests in accordance with the policies established by the Board.

Freedom of Inquiry and Expression—Students and student organizations will be free to examine and discuss all questions of interest to them and to express opinions publicly and privately. They will be free to support causes by orderly means which do not disrupt the regular and normal operation of the institution and which comply with the regulations that relate to student activities and conduct. At the same time, it should be made clear to the educational and the larger community that in their public expressions or demonstrations, students or student organizations speak only for themselves.

Recognized student organizations will be allowed to invite and to hear any person of their choosing when the purpose of such an invitation is consistent with the aims of the College System.

Student Participation in Institutional Government—As constituents of the educational community, students will be free, individually and collectively, to express their views on issues of institutional policy and on matters of general interest to the student body. The student body will have clearly defined means to participate and to express its views concerning any formulation and application of institutional policy affecting academic and student affairs. The role of the student government and both its general and specific responsibilities will be made explicit, and the actions of the student government within the areas of its jurisdiction will be reviewed only through orderly and prescribed procedures as provided in the Student Government Constitution and Regulations at the College.

OFF-CAMPUS FREEDOM OF STUDENTS

Exercise of Rights of Citizenship—College students are both citizens and members of the academic community. As citizens, students will enjoy the same freedom of speech, peaceful assembly, and the right of petition that other citizens enjoy. As members of the academic community, students are subject to the obligations granted to them by virtue of this membership. Faculty members and administrative officials will ensure that institutional powers are not employed

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to inhibit such intellectual and personal development of students as is often promoted by their exercise of the rights of citizenship both on and off campus.

Institutional Authority and Civil Penalties—Students who violate the law may incur penalties prescribed by civil authorities, but institutional authority will not be used merely to duplicate the function of general laws. Only where the institution's interests as an academic community are distinctly and clearly involved should the special authority of the institution be asserted. Students who incidentally violate institutional regulations (such as those relating to class attendance) in the course of their off-campus activities will be subject to no greater penalty than would normally be imposed. Institutional action will be independent of civil action.

RETAINED RIGHTS

The enumeration of the above rights and responsibilities shall in no way be interpreted as denying the existence of other rights and responsibilities which a student holds as a student or citizen.

ENFORCEMENT AND AMENDMENT

The Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities will be amended only at the direction of the United Student Council, administration or Board. Any amendments will be subject to Board approval.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

In all aspects of student rights, the student body collectively and individually has the responsibility of participating as citizens of the academic community to assist the College System in accomplishing its stated purposes. By virtue of enrolling in HCC, students have indicated that they will assume responsibility for their behavior and acknowledge and share the following responsibilities:

Students must recognize that the Board is the only legal authority for the operation of HCC. The Board delegates this authority to the administration.

The primary purpose for student involvement in the administration of appropriate functions of the College is to gain the education the College affords the student and to assist the administration in making better decisions.

Students are responsible collectively and individually for allowing other students to continue in their pursuit of education. All students must be allowed to pursue education, employment or other particular interests without having undue restrictions placed upon them by the activities of other students.

By enrolling in HCC, students assume the responsibility for complying with the rules and regulations of the College System. Further, students assume the responsibility to assist HCC in the refinement of such regulations to provide the greatest educational opportunity to all.

The right to disagree has been previously established. However, students must make sure that disagreement is factual and is presented with respect for those with whom they are disagreeing, including faculty, staff and administration, and students.

When approaching the administration about any matter, students must go through the established channels of communication. Students must assume the responsibility for active participation in student government in order that this organization might continue to be an effective means of communication.

Students have the responsibility to comply with all state and Board regulations governing student conduct. Such regulations and laws as may exist or that may be subsequently enacted and adopted shall have precedence over the provisions of this document of student rights.

INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING

STUDENT REPRESENTATION

HCC provides for student involvement in decision making through the student associations and organizations of its Colleges and the United Student Council. The Council shall be composed of representatives from the Colleges.

The Student Association shall be the College organization for student government. Membership shall be open to all students enrolled in the College.

SERVICE ON COMMITTEES

In addition to membership in student associations and organizations, students shall be given the opportunity to serve on both College and System committees as deemed appropriate by the College or College System.

STATEMENT OF STANDARDS

The Statement of Standards was developed by students, faculty, and staff to define the basic expectations the institution and the students, as partners in the educational process, should have of each other. While these standards cannot be viewed as guarantees or mandates, they do represent responsibilities which we believe the institution and the students should readily embrace and strive to achieve to the fullest extent possible.



INSTITUTION

It is the goal of Houston Community College to provide:

- Affordable and accessible courses and programs that allow students to pursue their goals.
- A quality curriculum, respected by the academic and business communities, which meets the standards of accrediting agencies and the state and is responsible to community needs.
- Qualified faculty who are knowledgeable in the subject matter and dedicated to teaching community college students, and who employ sound instructional practices.
- Facilities that are accessible, comfortable, and clean and classrooms that are appropriate for the students and the subject being taught.
- Adequate classroom supplies and equipment that is up-to-date, in good repair, and appropriate.
- Adequate library resources and personnel to support classroom learning.
- Adequate, accessible counseling, advising, and student support services.
- Student activities which enhance learning, promote a sense of community, and provide opportunities for social and personal growth.
- A safe and secure environment.
- A student-oriented environment in which administrative processes are efficient, faculty and staff members are helpful, and information is accessible.
- An environment in which students are respected and their individual and cultural differences are valued.
- A commitment to the principles of equality and fairness and appropriate processes for resolving problems and grievances.

STUDENTS

In working jointly with students to ensure they receive the education to which they are entitled, HCC asks that students:

- Become knowledgeable of, and adhere to, all regulations, procedures, and deadlines in the Catalog, Class Schedule, and Student Handbook.
- Identify their goals at HCC and develop and follow plans to achieve those goals.
- Enter the learning process with an open mind and a willingness to learn.
- Actively participate in their own learning, both inside and outside the classroom.
- Maintain their mental and physical well-being so that they are prepared to learn.

- Have the necessary prerequisite skills for the courses in which they enroll.
- Attend class regularly and on time and come prepared by following the syllabus and completing reading and assignments.
- Take responsibility for seeking the academic and student services help they need.
- Maintain satisfactory academic progress so that they can complete their programs.
- Demonstrate consideration and respect for other students, faculty, and staff, both inside and outside the classroom.
- Follow all HCC regulations governing student conduct and, in addition, any classroom standards of behavior established by the instructor.
- As a student and later as an alumnus, take pride in HCC and actively support its efforts to improve.

