CAMPUS LIFE

Campus 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, counseling and disability services, a 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 food services, online bookstore, SGSC libraries, and the SGSC Police Department.

ACADEMIC ADVISING

Academic advisement provides an appropriate support service for students in their respective academic pathways. Each student is assigned an advisor who will act as an advocate to help the student graduate in his/her chosen degree in a timely and efficient manner. Advisors serve students during times of registration to help plot their programs of study and take the necessary prerequisites/requirements for graduation. Advisors also assist students with transfer information and academic goal planning.

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 intercollegiate athletic programs: baseball, women's soccer, softball, and men's basketball. 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, the community golf course on the Douglas campus is available to enrolled students for recreational use. The strength of these programs is drawn from the high levels of student leadership and participation. The Coordinator of Student Engagement for Student Success is responsible for the oversight of the intramural sports program.

CAREER SERVICES

Career Services at SGSC provides resources to help students research potential pathways, programs, and college transfer options. Student Success staff assist students and alumni with individual career counseling at all campus locations. Students have access to career assessments and information about degree programs and career fields. Career Services partners with businesses in the community to offer internship opportunities that are designed to incorporate academic coursework with work experience. Through these experiences, students may earn credit(s) toward their degree while working in positions related to their academic and career goals. Additionally, Career Services provides workshops on skills such as networking, writing resumés and cover letters, and interviewing. Career Services sponsors information sessions and programming to help students transition into the workforce.

COUNSELING AND DISABILITY SERVICES

The University System of Georgia has launched a program to expand mental health resources. South Georgia State College has joined with them to offer its students access to the help and support needed while trying to navigate the changes and challenges many face. Uwill gives students free immediate access to telecounseling, a direct crisis connection, and wellness programming through its easy-to-use online platform.

Telecounseling:

- Students can schedule up to 4 teletherapy appointments with a licensed counselor based on needs and preferences. They may
    - Choose a therapist based on immediacy, gender, language, focus area; and
    - Select a time that works best, with day, evening and weekend appointments.
- Students can create a profile and get started in minutes.
- Counselors can refer students to Upsych for psychiatric services, if needed.

Crisis Support:

- If a student is experiencing a mental health crisis, Uwill provides a direct connection to a licensed counselor trained in trauma
- Help is available 24/7/365 by calling **833.646.1526**
- If a student is having a medical emergency, they should call 911

Wellness:

- Students can access free on-demand wellness programming on the Uwill platform.
- Select wellness from the left navigation.
- Relax & recharge your mind and body with yoga, meditation, mindfulness, and more!

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

Before each academic term, there is a highly-concentrated college-wide program, Student Orientation, Advisement, and Registration (SOAR), designed to introduce new students to SGSC. Students are provided information on academic and student support services. Workshop topics include Campus Resources, Information and Instructional Technology, Financial Aid, Advising and Registration, and more.

RESIDENCE LIFE AND HOUSING

The Office of Residence Life and Housing exists to advance the educational mission of the College through its diverse programs and services. The Office of Residence Life and Housing 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, group study rooms, multipurpose entertainment spaces, laundry/vending, security, 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 Program at Valdosta State University in Valdosta. For more information, email sgscep.vsu@sgsc.edu or phone 912.260.4660.

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 Becoming a Hawk 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 one of the following counties: Atkinson, Bacon, Ben Hill, Berrien, Coffee, Irwin, Jeff Davis, Telfair, or Ware (must provide a copy of driver's license if requested by the College; otherwise, the student does not need to complete an exemption form)

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 Campus 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 and Housing for Student Success.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

The SGSC Student Government Association (SGA) 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.

STUDENT SUCCESS CENTER

SGSC has established a Student Success Center 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. There are multiple locations and modalities available to meet the needs of students:

- Douglas Student Success Center (Powell Hall, Room 103)
- Waycross Student Success Center (Dye Building, Room 141)

Online tutoring is available through GeorgiaVIEW with tutor.com. Free tutoring services are also available at the entry program site listed below:

- Valdosta State University Entry Program Office (contact 912.260.4660 for assistance)

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 Success and the resources available, please visit https://www.sgsc.edu/academics/student-success.

COLLEGE POST OFFICE

Current residential students on the Douglas Campus may have mail and packages sent to them at the College. All mail and packages should be addressed to the student using their legal first and last name. The mailing address is 100 West College Park Drive, Douglas GA 31533. No building name or room number is needed.

