



Texas Southmost College  
TRADITION • INNOVATION • OPPORTUNITY

Student  
Handbook

2013-

2014

## Mission/Vision

### **Vision Statement**

Texas Southmost College will be a premier community college dedicated to student success.

### **Mission Statement**

Transforming our communities through innovative learning opportunities

### **Role and Scope**

Texas Southmost College's mission is guided by our commitment to provide:

- University transfer, career, and technical programs leading to an associate degree or certificate along with courses specializing in college preparatory and developmental education, workforce training, adult literacy, and continuing education to support the evolving needs of citizens, industry, and economic development initiatives within Cameron and Willacy Counties.
- High-quality instruction and learning opportunities in the classroom, online, and through other delivery methods; a supportive and innovative faculty and staff; appropriate technology, equipment, and learning resources; and advising and assessment services to promote transfer to a four-year baccalaureate institution, entry or advancement in the workforce, or lifelong learning.
- A learning-centered, service-oriented environment that celebrates diversity and inclusion; facilitates growth and development; fosters social responsibility, critical thinking, communication, and innovation; and empowers and engages students, faculty and staff to achieve personal and professional goals.
- Institutional effectiveness that embraces individual accountability, data-driven decision making, change, and an unending pursuit of excellence.

### **Values**

To successfully fulfill the vision and mission, Texas Southmost College is consciously committed to:

- **Integrity** by respecting the ideals of social responsibility, academic honesty, trustworthiness, personal ethics, and the courage to act.
- **Access** by reaching out to our diverse communities, expanding linkages with industry, and strengthening our partnerships with area ISDs and universities to create accessible and affordable educational pathways for our students, faculty and staff.
- **Service** by encouraging and recognizing collaboration, teamwork, compassion, and service to others.
- **Excellence** by providing relevant, high-quality educational experiences and a supportive learning environment to advance knowledge, to promote understanding and to achieve the academic and workforce potential of students, faculty and staff.
- **Innovation** by embracing emerging technologies to enhance and expand teaching, learning and service opportunities for students, faculty and staff.
- **Success** by empowering, engaging and educating students, faculty and staff to achieve their personal and professional aspirations for graduation, academic transfer, employment, and other educational goals

### **Institutional Goals**

In response to the region's challenges and to achieve this vision and mission, TSC's Institutional goals will revolve around four priorities between 2012 and 2017:

#### **I. Pathways**

Provide accessible, affordable, and flexible instructional delivery systems and dynamic curricula to all students, regardless of time or place, by enhancing career and technical programs that are responsive to the training needs of industry and a highly skilled workforce and by collaborating with internal and external stakeholders to improve college readiness, define outcomes, and promote multiple paths to student access, completion and success.

#### **II. Success**

Promote academic excellence and student learning through high-quality, learning-centered instruction and support services with a continuous focus on improving student learning outcomes that reflect the highest academic standards and that meet the needs of our communities and industry partners.

#### **III. Community Engagement**

Establish mutually beneficial public, private and community-based partnerships to expand awareness, leverage resources, and promote services and programs of the College that meet the needs of the communities in which it serves.

#### **IV. Institutional Effectiveness**

Enhance student success by focusing on continuous improvement that is grounded on

- Evidence-based initiatives, strategies, and processes;
- Student, faculty and staff engagement in teaching and learning outcomes;
- Professional development;
- An integrated systems approach to facilitate efficient use of college resources through fiscally sound practices; and
- Collaboration with and service to the communities in which the College serves.

## Important Phone Numbers

Admissions & Records	295-3600
Counseling	295-3409
Advising	295-3644
Transfer, Career & Employment Center	295-3409
Cashiers	295-3420
Conflict Resolution Center	295-3649
disABILITY Support Services	295-3409
Financial Aid	295-3625
Security	882-8232
Testing Center	295-3662
Student Life	295-3409
Veteran Affairs	295-3682

## Academic Calendar

### FALL 2013

**August 19-24** / Monday-Saturday  
New Student Convocation & Parent Orientation

**August 19-23** / Monday-Friday  
Add/Drop Period (Payment Due Same Day)

**August 23** / Friday  
Registration Payment Deadline

**August 26** / Monday  
Classes Begin

**September 2** / Monday  
College Closed - Labor Day

**September 11** / Wednesday  
Census Day (12th Class day) - Last Day to Withdraw without Recorded Grade

**October 1** / Tuesday  
Spring 2014 Financial Aid Priority Deadline

**October 14** / Monday  
Spring 2014 Early Registration Begins

**November 15** / Friday  
Last Day to Withdraw

**November 28-December 1** / Thursday-Sunday  
College Closed - Thanksgiving Holiday

**December 7** / Saturday  
Last Day of Class

**December 9-14** / Monday-Saturday  
Final Exams

**December 14** / Saturday  
Grades Due

**December 14** / Saturday  
Graduation

**December 19** / Thursday  
Spring 2014 Early Registration Ends

**December 20** / Friday  
Spring 2014 Late Registration Begins

**December 21-January 5**

College Closed - Winter Break

SPRING 2014

**October 1** / Tuesday

Financial Aid Priority Deadline

**October 14** / Monday

Early Registration Begins

**December 19** / Thursday

Early Registration Ends

**December 20** / Friday

Late Registration Begins

**January 6** / Monday

College Opens

**January 15** / Wednesday

Late Registration Ends

**January 16-18** / Thursday-Saturday

New Student Convocation & Parent Orientation

**January 16-17** / Thursday-Friday

Add/Drop Period (Payment Due Same Day)

**January 17** / Friday

Registration Payment Deadline

**January 20** / Monday

College Closed - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

**January 21** / Tuesday

Classes Begin

**February 5** / Wednesday

Census Day (12th Class Day) - Last Day to Withdraw without Recorded Grade

**March 3** / Monday

Fall 2014 Financial Aid Priority Deadline

**March 10-16** / Monday-Sunday

College Closed - Spring Break

**March 17** / Monday

Summer 2014 & Fall 2014 Early Registration Begins

**April 22** / Tuesday

Last Day to Withdraw

**May 10** / Saturday

Last Day of Class

**May 12-17** / Monday-Saturday

Final Exams

**May 17** / Saturday

Grades Due

**May 17** / Saturday

Graduation

### Payment Deadlines

Enrollment is complete only upon payment of tuition and fees, financial aid award or approved installment plan. Students who do not pay tuition and fees by the payment deadline will be dropped from their classes. Students who wish to be reinstated into their classes after being dropped for non-payment will be assessed a reinstatement fee.

### College Catalog

The TSC College Catalog is a guide to course descriptions, academic programs, admission, tuition, and administrative information.

The College Catalog is available through the Office of Admissions and Records and on the College web site.

### TSC Username and PIN

User IDs and passwords provide security access to the online registration system and student email. Once a student is admitted to TSC, a default PIN is assigned. Students will then be able to log in and assign themselves a unique password.

Login with your credentials to [pwreset.tsc.edu](https://pwreset.tsc.edu). Once you login you will change your password to one of your choice. The password has to have 1 capital letter, 1 number, and a minimum of 8 characters (Ex: Mytscpwd13). It CANNOT have any part of your username or include your ID#. You can also setup your challenge questions in case you forget your password in the future.

Usernames are uniquely assigned to every student and MUST be entered in lowercase at login. They **ARE NOT** the same as UTB Online usernames. Once you are admitted to TSC, Office of Admissions and Records staff provide you with your username and default password. If you did not receive a TSC username, you can contact the Office of Admissions and Records.

By default, your initial password is your first initial (CAPITALIZED) + last initial (lowercase) + the seven digits of your student id number. Example: Name: John Doe, ID Number: 1234567 = Jd1234567

If you changed your password and setup your challenge questions in the self-service password utility site (<https://pwreset.tsc.edu>), you can go back to that site, click on the "Reset Password" link, enter your username, and answer your challenge questions. You will then be able to reset your password. If you did not setup your challenge questions and reset your password, you can use your default password.