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

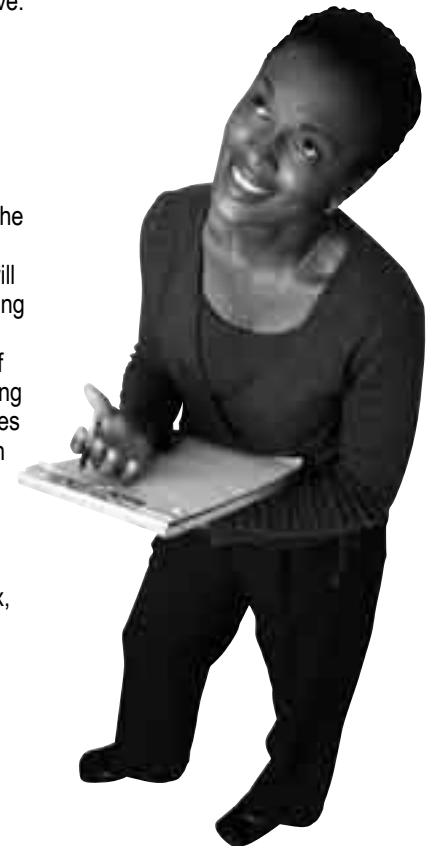
An organization in which membership is limited to HCC students, staff, and faculty may become a registered student organization by complying with the registration procedures that are available from the College Student Life Coordinators. Each College will be responsible for disseminating guidelines regarding its student organizations.

Affiliation with an external organization will not of itself disqualify a student organization from becoming a registered organization, so long as the former does not impose restrictions that would be in conflict with HCC policy.

Registered student organizations shall abide by HCC policy, and local, state, and federal laws. All registered student organizations will be open to all students without respect to color, race, religion, sex, or national origin.

Registration does not imply approval by HCC or its Colleges of the opinions and activities of the student organization. Student organizations do not speak for the College System.

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STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS AND UNITED STUDENT COUNCIL

The student associations, organizations, and clubs and the Student Government Associations and United Student Council have been developed as organizations through which students within the College System and its Colleges and system-wide programs join together to:

- Promote HCC and its Colleges;
- Develop co-curricular activities and organizations;
- Deal with general and specific problems; and
- Become directly involved in the decision-making processes of HCC and its Colleges.

Registered students are eligible to be members of their respective College Student Association. Membership is activated by attendance at a meeting. Voting and other privileges are determined by the organization's Rules of Self-Government.

STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

STUDENT NEWSPAPER

The Egalitarian shall be the newspaper of HCC and shall be written and produced by students. The Egalitarian shall promote the free exchange of ideas and information throughout the Colleges. The newspaper staff shall maintain a high standard of journalistic excellence.

The Egalitarian shall be distributed at least twice monthly to the students, faculty, and staff at all HCC campuses and centers.

The mission or role of the Egalitarian (meaning total equality), shall be to provide journalistic training in writing and experience in newspaper production for College System students. The content of the paper shall be designed to provide information for all members of the College System: students, staff, and faculty. An open and free forum, in accordance with First Amendment rights, freedom of speech and press, shall be implemented in disseminating newsworthy articles, editorials, commentaries, feature stories, letters to the editor, sports stories, announcements, photos, cartoons, and advertisements.

The control of the content of the Egalitarian shall be ultimately in the hands of the student editor, and no one shall dictate to the editor what can or cannot be printed. However, the editor shall be advised by the advisor and also shall follow the guidelines set down in the Egalitarian Statement of Policy as well as the canons of journalism and any applicable law.

The Egalitarian Statement of Policy, the canons of journalism, and the Associated Collegiate Press Model Code of Ethics for Collegiate Journalism are available in the Egalitarian Office, 3821 Caroline.



PETITIONS, HANDBILLS, AND LITERATURE

Each petition, handbill, or piece of literature shall identify the person or organization distributing it.

No person or organization may publicly distribute on HCC property one or more petitions, handbills, or pieces of literature that are obscene or libelous or that contain nonpermissible solicitation. Distribution must be conducted so as not to interfere with free and unimpeded flow of pedestrian and vehicular traffic or to disturb or interfere with academic or institutional activities.

No person or organization may distribute literature by accosting individuals or by hawking or shouting. The distributor must clean the area around which the literature was distributed.

SIGNS

For the purposes of this policy, "sign" shall be defined as billboard, decal, notice, placard, poster, banner, or any kind of hand-held sign; and "posting" shall be defined as any means used for displaying a sign.

Except for nonpermissible signs, as defined herein, a student or registered student organization may publicly post a sign on HCC property in areas or locations designated by the Dean of Student Development of the College. No object other than a sign may be posted on HCC property.

Before publicly posting a sign, a student or registered student organization must:

- Deposit in the College's Dean of Student Development's office a copy, photograph, or description of the sign to be posted.
- Provide the College's Dean of Student Development with the following information:
 - The name of the student or organization; and, if an organization, the name of its advisor.
 - The proposed general location for posting the sign.
 - The length of time the sign will be posted.
 - The signature of the student or, if an organization, the signature of its authorized representative and the signature of its advisor.
- Place the date of posting on each sign posted.

A student or organization shall remove each of its signs not later than 14 days after posting or attaching or, if it relates to an event, not longer than 24 hours after the event to which it relates has ended. At the time of removal, the student or organization shall clean the area around which the sign was posted.

No person may remove a sign posted or attached in accordance with this section without permission from the College's Dean of Student Development, the student, or the registered student organization.

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HONORS PROGRAM

Phi Theta Kappa Omega Sigma Chapter	
Central.....	713-718-6063
Northeast.....	713-718-8423
Northwest.....	713-718-5779
Southwest.....	713-718-7816
Southeast.....	713-718-7153

HCC HONOR SOCIETIES

Phi Theta Kappa, the national community college honor society, promotes scholarship, leadership, service, and fellowship among students. To be a member of the Omega Sigma Chapter, you must:

- Complete at least nine credit hours (non-developmental).
- Be enrolled in at least three credit hours and pursuing an associate degree.
- Maintain a 3.5 GPA on all degree-applied courses.
- Participate in the chapter's initiation ceremony.
- Have a degree plan on file.
- Obtain two letters of recommendation from HCC faculty.

Psi Beta is the national honor society for psychology students. Eligibility requirements to become a member of the NV-THS include:

- Currently enrolled in at least three semester hours in a Workforce program at HCC.
- Completed at least twelve semester hours toward an A.A.S. degree or a semester hour certificate program from HCC.
- Maintain a cumulative 3.5 GPA or above.
- Obtain two letters of recommendation from HCC faculty.
- Have a degree plan on file.

For more information, call your college's Dean of Student Development.

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

The HCC Alumni Association is open to all graduates of certificate and degree programs, former and current students who have successfully completed at

least one course, parents, and friends of the College. All are welcome! The primary purposes of the association are to provide former HCC students with an ongoing connection to the College that will enhance their careers and their personal lives, to promote HCC in the community, and to support current HCC students in reaching their educational goals.