Residence Life & Housing staff will receive student mail and packages and will contact students so they may pick their items at the Tiger 2 Front Desk.

Deliveries, if made to the College after hours, on weekends or other times when the College is closed, will be picked up by staff on the next regular business day.

SGSC POLICE DEPARTMENT

South Georgia State College (SGSC) is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all students, faculty, staff, and visitors. The SGSC Police Department is the primary law enforcement agency for the college and is recognized by the Georgia Peace Officers Standards and Training (POST) Council as a certified police agency. The department enforces federal and state laws as well as local ordinances and plays a vital role in ensuring the safety and security of the college community across its campuses.

Douglas Campus

The SGSC Police Department provides around-the-clock safety and security services on the Douglas Campus. For emergencies, dial 911, and for non-emergency assistance, contact 912.384.7675 to have an officer dispatched to your location. Tiger Village I, the 1st floor, West Wing, is home to the SGSC Police Department.

Waycross Campus

The Waycross Police Department provides emergency response services for the Waycross Campus. For emergencies, dial 911, and for non-emergencies, call 912.287.4335. An SGSC police officer is available during late afternoons and evenings, Monday through Thursday. Contact the Physical Plant at 912.449.7531 during business hours for internal campus concerns.

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.

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 maintains two campus libraries with full services to students, faculty, staff, and community users. These learning resource centers provide 21st century library services with modern technology and an environment conducive to research and study for both independent and collaborative learning.

The William S. Smith Library is a 32,000-square-foot facility located on the Douglas campus with access to a variety of individual and group study rooms and two computer labs offering more than thirty Internet-accessible computers. The Library houses a special collection of Georgiana materials and the University Archives in its Georgia Rooms. Other campus facilities located within the Library include a computer classroom and a research room for undergraduate research and study.

The Waycross Campus Library encompasses 13,600 square feet within the Administrative Building on the Waycross campus. The Library offers two study rooms and an audiovisual room. Students have access to over thirty computer terminals. This Library is home to an Okefenokee Swamp Collection and a smaller special collection of materials.

Both SGSC Libraries provide a variety of print, audiovisual, and electronic collections through direct and shared ownership, membership, and subscription including access to GALILEO, the state's virtual library. Hours are posted on the Libraries web page.

Wireless Internet is available at both locations and printing can be handled from any of the WEPA machines located on either campus. Books and media resources from one campus collection can be borrowed by and delivered to students on the other campus. Items not available at either campus may be borrowed from libraries within the University System through the GIL Express Service or requested from other non-USG libraries through Interlibrary Loan.

Librarians provide one-on-one in-person or virtual reference assistance and research consultation, classroom and information literacy instruction, and orientations and tours. Contact a librarian through LibChat, Ask-a-Librarian, or by filling out the Virtual Research Assistance form, all linked from the Libraries Home Page. A librarian may be embedded for research assistance within certain online classes upon request of faculty

VEHICLE REGISTRATION

SGSC extends the privilege to operate a motor vehicle on campus in return for adherence to regulations designed to promote safety. 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. College personnel may cite violators under South Georgia State College Traffic and Parking Regulations or the Georgia Traffic Code.

There are designated employee and visitor spaces on the Douglas and Waycross campuses. Commuter students and visitors may park in spaces that are not reserved.

Only residential students and employees parking in reserved spaces are required to have a parking permit on their vehicles. In order to obtain a decal, you must have your vehicle description, tag number and student identification.

New employees may obtain a parking permit from the Department of Human Resources.

Residential student permits may be obtained from security personnel during the first two weeks of class. Students may obtain one decal free of charge. Additional decals are $10.00 each.

Permits are to be permanently affixed to the driver's side exterior rear window of vehicles with the exception of motorcycles and convertibles. Those permits should be placed on the rear fender or the front windshield. Permits are valid until July 1 of the expiring year. Residential students should remain parked at the Residence Halls and walk to class.

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, from the Residence Life Specialist.

See http://www.sgsc.edu/departments/homepage.cms for additional details about vehicle registration and parking rules and regulations.

Revised 07/25/24

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 (updated January 19, 2019).

CODE OF CONDUCT

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR STUDENTS

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 remain silent.
- 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.