### TSC Online

TSC Online connects current and prospective students, faculty and staff to online academic communities, delivers targeted content to diverse user groups and takes advantage of the TSC's robust information technology services to enhance learning, student services, campus life and outreach.

TSC Online provides faculty and students with access to online course content, discussion forums, journals, online tutoring, document sharing, chat, webliography postings, and live web conferencing. These enhanced TSC Online tools are available for all courses offered in all delivery modes.

### TSC Student Email Account

Your TSC email account is the official form of electronic communication for your experience at Texas Southmost College. All campus communication, course-related information, tuition and billing information, and any additional administrative correspondence related to your enrollment and attendance at Texas Southmost College will be sent to this campus e-mail account.

You can login to your email by visiting [www.TSC.edu/MyTSC](http://www.TSC.edu/MyTSC) and clicking the email icon. You can login with your TSC username and new password. Your email address will be your (username@student.tsc.edu).

**It is your responsibility to check your TSC email account regularly. You will be held responsible for all communication sent to your TSC email account.**

### Wireless Internet

Wireless connectivity is provided to all students, faculty and staff to promote mobile learning. The college provides limited support for personal wireless technology and users are expected to understand how to configure and operate their devices accordingly. All wireless devices connecting to the TSC network are required to have current and automatically-updating antivirus software. For more information or for assistance contact the TSC Help Desk at 956-295-3800 or by e-mail to helpdesk@tsc.edu.

TSC students can access the "TSC Student" network by using the following password: **Sting13!**

### Student I.D. Cards

All students are responsible for obtaining an identification card at the time of initial registration with the college. Students should carry it at all times as it must be presented when paying fees, requesting transcripts, and utilizing library services. Student identification cards are issued to students free of charge. The identification card replacement fee is \$5. Student identification cards are available at the Office of Admissions and Records.

### Educational Technologies and Curricular Innovation (ETCI)

Many students balance work and family responsibilities with their educational goals, so by offering affordable and easily accessible, web-based digital course learning materials, TSC students have more options available to them when receiving important class information and course content. The Office of Educational Technologies and Curricular Innovation (ETCI) supports the institution's teaching and learning activities providing students, faculty, and staff members with a reliable online technology platform. TSC will provide:

- eTextbooks, learning materials that can be read on multiple displays - laptops, tablet readers, and smartphones
- MyLab, a personalized student learning experience
- Pearson Learning Studio, a cloud-based learning management system with advanced data analytics applications to monitor, analyze, and track trends in student performance
- Smarthinking, a live on-demand online tutorial service that offers vibrant interactive graphics
- Pearson Instructor Education services for faculty development

### Campus Parking

Every motor vehicle parked on the Texas Southmost College campus must have a valid parking permit. The person issued a parking permit is responsible for all violations and tickets cited to that permit.

Students parking vehicles on TSC property are required to have a current year parking permit permanently affixed to their vehicle on the inside lower right hand corner (passenger side) of the windshield. Motorcycle permits must be placed in a clearly visible location.

To obtain a permit all outstanding parking fines must be paid. Each permit, additional permit, or replacement permit will cost \$60.00 annually. Parking permits may be purchased from the Cashier window in Tandy Hall.

### Campus Security

The mission of the Texas Southmost College Security Department is to provide a safe educational environment for students, faculty, staff, and campus visitors.

If you are involved in an incident or accident on campus grounds that requires emergency assistance, call 911 immediately. To report crimes or for any other assistance contact Campus Security at 956-882-8232.

### Class Cancellations Due to Inclement Weather

Classes at Texas Southmost College may be cancelled due to inclement weather. Notification is made through local radio and TV stations, and on the College web site. If classes are cancelled due to inclement weather or other emergencies, attempts will be made to assure that classroom hours are rescheduled. Students will be notified through the Texas Southmost College Web site and through their TSC email account.

### Withdrawal (Dropping) From Developmental Courses

The Texas Success Initiative (TSI) is a state-legislated program designed to improve student success in college. There are two components of the program.

1. An assessment to diagnose students' basic skills in reading, mathematics, and writing.
2. Developmental instruction to strengthen academic skills that need improvement.

Students under TSI requirements who have been assigned developmental courses due to initial placement or failing a section of an alternative exam may not drop these courses. Students required to take Developmental courses including College Orientation must attend scheduled classes.

**If a student withdraws from a developmental course, or if they are dropped for non-attendance by their instructor, it may result in complete withdrawal from all their courses at Texas Southmost College.**

### Withdrawal (Dropping) From Semester Credit Courses

Withdrawal from a course results in a grade of "W." A student who decides to withdraw from a specific course(s) should initiate withdrawal procedures by securing a drop form from the Office of Admissions and Records. The form must be turned in to the Office of Admissions and Records prior to the published deadline for withdrawals.

**Students who withdraw or are withdrawn from a course(s) may be required to repay all or a portion of their financial aid.**

Students who fail to withdraw properly or who are failing a course and have not withdrawn as of the established deadline will receive an "F" for the course.

**It is the student's responsibility to initiate the withdrawal process. Texas Southmost College is not responsible for any liabilities incurred as a result of the student's failure to officially withdraw from the College.**

### Six Course Drop Ruling

Students are limited to a total of six (6) course drops during their undergraduate career, including a course(s) dropped at another institution as defined in Section 51.907 of the Texas Education Code, which limits the number of courses that may be dropped under certain circumstances. A dropped course is defined as a course in which an undergraduate student at an institution of higher education has enrolled for credit but did not complete under these conditions:

- the student was able to drop without receiving a grade or incurring an academic penalty;
- the student's transcript indicates or will indicate that the student was enrolled in the course past the deadline to add and drop prior to the census date; and
- the student is not dropping the course in order to withdraw from the institution.

Students must visit the Admissions and Records Office to apply for a Six Drop Waiver. Exceptions to the course drop limit include a total withdrawal from the institution and an approved waiver drop.

Students should carefully consider the number of courses to take and the time commitment required to be successful. Students with a cumulative total of six (6) drops will be awarded the grade earned at the end of the semester.

### Three-Peat (Third-Attempt) Enrollment Ruling

Texas Southmost College will charge a higher tuition rate to students registering the third (3) or subsequent time for a course. The State will no longer subsidize a student's enrollment for the third (3) or subsequent attempt. Students should meet with an advisor to determine if they are repeating a course for the third (3) time.

### Developmental Education Enrollment Ruling (27-Hour Rule)

Texas Southmost College will charge a higher tuition rate to students registering for developmental education courses who have accumulated at least 27 hours of credit in developmental education courses. Developmental education courses include all courses that begin with a zero (0).

### Calculating Grade Point Average (GPA)

The GPA is derived by dividing the total number of quality points by the total number of semester credit hours attempted (not including AU, I, P, CR, NR, W, WM, WS) for which grades have been received. The average is based on all semester and term coursework.

Calculating the GPA:

1. Multiply the number of semester credit hours each course is worth by the quality points earned.
2. Add these values.
3. Divide this sum by the number of semester credit hours attempted.

	<b>Semester Hours</b>	<b>Quality Points</b>	<b>Grade Points</b>	
<b>For Example:</b>				
BIOL 1406	4	3 (B)	12	
ENGL 1301	3	2 (C)	6	
SPAN 1411	4	4 (A)	16	
PSYC 2301	3	2 (C)	6	
KINE 1104	1	4 (A)	4	
	<b>15</b>		<b>44</b>	<b>GPA: 44 ÷ 15 = 2.93</b>

### Good Standing

Students are considered to be in Good Standing at Texas Southmost College if they have a cumulative and current GPA of 2.0 or above.