If you are interested in playing an active role and helping to chart the future of your alumni association, call the Alumni Office at 713-718-5033



It's new
It's here
eSchedule

SEE: WWW.HCCS.EDU



Student Organizations

CENTRAL

Student Life Coordinator

Denny Smith
713-718-6402

Anthropology Club

Marian McWhorter
713-718-2333

Association of Latin American Students

Carlos Villacis
713-718-6678

Campus Crusade for Christ

Margaret Eomurian

Eagles Club

Sue Moraska
713-718-6833

Future Teachers Association

Pamela Norwood
713-718-6263

Health & Fitness Club

Caprice Dodson
713-718-6086

Math Club

Tim Sever
713-718-6543

Student Communications Association

Napoleon Johnson
713-718-6305

Student Government Association

Denny Smith
713-718-6042

TRIO Student Leadership Association

Jose Salazar
713-718-6330

World Friendship League

Enguday Geberhiwot
713-718-6953

Vietnamese Student Association

Tina Do
713-718-6107

COLEMAN

COLLEGE FOR HEALTH SCIENCES

Medical Assistant Student Association

Cynthia Lundgren
713-718-7361

Occupational Therapy Student Government

Linda Joyce Williams
713-718-7392

Alpha Eta Honor Society

Janice Foster
713-718-7371

Pharmacy Technician Student Association

Jeff Gricar
713-718-7353

Physical Therapist Assistant Student Association

Jan Myers
713-718-7386

Radiologic Student Association

Larry Mason & Melanie Hail
713-718-1645

Respiratory Care Student Association

Donna Westmoreland
713-718-7381

NORTHEAST

Student Life Coordinator

Floyd Henderson
713-718-8373

Circle K International Club

Marilyn Douglas-Jones
713-718-8018

Criminal Justice Club

Michael J. Edwards
713-718-8374

International Student Association

Dr. Roman Alvarez
713-718-8420

Northeast College Student Government Association

Floyd Henderson
713-718-8373

Phi Beta Lambda Honor Society

Gwendolyn Matthews
713-718-8404

NORTHWEST

Student Programs, Activities and Leadership Development Office

Troy Jefferson
713 718-5702

Student Life Coordinator Anthropology Club

Ann Bragdon
713-718-5642

Emerging Leaders

Gisela Ables
713-718-5779

Mary Alice Wills

713-718-5716

NW Drama Club

Debbie Shine
713-718-5606

Music & Entertainment Industry Student Association

Aubrey Tucker
713-718-5622

Northwest College Students Association (Student Government)

Troy Jefferson
713 718-5702

Political Science Club

Gary LeBlanc
713-718-5842

Psi Beta (Psychology Honor Society)

Joanne Hsu
713-718-5625

Linda Whitney
713-718-5687

Rotaract Club

Melba Martin
713-718-5656

Sociology Club

Michael Fonge
13-718-5827

Students Reaching for Christ

Helen Jones
713-718-5521

Aubrey Tucker
713-718-5622

HCC Jazz Club

Joe LoCascio
713-718-5651

SOUTHEAST

Student Life Coordinator

Tara Webb
713-718-7293

Southeast College Student Government Association

Tara Webb
713-718-6402

SOUTHWEST

Student Life Coordinator

Derrick Small
713-718-7791

Broadcast Technology Student Association

713-718-6725

Campus Crusade for Christ

Augie Sanchez
and Linda Leauvano

713-718-7802

Delta Psi Omega Honor Society, Sigma Tau Cast

John Corley
713-718-6361

Digital Arts Club

Patricia Porcynaluk
713-718-7891

Math Club

Eunice Kallarackal
713-718-7800

Pakistan Student Association

Dr. Larry Gonzalez
713-718-7780

Psychology Club

Dr. Barbara Lachar
713-718-6707

Dr. Elaine P. Adams

713-718-8206

Southwest Fine Arts Student Association

Cynthia Millis
713-718-7700

Southwest Forensic Society

Bill Ferreira
281-261-6725

Southwest College Student Government Association

Mary Page
713-718-7791

Southwest Writers Club

Marie Dybala and Paul Rowe
713-718-7858

SYSTEM CONTACTS

Vice Chancellor, Student Success

Irene Porcarello
713-718-5042

Associate Vice Chancellor Student Success

Dr. Cheryl Sterling
713-718-5041

Manager, Student Services Initiatives.

Shantay Grays
713-718-5043

Habitat for Humanity Campus Chapter

Alex Warren
713-718-2223 Ex. 40006

Grievances and Complaints

EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

HCC is committed to providing an educational climate that is conducive to the personal and professional development of each individual. Students should be aware that discrimination and/or other harassment based on the age, color, ethnic background, disability, family status, gender, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, veteran status, or other immutable characteristic of individuals or any other subgroup stereotyping or grouping within the Houston Community College community is unacceptable.

To fulfill its multiple missions as an institution of higher learning, the College System shall encourage a climate that values and nurtures collegiality, diversity, pluralism, and the uniqueness of the individual within our state, nation, and world. HCC also shall strive to protect the rights and privileges and to enhance the self esteem of all its members.

HCC designates the Chancellor or designated representative to coordinate its Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action efforts to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, and with the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA).

Students who feel that they have been harassed or discriminated against or who feel that the College System has not adequately fulfilled its obligations under the provisions of the ADA should follow the Grievance Procedures stated below. For grievances concerning grades, follow the Course Grade Appeal procedure on page 26.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

HCC shall provide an educational, employment, and business environment free of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination that is not tolerated by HCC.

Any student who feels that he or she is the victim of sexual harassment has the right to seek redress of the grievance. HCC provides procedures for reviewing and resolving such complaints through its Grievance Policy.

Substantiated accusations may result in disciplinary action against the offender, up to and including termination of the employee or suspension of the student. In addition, complainants who make accusations of sexual harassment in bad faith may be subject to equivalent disciplinary action.

DEFINITION

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome advances, requests for sexual favors, other verbal or physical sexual conduct, or any other offensive unequal treatment of an employee, student, or group of employees or students that would not occur except for their sex when:

- The advances, requests, or conduct have the effect of interfering with performance of duties or studies or creating an intimidating, hostile, or otherwise offensive work or academic environment; or
- Submission to such advances, requests, or conduct is explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or academic achievement or advancement; or
- Submission to or rejection of such advances, requests or conduct is used as a basis for employment or academic decisions.

FILING A COMPLAINT

Any student or group of students alleging that an act of sexual harassment has taken place has the right to seek redress of the grievance. While informal resolution of the conflict is always open to the aggrieved party, an attempt at informal resolution is not a prerequisite to filing a formal grievance.

RECORD OF COMPLAINT

All proceedings and records concerning sexual harassment complaints shall be confidential to the extent permitted by law. Memoranda describing any formal reprimand or disciplinary action that the student receives for violating the College's sexual harassment policy will be placed in the student's permanent file.

No student will be subjected to retaliation by members of the College community as a result of filing a good-faith grievance for sexual harassment.



GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Any student who has a grievance concerning the interpretation, application, or claimed violation of his or her rights as an HCC student or feels he or she has been discriminated against or harassed on the basis of age, color, disability, family status, gender, national origin, race, religion, veteran status, sex, or sexual orientation, including sexual harassment, has the opportunity to seek resolution of such grievance.

Any student alleging that an act of harassment or discrimination has occurred or that his or her rights as an HCC student have been violated has the right to seek redress of his or her grievance. This may take place informally, through the mediation of designated officers of the College, or formally, through an established grievance procedure.