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Consistent with federal law and University System of Georgia policy, sexual misconduct of employees or students in the University System is prohibited and shall subject the offender to dismissal or other sanctions. Copies of the Sexual Harassment Policy are available online, https://www.usg.edu/policymanual/section6/C2655/

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

4.6.5 Standards for Institutional Student Conduct Investigation and Disciplinary Proceedings

(This policy will take effect Fall Semester, 2017)

This Policy establishes minimum procedural standards for investigations and resolutions of alleged student conduct violations, which each institution must incorporate into its respective student conduct policies. The purpose of this Policy is to ensure uniformity in the quality of investigations while providing for due process that affords fairness and equity in all student conduct investigations.

These procedures apply to matters relating to student misconduct, except matters relating to academic dishonesty, which may be covered under separate institutional policies. Institutions shall inform students of their procedures governing student misconduct complaints and investigations.

4.6.5.1 Reports of Student Misconduct

Institutions must provide clear notice to students and other campus community members as to how to file complaints of misconduct.

Complaints to the appropriate department and/or person(s) should include as much information as possible – such as: (1) the type of misconduct alleged; (2) the name and contact information of the individual(s) accused of misconduct; (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.

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 Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act (“Clery Act”) shall be assessed in compliance with federal law.

Where appropriate, complainants may file a law enforcement report as well as an institutional report but are not required to file both.

1. Confidentiality: Where a complainant or alleged victim requests that his or her identity be withheld or the allegation(s) not be investigated, the institutions should consider whether or not such request(s) can be honored while still providing a safe and nondiscriminatory environment for the institution and conducting an effective review of the allegations. The institution should inform the requesting party that the institution cannot guarantee confidentiality.
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 subjected 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 appropriate department or individual(s) for that institution. Any person found to have engaged in retaliation in violation of the student conduct policy shall be subject to disciplinary action, pursuant to the institution's policy.
3. False Complaints/Statements: Individuals are prohibited from intentionally giving false statements to an institution official. Any person found to have intentionally submitted false complaints, accusations, or statements, including during a hearing, in violation of this Policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action (up to and including suspension or expulsion) and adjudicated under the student conduct policy.
4. Amnesty: Students should be encouraged to come forward and report violations of the law and/or student code of conduct notwithstanding their own improper use of alcohol or drugs. Any student(s) who voluntarily and in good faith reports information to college or university faculty or staff prior to any investigation concerning use of drugs or alcohol will not be voluntarily reported to law enforcement; nor will information that the individual provides be used against the individual for purposes of conduct violations. Nevertheless, these students may be required to meet with staff members in regard to the incident and may be required to participate in appropriate educational program(s). The required participation in an educational program under this amnesty procedure will not be considered a sanction.

Nothing in this amnesty procedure shall prevent a university staff member who is otherwise obligated by law (the Clery Act) to report information or statistical data as required.

1.6.5.2 Process for Investigating and Resolving Disputed Reports

Jurisdiction: Each institution shall take necessary and appropriate action to protect the safety and well-being of its community. Accordingly, student conduct should be addressed when such acts occur on institution property, at institution-sponsored or affiliated events, or otherwise violate the institution's student conduct policies, regardless as to where such conduct occurs. 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.

Access to Advisors: The respondent and alleged victim (where applicable), as parties to these proceedings, shall have the right to have an advisor (who may or may not be an attorney) of his or her choosing, and at his or her own expense, for the express purpose of providing advice and counsel. The advisor may be present during meetings and proceedings during the investigatory and/or resolution process at which his or her advisee is present. The advisor may advise his or her advisee in any manner, including providing questions, suggestions, and guidance on responses to any questions posed to the advisee, but shall not participate directly during the investigation or hearing process. The institution shall not prohibit family members of a party from attending the hearing if the party requests such attendance but may limit each participant to

having two family members present.

Initial Evaluation of Student Conduct Reports: Regardless of how an institution becomes aware of misconduct, the institution shall ensure a prompt, fair, and impartial review and resolution of complaints alleging student misconduct. Where a report of student misconduct has been made to the appropriate department and/or person, the institution shall review the complaint to determine whether the allegation(s) describes conduct in violation of the institution's policies and/or code of conduct. If the reported conduct would not be a violation of the institution's policies and/or code of conduct, even if true, then the report should be dismissed. Otherwise, a prompt, thorough, and impartial investigation, and review shall be conducted into each complaint received to determine whether charges against the respondent should be brought.

Where a report of student misconduct alleges sexual misconduct or other forms of harassment and/or discrimination, the report will be referred to and the investigation will be conducted through or as directed by the appropriate office trained and equipped to investigate such matters.