### Satisfactory Academic Progress

Federal regulations require all students applying for financial assistance to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) in order to receive aid. The progress standards that students are required to meet in order to maintain financial aid eligibility are:

- A minimum 2.0 GPA ("C" or better) per semester and overall GPA;
- Successful completion of 70% of all coursework attempted; and
- Completion of the academic program of study within ninety-nine (99) hours of attempted coursework (including all hours attempted at other colleges). Thirty (30) hours of non-repeated developmental classes may be excluded from the ninety-nine (99) hours.

Compliance with SAP must be met in order for a student to retain their financial aid eligibility. Students are advised to check their status through their MyTSC account.

Final Satisfactory Academic Progress rules were published in the October 29, 2010 Federal Register to be effective July 1, 2011. The revised current regulations clarify, standardize, and strengthen provisions on school evaluations of the qualitative (grades and academic standing) and quantitative (pace of completion) aspects of a student's progress in a program for Title IV funding purposes.

### Graduation

Texas Southmost College confers degrees and certificates three (3) times a year, at the end of Fall and Spring semesters and Summer sessions.

Texas Southmost College offers recognition for satisfactory completion of work in the following forms:

- Associate of Arts Degree
- Associate of Science Degree
- Associate of Arts in Teaching
- Associate of Applied Science Degree
- Certificates



### Graduation Application

To be awarded a degree or certificate, students should request preparation of a degree audit and file an Application for Graduation form after the completion of forty-five (45) semester credit hours toward a specific degree or at least fifteen (15) semester credit hours toward a certificate at Texas Southmost College. All candidates should list the catalog edition under which graduation is requested when completing the Application for Graduation form. One application is required for each degree or certificate requested.

### Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and the Texas Open Records Act are federal and state laws, respectively, that provide for the review and disclosure of academic records. In accordance with these laws, TSC will not permit access to or the release of personally identifiable information contained in academic records to any party without the written consent of the student, except:

- to appropriate TSC officials, who require access to academic records in order to perform their legitimate duties, which means the information or records requested is relevant and necessary to accomplish a task or make a determination, and the task or determination is an employment-related responsibility of the inquirer or is a properly assigned duty for the inquirer.
- to officials of other schools in which the student seeks or intends to enroll, upon request of these officials, and upon the condition that the student be notified and receive a copy of the record, if desired.
- to federal, state or local officials or agencies authorized by law.
- in connection with a student's application for or receipt of financial aid.
- to accrediting agencies or organizations conducting educational studies, provided that these entities do not release personally identifiable data.
- to the parents of a dependent student, as defined in section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, provided a reasonable effort is made to notify the student in advance.

### Advising Center

It is important that all students visit with an Academic Advisor on a regular basis. Your advisor will provide assistance with:

- Academic and Admission advising
- Degree and Certificate planning
- Assessment Interpretation
- Information on Academic Programs
- Course Placement and Selection
- Registration Assistance
- Assistance with dropping or withdrawing from a course
- Graduation Requirements
- Referral to On-Campus Student Services
- Referral to Community Services
- Change of Major

### Counseling Center

Many students face life challenges that can make accomplishing their academic goals difficult. The Counseling Center is available to assist with those challenges by encouraging personal and academic growth to help each student successfully meet life's challenges.

Enrolled students are eligible for personal counseling services, and there is no fee. The counselor respects the confidential nature of discussions to the limits provided by law. No record of a student's visit is made on any academic file.

### disABILITY Support Services

disABILITY Support Services support services provided to qualified students with learning, physical, developmental, mental and emotional disabilities who are attending Texas Southmost College. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, a person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities. Reasonable accommodations are provided by the College to ensure access to all courses, programs, services, jobs, activities and facilities.

Support Services Include:

- Testing accommodations for placement testing and academic tests.
- Adaptive Technology: screen magnification, speech synthesized software, voice activated software, hearing amplification systems (FM systems), and more.
- Adaptive furniture.
- Readers, Scribes (writers), and Sign Language Interpreters.
- Campus and community referrals.
- Other appropriate academic modifications and disability-related information.

Individuals need to be eligible for accommodation services before the services will be approved and provided. To become eligible, an individual will need to:

- Arrange an intake appointment with the Counseling Center to review and approve the services. Be prepared to spend at least one hour to complete the initial intake appointment.
- Complete a Request for Services form.
- Provide current documentation for the disability for which services are requested. Documentation must be from a competent and qualified source capable of making that diagnosis within their profession.

Approved accommodation services may be provided each semester if the eligible student informs the Access office that services are needed for the current term. Requests to continue approved services must be in writing and handwritten notes or e-mail requests to the Access office are acceptable. It is not necessary to have successfully completed the Intake process, and the services have been approved by the Access office.

### **Transfer, Career and Employment Center**

One of the best ways to ensure career success is to establish a clear focus on the career path you wish to pursue. Transfer, Career and Employment Center staff can guide you through college transfer planning, the career planning process, and securing employment upon graduation.

#### **Transfer Planning**

During their enrollment at Texas Southmost College, students are advised to fulfill the lower division requirements for the college or university program. Students wishing to transfer into a baccalaureate or professional degree program should obtain an undergraduate catalog of the university to which they plan to transfer and consult with a representative from the Transfer, Career and Employment Center. Texas Southmost College makes every effort to aid students wishing to transfer; however, the student must consult with the senior college or university to ensure appropriate courses are taken at Texas Southmost College.

Transfer, Career and Employment Center staff also provide students with information concerning university admission requirements, degree program requirements, scholarships, housing, and university contact information. A transfer fair is held annually that provides students an opportunity to visit with university recruiters; and university transfer advisors from select institutions are scheduled each semester to advise prospective transfer students.

#### **Career Planning**

Career planning is an on-going process that takes time, energy, and commitment. It involves developing an awareness of your skills, abilities, values, strengths, interests; and learning about the various types of occupations that exists and what is required to accomplish your goals. The Transfer, Career and Employment Center offers career assessment tools to help match your skills, interests, personality, and values with various careers. Students who are undecided in their major are strongly recommended to start the career planning process early in their educational career.

#### **Job Readiness**

The Transfer, Career and Employment Center provides job readiness services to students and alumni. Students receive individualized services to develop job readiness skills, including effective resume writing, developing interviewing skills, employment referrals, and job market information.

### **Veterans Center**

The Office of Veteran Affairs promotes education opportunities to community members who are eligible for Veterans education benefits and provides support, guidance and a variety of services and programs to students who are using educational benefits under the Department of Veteran Affairs Educational Assistance Programs.

### **Student Activities**

Texas Southmost College is committed to providing a campus climate that encourages students to participate in programs that promote academic and personal enrichment through the merging of classroom instruction and campus involvement. Through campus involvement, students gain valuable experiences and develop skills in leadership, management, interpersonal communication, problem solving and collaboration.

### **Student Organizations**

Student organizations at Texas Southmost College contribute to a vibrant college community by providing invaluable experiences and opportunities for students to grow as individuals, leaders, and community members. Student organizations sponsor conferences, seminars, lectures, debates, cultural and social events, and fine arts programs. These programs allow students to meet and interact with local, state, and nationally renowned scholars, artists, politicians, academicians, and other professionals.

### **Campus Activities Board**

The Campus Activities Board (CAB) allows students to actively participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of programs and activities to ensure they meet the wide variety of student needs and interests at Texas Southmost College.

### **Student Leadership Academy**

The Student Leadership Academy encourages and aids in the development of student leaders. Through interactive workshops and seminars, this prestigious program allows students to develop their personal leadership style and put their leadership skills into practice, allowing them to gain experience and confidence.

### **Student Government Association**

Take an active role in defining and resolving crucial issues facing students at Texas Southmost College. The Student Government Association is the representative organization for the student body at Texas Southmost College and provides a forum for open discussion of matters affecting students at Texas Southmost College.