INFORMAL RESOLUTION

A student who feels he or she is a victim of harassment or discrimination or that his or her rights as a student have been violated may attempt to resolve the matter informally by bringing a complaint to the College's Dean of Student Development or to the College's relevant Instructional Dean (Academic or Workforce) for cases involving instructional matters.

Upon receipt of a complaint, the Dean receiving the complaint has the following responsibilities:

- Inform the complainant of his or her formal recourse, should that be necessary (see Formal Resolution described below), and
- Undertake, with permission of the complainant, to resolve the conflict informally by informing the individual alleged to have caused the grievance that the complaint has been filed; seek to find out the facts; and, if both parties desire it, arrange a meeting to try to resolve the differences.

All individuals who are involved in an investigation—as the accused, accuser, or witness—have a duty to keep all information confidential to the extent permitted by law. Persons who violate the confidentiality rights of other individuals may be subject to disciplinary action. At all times during this procedure, the College officer must keep all information completely confidential, and the name of the complainant should not be revealed to the individual alleged to have caused the grievance except with the complainant's permission. In addition, written records, if taken, shall be submitted to the Dean of Student Development and then to the System's Affirmative Action/Compliance Officer as appropriate.

In the event that an attempt at informal resolution of the problem is unsuccessful, or if the complainant deems that informal resolution is undesirable, the College officer shall assist the complainant in filing of a formal complaint.

FORMAL RESOLUTION

In the event that a student wishes to lodge a formal complaint against another member of the College community, the student will address the complaint to:

- The Dean of Student Development, if the individual alleged to have caused the grievance is another student.
- The Dean of Academic or Workforce Development and, in the case of a discrimination or harassment complaint, to the System's Affirmative Action/Compliance Officer, if the individual alleged to have caused the grievance is a faculty member.
- The Dean of Student Development and, in the case of discrimination or harassment, to the System's Affirmative Action/Compliance Officer, if the individual alleged to have caused the grievance is an administrator or non-faculty employee.

A formal complaint shall be made in writing by the complainant, addressed to the above-mentioned College officers, stating in detail the nature of the complaint, any relevant dates, and the names of any potential witnesses.

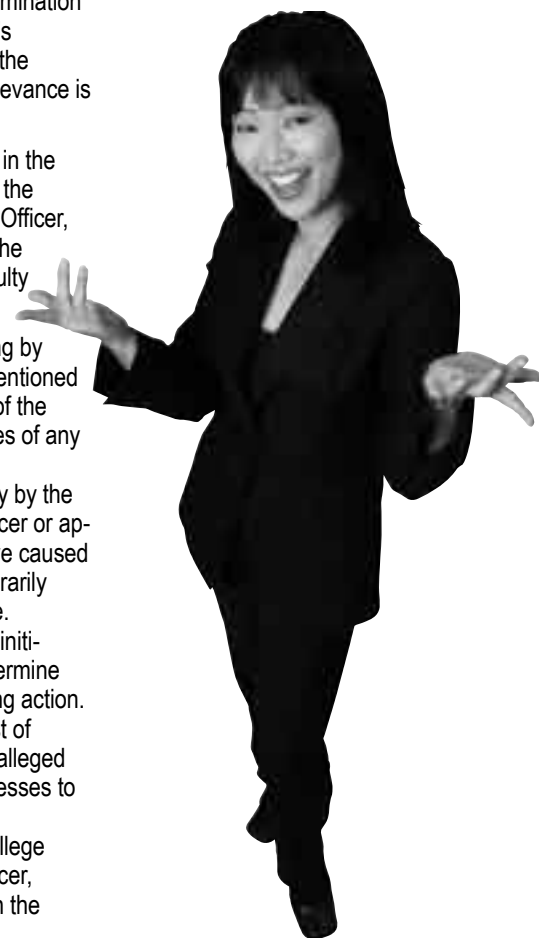
In a situation deemed to be an emergency by the System's Affirmative Action/Compliance Officer or appropriate Dean, the individual alleged to have caused the grievance or complainant may be temporarily transferred pending the outcome of the case.

The officers receiving the complaint shall initiate an investigation within two weeks to determine whether there is a reasonable basis for taking action. At a minimum, this investigation shall consist of interviewing the complainant, the individual alleged to have caused the grievance, and any witnesses to the conflict.

Within 30 days, the College's Dean or College System's Affirmative Action/Compliance Officer, as appropriate, must file a written report with the College's President for one of three actions:

- Conclude the complaint is without merit and that no further action is warranted;
- Attempt to bring about a negotiated settlement;
- Recommend to the College President conducting a formal grievance hearing to evaluate possible action against the individual alleged to have caused the grievance.

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Either party, the complainant or the individual alleged to have caused the grievance, may request a formal hearing if dissatisfied with the conclusion.

HEARING

A Grievance Committee composed of three faculty/staff members and two students shall be convened to hear the Dean or the System's Affirmative Action/Compliance Officer's recommendations and testimony from the complainant, the individual alleged to have caused the grievance, and any relevant witnesses.

The Committee shall decide whether:

- The complaint is without merit and that no further action is warranted; or
- Some remedial action is necessary.

OFFICIAL DISPOSITION

If, after the hearing, the Grievance Committee concludes that further official proceedings are necessary or if the complainant requests further proceedings despite the recommendations, the existing grievance and disciplinary procedures shall be used when determined by the College President to be appropriate. If the individual alleged to have caused the grievance is a student, the procedure set forth in the Student Discipline Policy will be followed.

If the individual alleged to have caused the grievance is a faculty member, the procedure for employee complaints shall be followed. If the individual alleged to have caused the grievance is a student, the Committee may:

- Pursue a negotiated or mediated settlement between the parties;
- Require that the students in question attend joint counseling or that the student whose conduct was complained of attend individual counseling with the College System counseling staff;
- Recommend forums for the discussion of issues of diversity and sensitivity to people of different backgrounds and characteristics in addition to written and/or oral condemnation of the discriminatory or harassing speech; and/or
- Require the student whose conduct is complained of to attend college-sponsored seminars or programs on problems of harassment or discrimination.

All other aspects of the grievance procedure not specifically mentioned in this policy shall be carried out in accordance with established HCC policy.

PENALTIES

In case of any formal proceedings, against either a student accused of violating the Student Discipline Code or an employee brought before a Grievance Committee proceeding, the standard penalties specified in the policies manual shall be enforced. The College President may also, either in lieu of or in addition to other sanctions, require an individual found to have caused a grievance involving discrimination or harassment to attend a College-sponsored seminar/program on the problems of harassment and discrimination.

COMPLAINT RECORD

All proceedings and records shall be confidential to the extent permitted by law. Memoranda describing a reprimand will be placed into the files of any student or employee in the event disciplinary action is taken against one of the parties and the disciplinary action is upheld.

No student shall be subjected to any retaliation or involuntary reassignment as a result of filing a good-faith grievance for harassment and discrimination.

At the request of the individual alleged to have caused the grievance, a memorandum recognizing a finding of nonharassment or nondiscrimination shall be placed into the file of the student or employee.

COURSE GRADE APPEAL

Grade determination and awarding of all grades in the course is clearly the responsibility of the instructor. A student's grade can be changed only at the discretion of the instructor or as a result of the appeals committee process.