Any report that involves allegation(s) of conduct that could lead to the suspension or expulsion of the respondent(s) in an initial violation must be promptly reported to the System Director by the institution. The System Director will work with the institution to determine whether any interim measure(s) are necessary, to assign an investigator and will collaboratively supervise the investigation with the appropriate institution professional (e.g., the Title IX Coordinator, Dean of Students and Housing for Student Success). If an allegation is not initially identified as one that could lead to suspension or expulsion of the respondent(s), but facts arise during the course of the investigation that would require oversight from the System Director, then the institution shall report that case to the System Director or her designee prior to proceeding.

Interim Measures

Interim measures may be provided by the institution at any point during an investigation and should be designed to protect the alleged victim and the community. To the extent interim measures are imposed, they should minimize the burden on both the alleged victim and the respondent, where feasible. Interim measures may include, but are not limited to:

1. Change of housing assignment;
2. Issuance of a "no contact" directive;
3. Restrictions or bars to entering certain institution property;
4. Changes to academic or employment arrangements, schedules, or supervision;
5. Interim suspension; and
6. Other measures designed to promote the safety and well-being of the parties and the institution's community.

An interim suspension should only occur where necessary to maintain safety and should be limited to those situations where the respondent poses a serious and immediate danger or threat to persons or property. In making such an assessment, the institution should consider the existence of a significant risk to the health or safety of the alleged victim or 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 must make all reasonable efforts to give the respondent 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 take effect immediately. Upon request, the respondent will have an opportunity to be heard by the respective conduct officer, Title IX Coordinator, or System Director, as appropriate, within three business days in order to determine whether the interim suspension should continue.

Investigation

Throughout any investigation and resolution proceedings, a party shall receive written notice of the alleged misconduct, shall be provided an opportunity to respond, and shall be allowed to remain silent or otherwise not participate in or during the investigation and resolution process without an adverse inference resulting. If a party chooses to remain silent or otherwise not participate in an investigation, the investigation may still proceed, and policy charges may still result and be resolved. Additionally, in any investigation involving allegations of sexual misconduct, timely notice of meetings shall be provided to each party of any meeting at which the complainant, respondent or alleged victim may be present. Timely and equal access to information that will be used during the investigation will be provided to the complainant, respondent and alleged victim (where applicable).

Where 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 must provide the additional minimal safeguards outlined below.

1. The alleged victim and respondent 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.
2. Upon receipt of the written notice, the respondent shall have at least three business days to respond in writing. In that response, the respondent shall have the right to admit or to deny the allegations, and to set forth a defense with facts, witnesses, and supporting materials. A non-response will be considered a general denial of the alleged misconduct. Any alleged victim shall also be provided three business days to respond to or to supplement the notice.
3. If the respondent admits responsibility, the process may proceed to the sanctioning phase or may be informally resolved, if appropriate.
4. If at any point the investigator determines there is insufficient evidence to support a charge or to warrant further consideration of discipline, then the complaint should be dismissed.
5. An investigator shall conduct a thorough investigation and should retain written notes and/or obtain written or recorded statements from each interview. The investigator shall also keep a record of any party's proffered witnesses not interviewed, along with a brief, written explanation of why the witnesses were not interviewed.
6. The initial investigation report shall be provided to the respondent and the alleged victim (where applicable). This report 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. For purposes of this Policy, a charge is not a finding of responsibility, but indicates that there is sufficient evidence to warrant further consideration and adjudication.
7. The final investigation report should be provided to the misconduct panel or hearing officer for consideration in adjudicating the charges brought against the respondent. A copy shall also be provided to the respondent 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.

Resolution/Hearing

In no case shall a hearing to resolve charge(s) of student misconduct take place before the investigative report has been finalized.

Where the respondent indicates that he or she contests the charges, the matter shall be set for a hearing and once the investigative report has been finalized and copies provided to the respondent and alleged victim (where applicable); however, the alleged victim (where applicable) and respondent may have the option of selecting informal resolution as a possible resolution in certain student misconduct cases where they mutually agree, except where deemed inappropriate by the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs (or his/her designee) or the System Director.