### **Intramural and Recreational Sports**

Intramural and Recreational Sports provides opportunities for individuals to engage in recreational sports and activities in a supportive and safe environment that enhances personal development, increases physical and mental health and encourages social interaction. Programs and services are designed to be responsive to the needs of students, and to educate participants on practices associated with physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being and the development of lifetime patterns for healthful living and positive use of leisure time.

Intramural and Recreational Sports offers opportunities for students to participate in basketball, volleyball, flag football, chess, table tennis, softball, racquetball, weight lifting, aerobic and fitness classes, and soccer.

### **Recreation Center**

The Recreation Center provides quality programs, facilities and services in a safe environment, that promote a sense of community and encourage the pursuit of a healthy lifestyle to a diverse student population.

### **Student Rights and Responsibilities**

As a premier learning-centered higher education institution, Texas Southmost College is committed to academic integrity and standards of excellence of the highest quality in all courses and programs and to providing an environment that fosters the educational process and the well-being of the campus community.

Texas Southmost College recognizes that student success is a shared responsibility between the student and the College. Students attending Texas Southmost College are expected to accept and adhere to the following responsibilities:

1. Student attendance and participation is paramount to academic success. Regular and punctual attendance in class and laboratories is expected of all students.
2. Students are expected to exercise personal responsibility and self-discipline as they engage in the rigors of discovery and scholarship. Inappropriate behavior may result in disciplinary action against the student.
3. Students attending Texas Southmost College are responsible for adhering to standards of academic integrity. Academic dishonesty may result in disciplinary action against the student.

In support of the rights of its students, Texas Southmost College is committed to:

1. A consistent and fair evaluation of student performance and an impartial process for grade appeals that allows students to appeal academic decisions or actions which they consider manifestly unjust or improper.
2. Ensuring that students are treated with fundamental fairness and personal dignity that includes an impartial process for students to appeal disciplinary sanctions imposed by the College or to file a complaint or grievance when they believe that they were unjustly or improperly treated by the College, College employees, or other students.

Detailed information regarding Texas Southmost College's expectations for students is presented in the Student Code of Conduct. The Student Code of Conduct is an articulation of Texas Southmost College's commitment to maintaining an environment that recognizes and supports the rights of its students and provides a guide for defining behaviors the College considers inappropriate.

### **Classroom Expectations**

Student attendance and participation is vital to academic success. Regular and punctual attendance and participation in class and laboratories is expected of all students.

It is the student's responsibility to communicate with the faculty member concerning any absence as specified by the respective course syllabus. Whenever possible, students' should notify their instructor in advance.

The student may be required to present evidence to support an absence and make-up work for class absences will be permitted only as specified by the faculty in the course syllabus.

A syllabus is a document that an instructor distributes to provide students with an overview of a college course. The syllabus is usually distributed on the first day of class and contains the following information:

- Course name and meeting times
- Name of instructor and their contact information
- Expectations for behavior
- Attendance policies
- Required texts and topics and chapters covered
- Test dates and other relevant dates
- Grading policy

The syllabus is your key to success. Make sure you read the syllabus completely and refer to it regularly.

### **Student Discipline in the Classroom**

Texas Southmost College supports the right of faculty to maintain discipline in the classroom. When a student is being disruptive in a classroom, clinical or other academic setting, the course instructor or clinical supervisor may temporarily or permanently remove that student from class according to the following procedures.

When a student exhibits inappropriate behavior in the classroom, clinical or other academic setting, the course instructor may temporarily or permanently remove that student from class according to the following procedures:

#### **Step 1**

Upon the first occurrence, the course instructor will:

- a. Speak with the student and inform them that they have violated appropriate standards of classroom behavior.
- b. Verbally warn the student that a repeat occurrence may result in permanent removal from the class.
- c. Obtain a commitment from the student that the inappropriate behavior will cease.
- d. If the infraction is serious enough to warrant immediate removal from class, the course instructor may go directly to Step 2.
- e. Document the situation and the conversation with the student.

## Step 2

Upon the second occurrence, the course instructor may:

- a. Withdraw the student from class and assign a grade of "W" or "F."
- b. Document the situation and the conversation with the student.
- c. Notify the office of Student Conduct Administration. Student Conduct Administration may impose additional sanctions, up to and including suspension or expulsion from the College.

## Appeal Process

The student may appeal the decision of the course instructor to the appropriate Program Director/Chair or, in the absence of a Program Director/Chair, to the Division Dean. This appeal must be made in writing and received in the Program Director/Chair/Dean's office within 5 working days of the student's receiving notice of the course instructor's decision.

1. Upon receipt of the appeal, the Program Director/Chair/Dean shall review the appeal, hear witnesses if he/she so chooses, and render a decision. The decision of the Program Director/Chair/Dean is final.
2. An appeal may result in one of the following:
  - a. Affirm the action of the course instructor.
  - b. Dismiss, reduce, modify, or increase the penalty imposed by the course instructor.
3. The student will be notified of the decision through their TSC email address.

## Student Code of Conduct

The Student Code of Conduct is an articulation of Texas Southmost College's commitment to maintaining an environment that recognizes and supports the rights of its students, while providing a guide for defining behaviors the College considers inappropriate. When students fail to act in accord with the rules and regulations of the Texas Southmost College community, the College must hold them accountable for their actions.

The purpose of the student conduct system is not solely to punish students for transgressions, but to help them understand and accept their obligations as citizens of an academic community. Whenever possible, sanctions for violations of the Student Code of Conduct will be educational in nature.

The office of Student Conduct Administration has primary authority and responsibility for the administration of student discipline.

## Preamble

Attendance at Texas Southmost College is optional and voluntary and choosing to join the Texas Southmost College community obligates each member to a code of civilized behavior. This means practicing personal and academic integrity; respecting the dignity of all persons; respecting the rights and property of others; discouraging prejudice and intolerance while striving to learn from differences in people, ideas, and opinions; and demonstrating concern for others, their feelings, and their need for conditions which support their work and development.

The goals of the student discipline system are (1) to promote a campus environment that supports the overall educational mission of the College; (2) to protect the College community from disruption and harm; (3) to encourage appropriate standards of individual and group behavior; (4) to foster ethical standards and civic virtues.

## Article I: Definitions

1. The term "College" means Texas Southmost College.
2. The term "student" includes all persons taking courses at the College, either full-time or part-time. Persons who withdraw after allegedly violating the Student Code of Conduct, who are not officially enrolled for a particular term but who have a continuing relationship with the College or who have submitted an application for admission are considered "students." This Student Code of Conduct applies at all locations of the College.