Whenever possible, students and instructors should attempt to resolve grade disputes informally. If this is not possible and the student remains dissatisfied, the instructor will notify the student of the student's right to appeal a final course grade and the procedure for filing an appeal.

RIGHT TO APPEAL

Students have the right to appeal only final course grades. If a student is dissatisfied with a grade awarded while a course is in progress, the student may discuss the matter with the instructor. At this point, however, the instructor's decision is final.

Students who wish to appeal their final course grades must initiate the appeals process in writing no later than 45 calendar days after the beginning of the semester (fall, spring, or summer) after the disputed grade was received. The appeals process must be resolved in a timely fashion, but no later than the end of the next long semester (fall or spring) after the term in which the disputed grade is awarded.



Discipline

STUDENT CONDUCT

BASIC STANDARD

According to its policy on student conduct, the Houston Community College views college-level students as adults who subscribe to a basic standard of conduct which requires that they not violate any municipal, state, or federal laws. At the same time, HCC has a duty and corollary disciplinary power to protect its educational purpose through the setting of standards of conduct and through the regulation of the use of System property.

Moreover, a student's membership in the community of scholars is a privilege and carries with it obligations to participate in and contribute to the educational mission of the College and to avoid any behavior that is contrary to that mission. Therefore, no student may disrupt or otherwise interfere with any educational activity being performed by a member of the College System. In addition, no student may interfere with his/her fellow students' right to pursue their academic goals to the fullest in an atmosphere appropriate to a community of scholars. Beyond the responsibilities described in this Handbook, an instructor may establish additional reasonable behavioral guidelines for his/her class.

Any student failing to abide by appropriate standards of conduct during scheduled College activities may be asked to leave that day's class or activity by the instructor or another College official. (The student has the right to return to the next class/activity.) If a student refuses a request to voluntarily leave the classroom, security may be summoned to remove the student so that the scheduled activity may resume without further disruption. In cases of serious problems, the faculty member will document and report the incident to his/her supervisor. Further disciplinary action may be pursued. The above policy does not diminish the student's freedom to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion. However, students are responsible for learning the content of any course of study in which they are enrolled. Free inquiry and free expression, both by the instructor and the student, are indispensable to the pursuit of truth and the development of students. Students must exercise their liberty with responsibility.

A student is not entitled to greater immunities or privileges under this policy than those enjoyed by other citizens generally.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The College Operations Officer or appropriate official may initiate disciplinary proceedings against students who allegedly:

- Refuse to pay or fail to pay a debt they owe to the College.
- Give the College a check, draft, or order with intent to defraud the College. The Business Office sends written notice to a student when the drawee has rightfully refused payment. A student's failure to pay the College the amount due on a check, draft, or order on or before the fifth class day after the notice is given constitutes prima facie evidence that the student intended to defraud the College.

USE OF IDENTIFICATION CARD

Student identification (ID) cards shall be distributed during the beginning of each semester. The card will be needed for library usage, admission to college activities, and voting in campus elections.

ID cards are nontransferable and are to be held only by the students to whom they were issued. Students are required to be in possession of their ID cards at all times.

All ID cards are the property of HCC and must be shown upon request of a representative of the College System. If students lose their ID cards, they should contact the College Police office to initiate the process to obtain a new one. A nominal fee shall be charged for the replacement of lost ID cards.

SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY

Students are responsible for conducting themselves with honor and integrity in fulfilling course requirements. Penalties and/or disciplinary proceedings may be initiated by College System officials against a student accused of scholastic dishonesty.

"Scholastic dishonesty" includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarism, and collusion.

"Cheating" on a test includes:

- Copying from another student's test paper;
- Using materials during a test that are not authorized by the person giving the test;
- Collaborating with another student during a test without authority;



- Knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or part the contents of an unadministered test;
- Bribing another person to obtain a test that is to be administered.

“Plagiarism” means the appropriation of another’s work and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work in one’s own written work offered for credit.

“Collusion” means the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work offered for credit.

VIOLATIONS

Possible punishments for academic dishonesty may include a grade of “0” or “F” on the particular assignment, failure in the course, and/or recommendation for probation or dismissal from the College System. A recommendation for suspension or expulsion will be referred to the College Dean of Student Development for disciplinary disposition.

Students who wish to appeal a grade penalty should notify the instructional supervisor within 30 working days of the incident. A standing committee appointed by the College Dean of Instruction (Academic or Workforce) will convene to sustain, reduce, or reverse the grade penalty. The committee will be composed of two students, two faculty members, and one instructional administrator. A majority vote will decide the grade appeal which is final.

OTHER OFFENSES

The College Dean of Student Development may initiate disciplinary proceedings against students who:

- Conduct themselves in a manner that significantly interferes with College teaching, research, administration, disciplinary procedures, or other authorized College activities (including its public service functions) on the College premises.
- Damage, deface, or destroy College property or the property of a member of the College community or a campus visitor;
- Damage, misuse, or reprogram without proper authorization or install viruses on College computers or other equipment;
- Knowingly give false information in response to requests from the College;
- Engage in hazing, as defined by state law and College regulations;
- Forge, alter, or misuse College documents, records, or ID cards;
- Violate College policies or regulations concerning parking, registration of student organizations, use of College facilities, or the time, place, and manner of public expressions;

- Fail to comply with lawful directions of College officials acting in the performance of their duties;
- Commit any act which is classified as an indictable offense under either state or federal law while on campus or while involved in College-sponsored activities;
- Fail to comply with the College’s attendance policy or other academic requirements of the College and its programs; or
- Use, possess, and/or sell any illicit drug or narcotic, as those terms are defined by the Texas Controlled Substance Act, on College System property or at any College-related events or activities.

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

Students shall not engage in disruptive activities while on the College campus or property. The Dean of Student Development shall be responsible for enforcing regulations set by the College and the state concerning disruptive activities. State legislation governing such activities is found in Texas Education Code 37.123, and is as follows:

No person or groups of persons acting in concert may willfully engage in disruptive activities or disrupt a lawful assembly on the campus or property of any private or public school or institution of higher education or public vocational and technical school or institute.

For the purposes of this Act, “disruptive activity” means:

- obstructing or restraining the passage of persons in an exit, entrance, or hallway of any building without the authorization of the administration of the school;
- seizing control of any building or portion of a building for the purpose of interfering with any administrative, educational, research, or other authorized activity;
- preventing or attempting to prevent by force or violence any lawful assembly authorized by the school administration;
- disrupting by force or violence or the threat of force or violence a lawful assembly in progress; or
- obstructing or restraining the passage of any person at an exit or entrance to said campus or property or preventing or attempting to prevent by force or violence or by threats thereof the ingress or egress of any person to or from said property or campus without the authorization of the administration of the school.

A lawful assembly is disrupted when any person in attendance is rendered incapable of participating in

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the assembly due to the use of force or violence or due to reasonable fear that force or violence is likely to occur.

Nothing herein shall be construed to infringe upon any right of free speech or expression guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States or the State of Texas.