Where a case is not resolved through informal resolution or informal resolution is not available due to the nature of the charges, the respondent shall have the option of having the charges heard either by an administrator (hearing officer) or a hearing panel. However, all cases involving charges of sexual misconduct that go to a hearing shall be heard by a panel of staff and/or faculty. Sexual misconduct panel members shall receive appropriate annual training as directed by the System Director or Coordinator and required by the Clery Act. If an administrative hearing is requested, the respondent shall use his or her discretion to determine whether the case should be heard by a hearing panel. Notice of the date, time, and location of the hearing shall be provided to the respondent, complainant, and alleged victim (where applicable) at least five business days prior to the hearing. Notice shall be provided via institution email where applicable. Additionally, the following standards will apply to any such hearing:

The respondent shall have the right to present witnesses and evidence to the hearing officer or panel. Witness testimony, if provided, shall pertain to knowledge and facts directly associated with the case being heard. Both parties shall have the right to confront any witnesses, including the other party, by submitting written questions to the hearing officer for consideration. Advisors may actively assist in drafting questions. The 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 respondent(s). In any event, the Panel shall err on the side of asking all submitted questions and must document the reason for not asking any particular questions.

1. 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 whether 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. In sexual misconduct cases, the hearing officer reserves the right to allow a party to testify in a separate room, so long as no party is unfairly disadvantaged by this procedure. A party must still give testimony in the presence of the Panel, and the opposing party must have the opportunity to view the testimony remotely and to submit follow-up questions.
2. Formal civil rules of evidence do not apply to the investigatory or resolution process.
3. 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.
4. Institutions should maintain documentation of the proceedings, which may include written findings of fact, transcripts, audio recordings, and/or video recordings.
5. Following a hearing, both the respondent and alleged victim (where applicable) shall be

simultaneously provided a written decision via institution email (where applicable) 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 hearing panel or an administrative proceeding.

Possible Sanctions

In determining the severity of sanctions or corrective actions the following should be 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; strength of the evidence; and the wellbeing of the university community. The hearing panel, hearing officer or administrator that found that a policy violation occurred will determine sanctions and issue notice of the same, as outlined above.

The broad range of sanctions includes: expulsion; suspension for an identified time frame or until satisfaction of certain conditions or both; temporary or permanent separation of the parties (e.g., change in classes, reassignment of residence, no contact orders, limiting geography of where parties can go on campus) with additional sanctions for violating no-contact orders; required participation in sensitivity training/awareness education programs; required participation in alcohol and other drug awareness and abuse prevention programs; counseling or mentoring; volunteering/community service; loss of institutional privileges; delays in obtaining administrative services and benefits from the institution (e.g., delaying registration, graduation, diplomas); additional academic requirements relating to scholarly work or research; financial restitution; or any other discretionary sanctions directly related to the violation or conduct.

4.6.5.3 Appeals

Where the sanction imposed includes a suspension or expulsion (even for one held in abeyance), the following appellate procedures must be provided. The alleged offender (and in cases involving sexual misconduct or other forms of discrimination and/or harassment, the alleged victim) 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 for the above reasons in any case where sanctions are issued, even when such sanctions are held "in abeyance," such as probationary suspension or expulsion.

The appeal must be made in writing and must set forth one or more of the bases outlined above and must be submitted within five business days of the date of the final written decision. The appeal should be made to the institution's Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs or his/her designee.

The appeal shall be a review of the record only, and no new meeting with the respondent or any alleged victim is required. The Vice President, or his or 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 or her designee shall then issue a decision in writing to the respondent within a reasonable time period.

The decision of the Vice President or his or her designee may be appealed in writing within five business days (as determined by the date of the decision letter) to the President of the institution solely on the three grounds set forth above.

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 simultaneously issued in writing to the complainant, the respondent and the alleged victim (where applicable) within a reasonable time period. The President's decision shall be the final decision of the institution.

Should the respondent or alleged victim (where applicable) wish to appeal the President's decision, he or she may request review by the Board of Regents in accordance with the Board of Regents' Policy on Discretionary Review.

4.6.5.4 Recusal/Challenge for Bias

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 should be submitted within a reasonable time after the individual knows or 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, the replacement to be appointed.

Student Complaint Process

Within the framework of Student Rights and Responsibilities, South Georgia State College (SGSC) students are encouraged to communicate responsibly on matters of concern. The college expects that students will attempt to resolve complaints at the lowest possible level before submitting a formal complaint. The goal is the successful resolution of the issue. All records of the formal complaint process, including the complaint form and all reports and findings, are the property of the college.