3. The term "faculty" or "faculty member" means any person hired by the College to conduct classroom or teaching activities or who is otherwise considered by the College to be a member of its faculty.
4. The term "College official" includes any person employed by the College, performing assigned administrative or professional responsibilities.
5. The term "member of the College community" includes any person who is a student, faculty member, College official or any other person employed by the College. A person's status in a particular situation shall be determined by the Associate Vice President of Student Services.
6. The term "College premises" includes all land, buildings, facilities, and other property in the possession of or owned, used, or controlled by the College (including adjacent streets and sidewalks).
7. The term "organization" means any number of persons who have complied with the formal requirements for College recognition.
8. The term "Student Conduct Board" means any person or persons authorized by the Associate Vice President of Student Services to determine whether a student has violated the Student Code of Conduct and to recommend sanctions that may be imposed when a rules violation has been committed.
9. The term "Student Conduct Administrator" means a College official authorized on a case-by-case basis by the Associate Vice President of Student Services to impose sanctions upon any student(s) found to have violated the Student Code of Conduct. The Associate Vice President of Student Services may authorize a Student Conduct Administrator to serve simultaneously as a Student Conduct Administrator and the sole member or one of the members of the Student Conduct Board. The Associate Vice President of Student Services may authorize the same Student Conduct Administrator to impose sanctions in all cases.
10. The term "Appellate Board" means any person or persons authorized by the Associate Vice President of Student Services to consider an appeal from a Student Conduct Board's determination as to whether a student has violated the Student Code of Conduct or from the sanctions imposed by the Student Conduct Administrator.
11. The term "shall" is used in the imperative sense.
12. The term "may" is used in the permissive sense.
13. The Associate Vice President of Student Services is that person designated by the College President to be responsible for the administration of the Student Code of Conduct.
14. The term "policy" means the written regulations of the College as found in, but not limited to, the College Policy Manual, Student Code of Conduct, Student Handbook, the College web page, the College computer use policy, and the College Catalog.
15. The term "cheating" includes, but is not limited to: (1) use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; (2) use of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; (3) the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the College faculty or staff; (4) engaging in any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion.
16. The term "plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.
17. The term "Accused Student" means any student accused of violating this Student Code of Conduct.
18. The term "Complainant" means any person who submits a charge alleging that a student violated this Student Code of Conduct. When a student believes that he/she has been a victim of another student's misconduct, the student who believes he/she has been a victim will have the same rights under this Student Code of Conduct as are provided to the Accused Student, even if another member of the College community submitted the charge itself.

## Article II: Student Conduct Code of Conduct Authority

1. The Associate Vice President of Student Services shall determine the composition of Student Conduct Boards and Appellate Boards and determine which Student Conduct Board, Student Conduct Administrator and Appellate Board shall be authorized to hear each matter.
2. The Associate Vice President of Student Services shall develop policies for the administration of the student conduct system and procedural rules for the conduct of Student Conduct Board Hearings that are consistent with provisions of the Student Code of Conduct.
3. Decisions made by a Student Conduct Board and/or Student Conduct Administrator shall be final, pending the normal appeal process.

## Article III: Unacceptable Conduct

- A. Jurisdiction of the College Student Code of Conduct.

The College Student Code of Conduct shall apply to conduct that occurs on College premises, at College-sponsored activities, and to off-campus conduct that adversely affects the College Community and/or the pursuit of its objectives. Each student shall be responsible for his/her conduct from the time of application for admission through the actual awarding of a degree, even though conduct may occur before classes begin or after classes end, as well as during the academic year and during periods between terms of actual enrollment (and even if their conduct is not discovered until after a degree is awarded). The Student Code of Conduct shall apply to a student's conduct even if the student withdraws from school while a disciplinary matter is pending. The Associate Vice President of Student Services shall decide whether the Student Code of Conduct shall be applied to conduct occurring off campus, on a case-by-case basis, in his/her sole discretion.

- B. Conduct Rules and Regulations.

Any student found to have committed or to have attempted to commit the following misconduct is subject to the disciplinary sanctions outlined in Article IV: Student Code of Conduct Procedures.

1. Acts of dishonesty, including but not limited to the following:
  - a. Cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty.
  - b. Furnishing false information to any College official, faculty member, or office.
  - c. Forgery, alteration, or misuse of any College document, record, or instrument of identification.
2. Disruption or obstruction of teaching, research, administration, disciplinary proceedings, other College activities, including its public service functions on or off campus, or of other authorized non-College activities when the conduct occurs on College premises.
3. Physical abuse, verbal abuse, threats, intimidation, harassment, coercion, and/or other conduct which threatens or endangers the health or safety of any person.
4. Sexual misconduct that involves:
  - a. Deliberate touching of another's sexual parts without consent or deliberate sexual invasion of another without consent. This includes any sexual act that occurs without the consent of the victim, or that occurs when the victim is unable to give consent.
  - b. Deliberate constraint or incapacitation of another, without that person's knowledge or consent, so as to put another at substantially increased risk of sexual injury.
  - c. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that expressly or implicitly imposes conditions upon, threatens, interferes with, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or demeaning environment for an individual's (I) academic pursuits, (II) College employment; (III) participation in activities sponsored by the College or organizations or groups related to the College, or (IV) opportunities to benefit from other aspects of College life. This includes unwanted, unwelcome, inappropriate, or irrelevant sexual or gender-based activities or comments.

- d. Obscene or indecent behavior, which includes, but is not limited to, exposure of one's sexual organs or the display of sexual behavior that would reasonably be offensive to others.
5. Attempted or actual theft of and/or damage to property of the College or property of a member of the College community or other personal or public property, on or off campus.
6. Hazing. "Hazing" means any intentional knowing, or reckless act, occurring on or off the campus of an educational institution, by one person alone or acting with others, directed against a student that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization whose members are students at an educational institution. The express or implied consent of the victim will not be a defense. Apathy or acquiescence in the presence of hazing are not neutral acts; they are violations of this rule. The term includes but is not limited to:
  - a. Any type of physical brutality, such as whipping, beating, striking, branding, electronic shocking, placing of a harmful substance on the body, or similar activity.
  - b. Any type of physical activity, such as sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement in a small space, calisthenics, or other activity that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk or harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student.
  - c. Any activity involving consumption of a food, liquid, alcoholic beverage, liquor, drug, or other substance which subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or which adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student.
  - d. Any activity that intimidates or threatens the student with ostracism that subjects the student to extreme mental stress, shame, or humiliation, or that adversely effects the student from entering or remaining registered in an educational institution, or that may reasonably be expected to cause a student to leave the organization or the institution rather than submit to acts described in this subsection.
  - e. Any activity that induces, causes, or requires the student to perform a duty or task which involves a violation of the Texas Penal Code Sec. 4.52.
  - f. Personal Hazing Offense. A person commits an offense if the person:
    - i. Engages in hazing.
    - ii. Solicits, encourages, directs, aids, or attempts to aid another in engaging in hazing.
    - iii. Intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly permits hazing to occur.
    - iv. Has firsthand knowledge of the planning of a specific hazing incident involving a student in an educational institution, or firsthand knowledge that a specific hazing incident has occurred, and knowingly fails to report said knowledge in writing to the Dean of Students or other appropriate officials of the institution.
  - g. Organization Hazing Offense. "Organization" means a fraternity, sorority, association, corporation, order, society, corps, cooperative, club, or service, social, or a similar group, whose members are primarily students at an educational institution. An organization commits an offense if the organization:
    - i. Condone or encourages hazing.
    - ii. If an officer or any combination of members, pledges, or alumni of the organization commits or assists in the commission of hazing.
7. Failure to comply with directions of College officials or law enforcement officers acting in performance of their duties and/or failure to identify oneself to these persons when requested to do so.
8. Unauthorized possession, duplication or use of keys to any College premises or unauthorized entry to or use of College premises.
9. Violation of any College policy, rule, or regulation published in hard copy or available electronically on the College website.