SMOKING

HCC prohibits smoking inside any of its buildings, owned or leased, including offices, classrooms, rest rooms, hallways, elevators and all other interior locations. Smoking is permitted outside in approved areas established by each College, administrative or support location.

DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS

HCC is fully dedicated to a drug-free environment for all students and employees at all College locations. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, sale, offer to sell, purchase and/or use of controlled substances or alcohol on campuses, at teaching sites, in vehicles, and on other property owned, leased, or under the control of HCC and at all on-campus and off-campus, school-sponsored activities is prohibited.

Controlled substances are those defined in Schedules I through V of Section 202 of the Texas Health and Safety Code, s 481.001 et. seq. the Texas Controlled Substances Act. Controlled substances include, but are not limited to, such substances as marijuana, hashish, heroin, cocaine, LSD, PCP, methamphetamine, anabolic steroids, human-growth hormones, and fentanyl.

A student who uses a drug authorized by a licensed physician through a prescription specifically for that student's use shall not be considered to have violated this rule.

As a condition of enrollment, all students are required to follow HCC policy and regulations concerning alcohol and other drugs. College counselors are available to students for consultation on alcohol and other drug issues. Counselors will assist students personally or act as a referral source when necessary. All student-counselor relationships will be on a confidential basis to the extent permitted by law.

VIOLATIONS

Students who violate the policy shall be subject to disciplinary proceedings according to the Student Discipline and Conduct Code. Disciplinary action may include referral to drug and alcohol counseling or rehabilitation programs or student assistance programs, suspension, expulsion, and referral to appropriate law enforcement officials for prosecution.

SEARCHES

No person, except a law enforcement officer, shall search a student's personal possessions for the purpose of enforcing the Student Discipline Code unless the individual's prior permission has been obtained. Searches by law enforcement officers of such possessions shall be conducted only as authorized by law.

All HCC-controlled property, such as lockers, desks, equipment, and rooms, shall be subject to search at any time, and no student should place an object in these HCC controlled areas with expectations of privacy.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE

Students in the College System are protected as any citizen and have due process rights as stated in the Fourteenth Amendment. Students must, however, assume the responsibilities of citizenship. They are expected to obey both the penal and civil statutes of the State of Texas and the federal government and the Board rules, College System regulations, and administration rules.

This Student Discipline Code contains regulations for dealing with alleged student violations of College System standards of conduct in a manner consistent with the requirements of procedural due process.

The code applies to individual students and states the function of student, faculty, and administrative staff members of the College System in disciplinary procedures.

The College System has jurisdiction for disciplinary purposes over persons who were students at the time they allegedly violated a Board rule, College regulation, or administrative policy.

DEFINITIONS

In this Code, unless the context requires a different meaning, the following definitions apply

- "Class Day" means a day on which classes are regularly scheduled or final examinations are given.
- "Dean" means the College Dean of Student Development or the Dean of Instruction (Academic or Workforce) or their representative(s).
- "Supervisor of Security" means the Supervisor of Security or delegate(s) or representative(s).
- "Chancellor" means the Chancellor of the Houston Community College.
- "Student" means a person enrolled at the College or a person accepted for enrollment at the College.



- “Administrators” means all Vice Chancellors, Associate Vice Chancellors College Presidents, Deans, Assistant Deans, Directors, and Coordinators of the College System.
- “Complaint” means a written summary of the essential facts constituting a violation of Board rules, College regulations, or administrative rules.
- “Board” means the Board of Trustees of the Houston Community College.
- “Violation” means an activity which may result in disciplinary action, suspension, or expulsion from the College and includes:
 - 1 destroying state property or students’ personal property;
 - 2 giving false information in response to requests from the College;
 - 3 instigating a disturbance or riot which substantially disrupts the educational process;
 - 4 stealing;
 - 5 possession, use, sale, or purchase of illegal drugs while on campus or involved in College-sponsored activities;
 - 6 any attempt at bodily harm toward self or others (this includes taking an overdose of pills or any other act where emergency medical attention is required);
 - 7 failure to pay or settle a debt owed with the College;
 - 8 failure to comply with parking and traffic regulations;
 - 9 possession of firearms, explosives (including fireworks), swords, daggers, straight razors, or illegal knives on any campus or in automobiles on campus parking lots;
 - 10 hazing;
 - 11 other activities specifically prohibited in the sections of the Student Discipline and Conduct Codes
 - 12 being intoxicated or possessing intoxicating beverages anywhere on campus or in an automobile parked on campus;
 - 13 misuse of ID card;
 - 14 creating a disturbance on campus facilities;
 - 15 gambling;
 - 16 unauthorized use of College facilities;
 - 17 scholastic dishonesty; or
 - 18 other activities which disrupt the normal educational process.

INITIATION OF DISCIPLINARY ACTION

When the College administrator receives information that a student has allegedly violated a Board rule, College regulation, or administrative rule, the appropriate College administrator shall investigate the alleged violation. After completing the preliminary investigation, the appropriate College administrator may take action as stated in the Penalties Section of this Handbook (see page 32). If the student seeks appeal of the action, the College administrator shall request the Dean of Student Development or a delegated representative to review the investigation of the alleged violation. After reviewing the preliminary investigation, the Dean may:

- conduct a further investigation if deemed necessary and, then
- dismiss the allegation as unfounded; or
- summon the student for a conference for an evaluation of the severity of the allegations and, after conferring with the student, either dismiss the allegation, proceed administratively as described in the Administrative Disposition of a Violation Section (below), or prepare a complaint based on the allegation for use in disciplinary hearings along with a list of witnesses and documentary evidence supporting the allegation.

The Dean may take immediate interim disciplinary actions, to suspend the right of a student to be present on any HCC campus, enroll or attend classes. Altering the status of a student for violation of a Board rule, College regulation, or administrative rule when an emergency exists, requires immediate action to preserve the educational environment.

SUMMONING STUDENT

A student may be summoned to appear in connection with an alleged violation by the Dean calling the student at the phone number listed in the student’s permanent folder in the Office of Student Records. (It is the student’s responsibility to send immediate notification to that office of any change of address or phone number.) In other instances, officials authorized to complete a Student Incident Report may tell a student that he/she may not return to class until the student has contacted the Dean.

- The call or form shall direct the student to appear at a specified time and place not more than seven working days after the time of the call or the completion of the form.
- The Dean may place on disciplinary probation a student who fails, without good cause, to comply with a Letter of Summons or the Dean may proceed against the student as described below in “Administrative Disposition of a Violation.”

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ADMINISTRATIVE DISPOSITION OF A VIOLATION

- In administratively disposing of a violation, the Dean may impose any disciplinary action authorized in "Penalties" (see page 41), subject to the student's right to appeal.
- At a conference with a student in connection with an alleged violation, the Dean shall advise the student of his or her rights.
- The Dean shall prepare an accurate, written summary of each administrative disposition of a violation and forward a copy to the student, to the parents or guardians of a student who is unmarried and under 18 years of age, and to the College President and other administrative personnel when deemed appropriate. (Discretion may call for modification of this listing.)
- A student may refuse administrative disposition of the alleged violation and, upon refusal, is entitled to a hearing. If administrative disposition is accepted, the student shall sign a statement certifying understanding of the nature of the charges, the right to a hearing or to waive the same, the penalty imposed, and the waiver of the right to appeal.

DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE

When a student refuses administrative disposition of a violation, the student is entitled to a hearing before a Discipline Committee. This request must be made in writing on or before the seventh working day following the administrative disposition.

Discipline Committees shall be appointed by the College President and shall include three faculty or staff members and two students.

The Discipline Committee shall elect a chairperson from the three faculty members. The chairperson of the Committee shall rule on the admissibility of evidence, motions, and objections to procedure; but a majority of the committee members may override the chairperson's ruling. All members of the Committee are eligible to vote in the hearing.

The College Dean of Student Development shall set the date, time, and place for the hearing and notify the student defendant of the date, time, and place. The Dean shall also request the appearance of witnesses and require the production of documentary and other evidence.

The Dean shall represent the College before the Discipline Committee and present evidence to support any allegations of violations of Board rules, College regulations, or administrative rules. The Dean may be assisted by legal counsel when in the opinion of the Dean, the best interests of the student or the College would be served by such assistance.

NOTICE

The Dean shall notify the student concerned by letter of date, time, and place for the hearing. The letter shall specify a hearing date not less than three, nor more than 10, class days after the date of the letter. If the student is unmarried and under 18 years of age, a copy of the letter shall be sent to the parents or guardians.

The Dean may for good cause postpone the hearing so long as all interested parties are notified of the new hearing date, time, and place.

The Discipline Committee may hold a hearing at any time if:

- The student has actual notice of the date, time, and place of the hearing, and
- The College President or designee gives written notice to the Dean that because of extraordinary circumstances the normal time requirements for the hearing have been waived.

The hearing notice shall:

- Contain a copy of the complaint;
- Direct the student to appear before the Committee on the date and at the time and place specified; and
- Advise the student of his or her rights to an open or closed public hearing, to appear alone or with legal counsel, and to have his or her parents or legal guardians present at the hearing.

STUDENT RIGHTS

Charges arising out of a single transaction or occurrence against one or more students may be heard together; however, at the option of the Committee or upon request by one of the students involved, a separate hearing may be held.

Seventy-two hours prior to the hearing date, the student concerned shall furnish the committee chairperson with:

- The name and address of each witness the student wants to appear and description of all documentary and other evidence possessed by the College which the student wants produced; and
- A summary of the proposed testimony of each witness;
- If the student chooses to be assisted by another person or attorney, the name and address of such person or attorney, if any, who will appear with the student; or
- A request for a separate hearing, if any, and the grounds for such request; or
- An objection that, if sustained by the chairperson of the Student Disciplinary Committee, would prevent the hearing.

When the hearing is set, or for any good cause



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determined by the Committee chairperson, the student concerned is entitled to furnish the information described above before the hearing begins.

Failure to provide advanced notices may result in the Committee's refusal to allow the attorney and/or witnesses to participate in the hearing or may be grounds for a delay in the proceeding.

HEARING

The hearing, open or closed, is informal and the chairperson shall provide reasonable opportunities for witnesses to be heard. The College may be represented by staff members of the Dean's office, legal counsel, and other persons designated by the College President. The hearing may include the following persons at the invitation of the student:

- Student's legal counsel; and
- Members of the student's immediate family.

The Committee shall proceed generally as follows during the hearing:

1. The Dean reads the complaint;
2. The Dean informs the student of his or her rights;
3. The Dean presents the College's case;
4. The student presents his or her defense;
5. The Dean and the student present rebuttal evidence and arguments;
6. The Committee votes to decide whether or not there has been a violation of a Board rule, College regulation, or administrative rule. If the Committee finds the student has violated a Board rule, College regulation, or administrative rule, the Committee will determine an appropriate penalty;
7. The Committee or the Dean acting on behalf of the Committee informs the student of the decision and penalty, if any; and
8. The Committee shall state in writing each finding of a violation of a Board rule, College regulation, or administrative rule, and the penalty determined. Each Committee member concurring in the finding and penalty shall sign the statement. The Committee may include in the statement its reasons for the finding and penalty.

EVIDENCE

Legal rules of evidence do not apply to hearings before the Discipline Committee, and the Committee may admit and give probative effect to evidence that possesses probative value and is commonly accepted by reasonable people in the conduct of their affairs. The Committee shall exclude irrelevant, immaterial, and unduly repetitious evidence. The Committee shall recognize as privileged, to the extent permitted by law, communications between a student and a member of the professional staff of the Counseling Center or the Office of the Dean where such communications were made in the course of

performance of official duties and when the matters discussed were understood by the staff member and the student to be confidential. Committee members may freely question witnesses.

The Committee shall presume a student innocent of the alleged violation until it is convinced by substantial evidence (preponderance of the evidence) that the student violated a Board rule, College regulation, or administrative rule.

All evidence shall be offered to the Committee during the hearing and made a part of the hearing record. Documentary evidence may be admitted in the form of copies or extracts or by incorporation by reference. Real evidence may be photographed, videotaped, recorded or described.

A student defendant may not be compelled to testify against himself or herself.

RECORD

The hearing record shall include:

- A copy of the notice required (see "Notice" on page 31);
- All documentary and other evidence offered or admitted as evidence;
- Written motions, pleas, and any other materials considered by the Committee; and
- The Committee's decision.

If a Notice of Appeal is given, the Dean shall send the record to the student appellant on or before the 10th class day after the Notice of Appeal is given.

The disciplinary records and proceedings shall be kept separate from the student's academic record and shall be treated as confidential to the extent provided by law.

Final disposition of the record shall reside with the Office of Student Records.

APPEAL

A student is entitled to appeal to the College President and to the Board through the College President. The College President shall automatically review every penalty of expulsion.

A petition is informal, but shall contain the information required. A student shall file the petition with the President on or before the third class day after the Discipline Committee announces its decision. If the College President rejects the petition and the student appellant wishes to appeal to the Board, the student shall file the petition to the Board through the College President on or before the third class day after the day the College President rejects the petition.

The College President and/or Board in their review may take any action that the Student Discipline Committee is authorized to take. The College President and/or Board may receive written briefs and hear oral argument during their review.



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PENALTIES

Subject to the student's right of appeal, the Dean of Student Development or the Discipline Committee may impose one or more of the following penalties for violation of a Board rule, College regulation, or administrative rule:

- Admonition.
- Warning probation.
- Disciplinary probation.
- Withholding of transcript or degree.
- Bar against readmission.
- Restitution.
- Suspension of rights or privileges.
- Suspension of eligibility for official co-curricular activities.
- Denial of degree.
- Suspension from the College.
- Expulsion from the College.

The penalties above shall be defined as follows:

An admonition is a written reprimand from the Dean to the student on whom it is imposed.

Warning probation indicates that further violations of regulations will result in more severe disciplinary action. Warning probation may be imposed for any length of time up to one calendar year, and the student shall be automatically removed from probation when the imposed period expires.