Students have the following avenues for addressing complaints:

Non-Academic Complaints or Grievances: If the source of the complaint arose outside the classroom setting, it should be taken by the student directly to the other party(s) involved. If the student and the other party are unable to resolve the matter or if for any reason the student does not feel at ease in going to the other party, the student has the right to submit a formal written complaint. Students should submit the complaint via the SGSC Student Complaint Portal. The SGSC Student Complaint Portal provides an electronic pathway for students to submit non-academic complaints and the complaint will be directed to the appropriate office on campus for review and resolution. If the complaint is lodge about a process, procedure, or student service, it will be directed to the supervisor of the area at issue. The formal complaint procedure for non-academic complaints is set up to take no more than 50 working days. To have remedy under the formal complaint process, complaints must be filed within 30 days of the incident. Complaints filed more than 30 days after the incident will not be accepted.

Student Non-Academic Complaint Form

Academic Complaints or Grievances: Academic complaints or grievances that emerged within a classroom or related setting are resolved following the same steps describe in the process for a Grade Appeal (see page 9 - 11 of the Student Handbook). The formal complaint procedure for academic complaints that are not grade appeals is set up to take no more than 50 working days. To have remedy under the formal complaint process, complaints must be filed within 30 days of the incident. Complaints filed more than 30 days after the incident will not be accepted.

Please click here to view the Appeal of a Grade process.

Students who are not comfortable addressing a complaint with a faculty member with whom he/she has a concern should address the issue with the faculty member's Division Chairperson or Dean.

South Georgia State College is committed to freedom of expression and intellectual diversity. Failure on the part of faculty and staff to honor this commitment is a legitimate reason for a student to file a grievance. For more information about matters related to Academic Freedom and Intellectual Diversity, please refer to the American Council of Education's statement of Academic Rights and Responsibilities. Please click here to view the Intellectual Pluralism and Academic Freedom Statement.

To ensure excellent service and compliance with ethical standards, the University System of Georgia maintains a hotline for ethics and compliance reporting. Information and directions for reporting concerns related to compliance with ethics standards can be found at https://bor.alertline.com/gcs/welcome.

Student Complaint Resolution Policy: Distance Education Courses Offered Outside of Georgia

South Georgia State College is a participating institution in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) administered by GA-SARA.

Through its SARA designation, SGSC is authorized or not subject to approval to offer distance education in every state and territory, except California. SGSC periodically reviews the SARA regulations regarding authorization to offer distance education; however, it is ultimately the student's responsibility to be aware of the specific circumstances in their state of residence while participating in distance education.

As a SARA participant, SGSC may engage in the following activities:

Enroll online students from SARA member states, subject to program-specific state authorization permissions.

Allow current South Georgia State College students to complete experiential learning placements in SARA member states, subject to certain limitations.

Permit current South Georgia State College students to engage in independent research or field study in SARA member states.

Arrange South Georgia State College-sponsored field trips in SARA member states.

Offer short courses and seminars in SARA member states, subject to the SARA parameters for short courses listed in the SARA Manual.

SARA is intended to make it easier for students to take online courses offered by postsecondary institutions based in another state, thereby increasing educational opportunity and access. It protects students in other states by providing a process by which out-of-state distance learning students can have their complaints about substantive programmatic or institutional issues addressed.

Under SARA Policies and Standards, the following complaint procedures apply to students who reside in SARA states:

Students should first direct their initial complaint through the student complaint process described above. *Note: Student grade appeals and/or student conduct violations "are governed entirely by institutional policy and the laws of the SARA institution's home state." (State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements Policies and Standards)*.

Students who wish to appeal a South Georgia State College resolution of a complaint may direct an appeal (except for complaints about grades or student conduct violations) to the Georgia SARA State Portal Entity (SPE) by reviewing the **GA-SARA Student Complaint Rules** and submitting a **GNPEC Student Complaint Form**. The resolution of the complaint by the Georgia SARA SPE is final.

California is not a member of SARA and does not currently regulate distance education offered through public institutions. If students in the state of California wish to file a complaint, please visit the **State of California's Department of Consumer Affairs**.

Students residing outside of Georgia while taking distance education courses are required to first exhaust South Georgia State College's internal grievance procedures before appealing to external agencies.

In the event that a satisfactory resolution is not reached at the institutional level, students may appeal the complaint to the Georgia SARA State Portal Entity (SPE) and/or the SARA SPE within their home state. The SPE is responsible for investigating and resolving out-of-state student complaints that fall within the scope of SARA policy.

Georgia State Portal Entity Contact: GA-SARA Coordinator Georgia Nonpublic Postsecondary Education Commission (GNPEC) **Email: gasara@gnpec.ga.gov**

External Complaint Resources:

- GA-SARA Online Student Complaint Form
- NC-SARA Student Complaint Page