10. Violation of any federal, state or local law.
11. Use, possession, manufacturing, or distribution of marijuana, heroin, narcotics, or other controlled substances except as expressly permitted by law.
12. Use, possession, manufacturing, or distribution of alcoholic beverages (except as expressly permitted by College regulations), or public intoxication. Alcoholic beverages may not, in any circumstance, be used by, possessed by or distributed to any person under twenty-one (21) years of age.
13. Illegal or unauthorized possession of firearms, explosives, other weapons, or dangerous chemicals on College premises or use of any such item, even if legally possessed, in a manner that harms, threatens or causes fear to others.
14. Participating in an on-campus or off-campus demonstration, riot or activity that disrupts the normal operations of the College and/or infringes on the rights of other members of the College community; leading or inciting others to disrupt scheduled and/or normal activities within any campus building or area.
15. Obstruction of the free flow of pedestrian or vehicular traffic on College premises or at College-sponsored or supervised functions.
16. Conduct that is disorderly, lewd, or indecent; breach of peace; or aiding, abetting, or procuring another person to breach the peace on College premises or at functions sponsored by, or participated in by, the College or members of the academic community. Disorderly conduct includes but is not limited to any unauthorized use of electronic or other devices to make an audio or video record of any person while on College premises:
  - a. Without his/her prior knowledge.
  - b. Without his/her effective consent when such a recording is likely to cause injury or distress. This includes, but is not limited to, surreptitiously taking pictures of another person in a gym, locker room, or restroom.
17. Theft or other abuse of computer facilities and resources, including but not limited to:
  - a. Unauthorized entry into a file, to use, read, or change the contents, or for any other purpose.
  - b. Unauthorized transfer of a file.
  - c. Use of another individual's identification and/or password.
  - d. Use of computing facilities and resources to interfere with the work of another student, faculty member or College official.
  - e. Use of computing facilities and resources to send obscene or abusive messages.
  - f. Use of computing facilities and resources to interfere with normal operation of the College computing system.
  - g. Use of computing facilities and resources in violation of copyright laws.
  - h. Any violation of the College Computer Use Policy
18. Abuse of the Student Conduct System, including but not limited to:
  - a. Failure to obey the notice from a Student Conduct Board or College official to appear for a meeting or hearing as part of the Student Conduct System.
  - b. Falsification, distortion, or misrepresentation of information before a Student Conduct Board.
  - c. Disruption or interference with the orderly conduct of a Student Conduct Board proceeding.
  - d. Institution of a Student Code of Conduct proceeding in bad faith.
  - e. Attempting to discourage an individual's proper participation in, or use of, the student conduct system.

- f. Attempting to influence the impartiality of a member of a Student Conduct Board prior to, and/or during the course of, the Student Conduct Board proceeding.
  - g. Harassment (verbal or physical) and/or intimidation of a member of a Student Conduct Board prior to, during, and/or after a Student Code of Conduct proceeding.
  - h. Failure to comply with the sanction(s) imposed under the Student Code of Conduct.
  - i. Influencing or attempting to influence another person to commit an abuse of the Student Conduct system.
19. Students are required to engage in responsible social conduct that reflects credit upon the College community and to model good citizenship in any community.

C. Violation of Law and College Discipline

1. College disciplinary proceedings may be instituted against a student charged with conduct that potentially violates both the criminal law and this Student Code of Conduct (that is, if both possible violations result from the same factual situation) without regard to the pendency of civil or criminal litigation in court or criminal arrest and prosecution. Proceedings under this Student Code of Conduct may be carried out prior to, simultaneously with, or following civil or criminal proceedings off campus at the discretion of the Associate Vice President of Student Services.
2. Determinations made or sanctions imposed under this Student Code of Conduct shall not be subject to change because criminal charges arising out of the same facts giving rise to violation of College rules were dismissed, reduced, or resolved in favor of or against the criminal law defendant.
3. When a student is charged by federal, state, or local authorities with a violation of law, the College will not request or agree to special consideration for that individual because of his or her status as a student. If the alleged offense is also being processed under the Student Code of Conduct, the College may advise off-campus authorities of the existence of the Student Code of Conduct and of how such matters are typically handled within the College community. The College will attempt to cooperate with law enforcement and other agencies in the enforcement of criminal law on campus and in the conditions imposed by criminal courts for the rehabilitation of student violators (provided that the conditions do not conflict with campus rules or sanctions). Individual students and other members of the College community, acting in their personal capacities, remain free to interact with governmental representatives as they deem appropriate.

Article IV: Student Code of Conduct Procedures

A. Charges and Student Conduct Board Hearings

1. Any member of the College community may file charges against a student for violations of the Student Code of Conduct. A charge shall be prepared in writing and directed to the Student Conduct Administrator. Any charge should be submitted as soon as possible after the event takes place, preferably within 30 days.
2. The Student Conduct Administrator may conduct an investigation to determine if the charges have merit and/or if they can be disposed of administratively by mutual consent of the parties involved on a basis acceptable to the Student Conduct Administrator. Such disposition shall be final and there shall be no subsequent proceedings. If the charges are not admitted and/or cannot be disposed of by mutual consent, the Student Conduct Administrator may later serve in the same matter as the Student Conduct Board or a member thereof. If the student admits violating institutional rules, but sanctions are not agreed to, subsequent process, including a hearing if necessary, shall be limited to determining the appropriate sanction(s).
3. All charges shall be presented to the Accused Student in written form. A time shall be set for a Student Conduct Board Hearing, not less than five nor more than fifteen calendar days after the student has been notified. Maximum time limits for scheduling of Student Conduct Board Hearings may be extended at the discretion of the Student Conduct Administrator.

4. Student Conduct Board Hearings shall be conducted by a Student Conduct Board according to the following guidelines except as provided by article IV(A)(7) below:
  - a. Student Conduct Board Hearings normally shall be conducted in private.
  - b. The Complainant, Accused Student, and their advisors, if any, shall be allowed to attend the entire portion of the Student Conduct Board Hearing at which information is received (excluding deliberations). Admission of any other person to the Student Conduct Board Hearing shall be at the discretion of the Student Conduct Board and/or the Student Conduct Administrator.
  - c. In Student Conduct Board Hearings involving more than one Accused Student, the Student Conduct Administrator, in his or her discretion, may permit the Student Conduct Board Hearings concerning each student to be conducted either separately or jointly.
  - d. The Complainant and the Accused Student have the right to be assisted by an advisor they choose, at their own expense. The advisor must be a member of the College community and may not be an attorney. The Complainant and/or the Accused Student is responsible for presenting his or her own information, and therefore, advisors are not permitted to speak or to participate directly in any Student Conduct Board Hearing before a Student Conduct Board. A student should select as an advisor a person whose schedule allows attendance at the scheduled date and time for the Student Conduct Board Hearing because delays will not normally be allowed due to the scheduling conflicts of an advisor.
  - e. The Complainant, the Accused Student, and the Student Conduct Board may arrange for witnesses to present pertinent information to the Student Conduct Board. The College will try to arrange the attendance of possible witnesses who are members of the College community, if reasonably possible, and who are identified by the Complainant and/or Accused Student at least two weekdays prior to the Student Conduct Board Hearing. Witnesses will provide information to and answer questions from the Student Conduct Board. Questions may be suggested by the Accused Student and/or Complainant to be answered by each other or by other witnesses. This will be conducted by the Student Conduct Board with such questions directed to the chairperson, rather than to the witness directly. This method is used to preserve the educational tone of the hearing and to avoid creation of an adversarial environment. Questions of whether potential information will be received shall be resolved in the discretion of the chairperson of the Student Conduct Board.
  - f. Pertinent records, exhibits, and written statements (including Student Impact Statements) may be accepted as information for consideration by a Student Conduct Board at the discretion of the chairperson.
  - g. All procedural questions are subject to the final decision of the chairperson of the Student Conduct Board.
  - h. After the portion of the Student Conduct Board Hearing concludes in which all pertinent information has been received, the Student Conduct Board shall determine (by majority vote if the Student Conduct Board consists of more than one person) whether the Accused Student has violated each section of the Student Code of Conduct which the student is charged with violating.
  - i. The Student Conduct Board's determination shall be made on the basis of whether it is more likely than not that the Accused Student violated the Student Code of Conduct.
  - j. Formal rules of process, procedure, and/or technical rules of evidence, such as are applied in criminal or civil court, are not used in Student Code of Conduct proceedings.
5. There shall be a single verbatim record, such as a tape recording, of all Student Conduct Board Hearings before a Student Conduct Board (not including deliberations). Deliberations shall not be recorded. The record shall be the property of the College.
6. If an Accused Student, with notice, does not appear before a Student Conduct Board Hearing, the information in support of the charges shall be presented and considered even if the Accused Student is not present.