Disciplinary probation indicates that further violations may result in suspension. Disciplinary probation may be imposed for any length of time up to one calendar year and the student shall be automatically removed from probation when the imposed period expires.

Withholding of transcript or degree is imposed upon a student who fails to pay a debt owed the College or who has a disciplinary case pending final disposition. The penalty terminates on payment of the debt or final disposition of the case.

Bar against readmission is imposed on a student who has left the College on enforced withdrawal for disciplinary reasons.

Restitution is reimbursement for damage to or misappropriation of property. Reimbursement may take the form of appropriate service to repair or otherwise compensate for damages.

Suspension of rights and privileges is an elastic penalty which may impose limitations or restrictions to fit the particular case.

Suspension of eligibility for official co-curricular activities prohibits, during the period of suspension, the student on whom it is imposed from joining a registered student organization, taking part in a registered student organization's activities or attending its meetings or functions, or participating in an official

co-curricular activity. Such suspension may be imposed for any length of time up to one calendar year.

Denial of degree may be imposed on a student found guilty of scholastic dishonesty and may be imposed for any length of time, up to and including permanent denial.

Suspension from the College prohibits, during the period of suspension, the student on whom it is imposed from being initiated into an honorary or service organization; from entering the College campus, except in response to an official summons; and from registering, either for credit or for non-credit, for scholastic work at or through the College.

Expulsion is permanent severance from the College.



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Student Records

To minimize the risk of improper disclosure, academic and disciplinary records will be kept separate, and the conditions of access to each will be set forth in an explicit policy statement in accordance with the Texas Open Records Law and the Family Rights and Privacy Act.

Records of present or former students are confidential and are not public information.

TYPES OF RECORDS

- Admissions records*
- Academic progress*
- Academic transcript*
- Attendance records
- Standardized test results
- Psychological tests and evaluations
- Disciplinary records*
- Library records
- Financial records
- Placement records
- Financial aid records
- Veteran's records
- Counselor's information
- Any other information in a file assigned to a student.

**These records are part of the student's permanent record. Permanent records are maintained at 3100 Main by the appropriate custodial agent, except for disciplinary records which are maintained by the Dean of Student Development at each College.*

DEFINITIONS

Student records—any personally identifiable record concerning a student maintained for use by the College System, except:

A personal record kept by a staff member, if it is kept in the personal possession of the individual who made the record, and information contained in the record has never been revealed or made available to any other person except the maker's temporary substitute.

Records maintained by the College System Security Office if the record is maintained solely for law enforcement purposes and is revealed only to law enforcement agencies of the same jurisdiction and the Office does not have access to education records maintained by the System.

Eligible student—any person who has been accepted, who attends or has attended the College System.

Custodian—the Chancellor of the College System.

Custodial agents—Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Services, Registrar, Financial Aid Director, Director of Learning Support, Director of Admissions and Enrollment Support, and Director of Certification (3100 Main, P.O. Box 667517, Houston, TX 77266-7517).

Directory information— name, address, telephone number, date of birth, degrees earned and dates, major field of study, dates of attendance, enrollment status, name of most recent previous institution attended, student classification number of semester hours completed and in progress.

School official—a person employed by the College in an administrative, supervisory, academic or research, or support staff position (including law enforcement unit personnel); a person or company with whom the College has contracted (such as attorney, auditor, or collection agent); a person serving on the Board of Trustees; or a student serving on an official committee, such as Disciplinary or Grievance Committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

Legitimate educational interest—a need by a school official to review an educational record in order to fulfill a professional responsibility.

Dates of attendance—beginning and ending dates of terms student attended, including withdrawal dates.

ACCESS TO RECORDS

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords students certain rights with respect to their educational records. These rights include:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's educational records.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's educational records that the student believes are inaccurate or misleading.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's educational records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by Houston Community College to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is: Family Policy Compliance Office; US Department of Education; 400 Maryland Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20202-4605.

A student's file may at any time be reviewed upon written request to the appropriate custodial agent.



An inaccurate or inappropriate entry into the records may not be corrected or removed when an eligible student has made a request to review the record and the request has not yet been honored.

Requests for examination of personally identifiable information must be made in writing by the eligible student to the appropriate custodial agent. The request shall identify the specific record(s) to be examined. Requests shall be promptly honored within a reasonable period of time, but the request must be honored within 45 days from receipt of request.

Requests for copies of student records may be made by an eligible student to the appropriate custodial agent. Fees may be charged for copies of records in accordance with the Texas Public Information Act and the Family Rights and Privacy Act. A student may seek a waiver of such fees.

When a record contains information about more than one student, only the records that relate to the student making the request may be reviewed.

A log of requests for a student's records shall be maintained in the student's file indicating all requests, date of requests, by whom made, and whether or not each request was honored.

PROCEDURE TO AMEND RECORDS

If an eligible student feels that information in records is inaccurate or misleading or in violation of the student's privacy rights or other rights, a request for correction, which identifies the part of the record questioned and the nature of the inaccuracy, may be given in writing to the appropriate custodial agent. If the correction is not made within a reasonable length of time (a maximum of 30 school days) a hearing may be requested with the custodian of the appropriate record.

If the concern is not resolved with the custodial agent, an appeal for a second hearing may be made to the appropriate Vice Chancellor.

If the eligible student has a legitimate complaint following a hearing before the appropriate Vice Chancellor, it may be filed with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Office, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, in Dallas, TX.

A hearing pertaining to student records may be scheduled to challenge the accuracy of recording but not the assignment of a grade.

ACCESS BY OTHER PERSONS

With the exceptions recognized in this policy, the release of student records shall require written approval of the eligible student. In all instances legal directives and requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 and the Texas Public Information Act pertaining to student records shall be followed.

Student records shall be accessible without consent to the following:

- School officials who have a legitimate educational interest in the student's record.
- Upon request, officials of other schools in which the student seeks or intends to enroll. The student is entitled to a copy of the record forwarded to the other institutions if the student so desires.
- Individuals needing the information in connection with a student's application for or receipt of financial aid.
- State or local officials to which educational data must be reported.
- Legitimate organizations developing, validating, or administering predictive tests or student aid programs. Such data is not to be released in any identifiable form and will be destroyed by the organization after the research has been completed.
- Accrediting agencies.
- Parents of a dependent student as defined in Section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954.
- In compliance with a judicial order or pursuant to any lawfully issued subpoena.
- Representative of the Comptroller General of the United States, Secretary of Education, administrative heads of educational agencies, or state education authorities.

Personally identifiable information may also be released to legitimate agencies providing financial assistance to students, to organizations conducting studies for the purposes of developing, validating, or administering tests, or for the purpose of improving instruction, provided that the information is not to be revealed to a third party.

Directory information will be released without consent by the custodial agent. Students who do not want directory information released are responsible for notifying the Office of Student Records (3100 Main, Houston, TX 77002) in writing within the first 12 days of the fall or spring semester or the first four days of the summer term.

The custodial agent may require a conference with the eligible student during a review or with anyone entitled to access to any records prior to release of the records if necessary for an understanding of the records.

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