7. The Student Conduct Board may accommodate concerns for the personal safety, well-being, and/or fears of confrontation of the Complainant, Accused Student, and/or other witness during the hearing by providing separate facilities, by using a visual screen, and/or by permitting participation by telephone, videophone, closed circuit television, video conferencing, videotape, audio tape, written statement, or other means, where and as determined in the sole judgment of the Associate Vice President of Student Services to be appropriate.

## B. Sanctions

1. The following sanctions may be imposed upon any student found to have violated the Student Code of Conduct:
  - a. Warning - A notice in writing to the student that the student is violating or has violated institutional regulations.
  - b. Probation - A written reprimand for violation of specified regulations. Probation is for a designated period of time and includes the probability of more severe disciplinary sanctions if the student is found to violate any institutional regulation(s) during the probationary period.
  - c. Behavior Contract - A written agreement that details clear expectations of the student in carrying out an intervention plan. Behavior Contracts may include referral to a counselor, participation in a monitored supervision plan, signing a "no contact" order prohibiting contact with an individual or individuals, submission to random drug testing for a specific period of time, restriction from a certain campus location, loss of parking privileges, or other stipulations appropriate to the Student Code of Conduct violation.
  - d. Loss of Privileges - Denial of specified privileges for a designated period of time.
  - e. Fines - Previously established and published fines may be imposed.
  - f. Restitution - Compensation for loss, damage, or injury. This may take the form of appropriate service and/or monetary or material replacement.
  - g. Withdrawal from a course or courses with a grade of "W" (Withdrawal).
  - h. Discretionary Sanctions - Discretionary Sanctions include, but are not limited to, work assignments, essays, service to the College, or other related discretionary assignments.
  - i. College Suspension - Separation of the student from the College for a definite period of time, after which the student is eligible to return. Conditions for readmission may be specified.
  - j. College Expulsion - Permanent separation of the student from the College.
  - k. Revocation of Admission and/or Degree - Admission to or a degree awarded from the College may be revoked for fraud, misrepresentation, or other violation of College standards in obtaining the degree, or for other serious violations committed by a student prior to graduation.
  - l. Withholding Degree - The College may withhold awarding a degree otherwise earned until the completion of the process set forth in this Student Code of Conduct, including the completion of all sanctions imposed, if any.
2. More than one of the sanctions listed above may be imposed for any single violation.
3. (a) Other than College expulsion or revocation or withholding of a degree, disciplinary sanctions shall not be made part of the student's permanent academic record, but shall become part of the student's disciplinary record. Upon graduation, the student's disciplinary record may be expunged of disciplinary actions other than College suspension, College expulsion, or revocation or withholding of a degree, upon application to the Student Conduct Administrator. Cases involving the imposition of sanctions other than College suspension, College expulsion or revocation or withholding of a degree shall be expunged from the student's confidential record eight (8) years after final disposition of the case.  
  
(b) In situations involving both an Accused Student(s) (or group or organization) and a student(s) claiming to be the victim of another student's conduct, the records of the process and of the sanctions imposed, if any, shall be considered to be the education records of both the Accused Student(s) and the student(s) claiming to be the victim because the educational career and chances of success in the academic community of each may be impacted.

4. The following sanctions may be imposed upon groups or organizations:
  - a. Those sanctions listed above in article IV(B)(1)(a),(b),(d),(e),(f).
  - b. Loss of selected rights and privileges for a specified period of time.
  - c. Deactivation. Loss of all privileges, including College recognition, for a specified period of time.
5. In each case in which a Student Conduct Board determines that a student and/or group or organization has violated the Student Code of Conduct, the sanction(s) shall be determined and imposed by the Student Conduct Administrator. In cases in which persons other than, or in addition to, the Student Conduct Administrator have been authorized to serve as the Student Conduct Board, the recommendation of the Student Conduct Board shall be considered by the Student Conduct Administrator in determining and imposing sanctions. The Student Conduct Administrator is not limited to sanctions recommended by members of the Student Conduct Board. Following the Student Conduct Board Hearing, the Student Conduct Board and the Student Conduct Administrator shall advise the Accused Student, group and/or organization (and a complaining student who believes s/he was the victim of another student's conduct) in writing of its determination and of the sanction(s) imposed, if any.

#### C. Interim Suspension

In certain circumstances, the Associate Vice President of Student Services, or a designee, may impose a College suspension prior to the Student Conduct Board Hearing before a Student Conduct Board.

1. Interim suspension may be imposed only: 1) to ensure the safety and well-being of members of the College community or preservation of College property; b) to ensure the student's own physical or emotional safety and well-being; or c) if the student poses an ongoing threat of disruption of, or interference with, the normal operations of the College.
2. During the interim suspension, a student shall be denied access to the campus (including classes) and/or all other College activities or privileges for which the student might otherwise be eligible, as the Associate Vice President of Student Services or the Student Conduct Administrator may determine to be appropriate.
3. The interim suspension does not replace the regular process, which shall proceed on the normal schedule, up to and through a Student Conduct Board Hearing, if required.
4. The student shall be notified in writing of this action and the reasons for the suspension. The notice will include the time, date, and place of a subsequent hearing at which the student may show cause why his or her continued presence on the campus does not constitute a threat, and at which they may contest whether a campus rule was violated.

#### D. Appeals

1. A decision reached by the Student Conduct Board or a sanction imposed by the Student Conduct Administrator may be appealed by the Accused Student(s) or Complainant(s) to an Appellate Board within five (5) school days of the decision. Such appeals shall be in writing and shall be delivered to the Student Conduct Administrator or his or her designee.
2. Except as required to explain the basis of new information, an appeal shall be limited to a review of the verbatim record of the Student Conduct Board Hearing and supporting documents for one or more of the following purposes:
  - a. To determine whether the Student Conduct Board Hearing was conducted fairly in light of the charges and information presented, and in conformity with prescribed procedures giving the complaining party a reasonable opportunity to prepare and to present information that the Student Code of Conduct was violated, and giving the Accused Student a reasonable opportunity to prepare and to present a response to those allegations. Deviations from designated procedures will not be a basis for sustaining an appeal unless significant prejudice results.
  - b. To determine whether the decision reached regarding the Accused Student was based on substantial information, that is, whether there were facts in the case that, if believed by the fact finder, were sufficient to establish that a violation of the Student Code of Conduct occurred.

- c. To determine whether the sanction(s) imposed were appropriate for the violation of the Student Code of Conduct which the student was found to have committed.
  - d. To consider new information, sufficient to alter a decision, or other relevant facts not brought out in the original hearing, because such information and/or facts were not known to the person appealing at the time of the original Student Conduct Board Hearing.
3. If an appeal is upheld by the Appellate Board, the matter shall be returned to the original Student Conduct Board and Student Conduct Administrator for re-opening of Student Conduct Board Hearing to allow reconsideration of the original determination and/or sanction(s). If an appeal is not upheld, the matter shall be considered final and binding upon all involved.

#### Article V: Interpretation and Revision

- A. Any question of interpretation or application of the Student Code of Conduct shall be referred to the Associate Vice President of Student Services or his or her designee for final determination.

The Student Code of Conduct shall be reviewed annually under the direction of the Associate Vice President of Student Services.

#### Conflict Resolution Center

The Conflict Resolution Center provides guidance to the Texas Southmost College community regarding Texas Southmost College protocol and procedures and assists and counsels students in resolving disputes and conflicts in a way that facilitates individual responsibility, contributes to their maturation, and promotes the development of self-advocacy skills.

The Conflict Resolution Center serves as an informal, independent, neutral, confidential, problem-solving resource for student-related issues. The Conflict Resolution Center is able to provide services as an intermediary/facilitator or to mediate when disputing parties are deadlocked. Conflict Resolution Center staff are available to listen, provide information, reframe issues, develop options, and make referrals when appropriate. Conflict Resolution Center staff will explain and clarify College policies and procedures while encouraging complainants to follow the approved policies and procedures. Conflict Resolution Center staff may conduct informal fact finding interviews when appropriate.

#### Student Appeal of Course Grades

Students at Texas Southmost College may appeal final course grades which they consider unfair or inaccurate.

The primary responsibility for assigning grades in a course belongs to the faculty member, and in the absence of compelling evidence of discrimination, differential treatment, or procedural irregularities, the judgment of the faculty member responsible for the course must remain determinative.

- The burden of proof lies with the student and it is the student's responsibility to provide evidence the grade should be changed. Unless the student demonstrates compelling evidence supporting a change of grade, the final grade issued by the faculty member responsible for the course will remain on the student's transcript.
- No appeals will be accepted with the desired resolution being anything other than a change of grade. Complaints must follow Texas Southmost College complaint procedures.
- Students who file frivolous appeals or who deviate from the approved process may have their appeal summarily dismissed.
- Students must submit appeals individually, group appeals will not be considered.
- If the student fails to comply with the designated time frames, the appeal may be summarily dismissed.
  - Only under conditions warranting exception will the time constraint for initiating the grade appeal process be extended. Exceptions might include unexpected call to military service, extreme health issues and severe life disruption.
  - Requests for an exception to the time constraint require verifiable documentation and must be submitted in writing to the appropriate Division Dean who will grant or deny the exception. The Division Dean will render a decision within 15 calendar days and the student will be notified of the decision through their TSC email address.

To appeal a grade, the following procedures must be observed:

#### Step 1

It is the responsibility of the student to initiate the grade appeal process by contacting the appropriate Division Dean no later than 30 calendar days after the end of the semester in which the grade was issued.

#### Step 2

1. The Division Dean will arrange a meeting between the student and the faculty member to discuss the appeal.
  - a. Both parties are required to meet unless either party can show that a special circumstance exists, in which case the appeal will advance to Step 3 of this process.
  - b. Either the Division Dean, faculty member, or the student may request a mediator to be present at the meeting. Mediators will be provided by the Conflict Resolution Center.
  - c. If the faculty member is no longer employed at Texas Southmost College, the student will advance to Step 3 of the grade appeal process.
  - d. If the faculty member is still employed at Texas Southmost College but not currently teaching, the grade appeal will be delayed until the faculty member returns to teach, as long as the faculty member returns no later than the next full (fall or spring) semester.
2. The faculty member may approve the appeal, deny the appeal or work with the student to reach a solution that is agreeable to both parties.
3. Following the meeting, the student will have 10 calendar days to proceed to step 3 of the appeal process.

#### Step 3

1. The student must submit a written appeal along with all supporting documentation to the appropriate Division Dean. The appeal must be in English and typed using size 12 Times New Roman or Arial font.
2. The Division Dean will forward the written appeal to the faculty member; requesting a written response.

#### Step 4

1. The Division Dean will submit the student's appeal and response from the faculty member to the Texas Southmost College Grade Appeal Committee, who will hear the appeal at their next regularly scheduled meeting.
  - a. The Grade Appeal Committee is chaired by the Associate Vice President of Student Services or his/her designee, and consists of two faculty representatives from each of the instructional divisions.
  - b. To meet quorum, a minimum of five faculty members must be present at the meeting.
2. The Grade Appeal Committee's responsibility will be:
  - a. To review the student's written appeal and evidence.
  - b. To consider the written response from the faculty member.
  - c. To call any witnesses, if desired, to corroborate documentary evidence. If summoned to testify, the student and faculty member may decline.
  - d. To inform the Division Dean of their decision. The Grade Appeal Committee may initiate a grade change or offer a solution to the student without consent from the Division Dean or faculty member.
3. The Division Dean will communicate the decision of the Grade Appeal Committee in writing, to the student and faculty member through their TSC email addresses.

The decision of the Grade Appeal Committee is final and concludes the approved Texas Southmost College grade appeal process.

## Student Complaints

These complaint procedures have been established to ensure students have an orderly process to present complaints and to provide the College with a consistent procedure for resolving complaints in a fair and just manner.

Students are expected to present and communicate their complaints using a professional standard of behavior in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Students are not exempt from disciplinary sanctions themselves when they violate any standard of the Student Code of Conduct while communicating their complaint to any level of the complaint process.

- No complaints will be heard with the desired outcome to overturn a decision rendered by an approved Texas Southmost College discipline or appeal committee.
- No complaints will be heard with the desired resolution being a change of grade.
- Group complaints will not be considered, students must submit complaints individually.
- Students who file frivolous or retaliatory complaints or who deviate from the approved complaint process may have their complaint summarily dismissed.
- The College will not retaliate against any student filing a complaint in "good faith."

Because the appropriate course of action is not always clear to students, the Office of the Associate Vice President of Student Services serves as a resource center for those seeking information regarding complaint procedures.

### Types of Complaints

The college defines two types of complaints:

1. **Informal Complaint**

An Informal Complaint is used to express dissatisfaction or concern regarding the actions of an individual or resolve an issue through which a student's rights were not violated.

2. **Formal Complaint**

A Formal Complaint may be used to resolve an issue if a student believes a member of the College community has violated his or her rights or caused him/her harm through a violation of College policy. The student must demonstrate that the issue in question meets specific criteria to file a Formal Complaint.

### Initial Consultation

The student complainant is encouraged to first consult with a representative from the Conflict Resolution Center, who will provide confidential and impartial guidance in exploring the different options available to address the concern.

During this initial consultation, the representative from the Conflict Resolution Center may suggest other informal options, such as facilitated dialogue, as an alternative to the complaint process.

### Facilitated Dialogue

A representative from the Conflict Resolution Center can serve as a neutral mediator to facilitate the discussion between parties who have reached a communication impasse. This process allows each party an opportunity to express their concerns clearly and in a calm manner, while respecting each other's point of view.

### Informal Complaint

Informal complaints allow a student to express a concern that can be easily resolved without the need to make a formal complaint.

To register an informal complaint, the student may either:

1. Speak with the appropriate supervisor in person, or
2. Send the appropriate supervisor an email from their TSC email account.
  - a. The complaint will be acknowledged by email within seven working days.
  - b. An investigation into the complaint will be conducted.
  - c. The complainant is advised of the outcome and associated decision as soon as possible, typically within seven working days of the date of the acknowledgement email. If the investigation takes longer than seven days, the complainant will be kept informed of the progress made in the investigation of the complaint.



### Formal Complaint

The student complainant must demonstrate that the issue meets ALL of the following criteria to file a formal complaint; otherwise, the student complainant has the option to make an informal complaint.

1. There has been a violation, a misinterpretation, an arbitrary or discriminatory application of College policy, regulation, or procedure which applies personally to the student complainant or the student complainant has been discriminated against on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status or sexual orientation. The student complainant must cite the campus policy, procedure or practice allegedly violated; and the student complainant must allege information which, if found to be true, is sufficient to support a violation of College policy, procedure or practice.
2. The student complainant must describe the personal adverse effect caused by the alleged violation of College policy, procedure, or practice.
3. The resolution sought by the student complainant must be reasonable given the circumstances of the complaint articulated by the student.

To register a formal complaint:

1. The student complainant must submit their complaint in writing to the Conflict Resolution Center.
2. The complaint will be forwarded to the appropriate supervisor or department who will investigate and provide a written response to the Conflict Resolution Center. The investigation may consist of interviewing witnesses, and/or requiring documentation relating to the issue.
  - a. A representative from the Conflict Resolution Center will review the response with the student complainant to determine if the complaint has been adequately resolved or if the student complainant wishes to continue the complaint process.
    - i. If the student complainant is satisfied with the response, then the complaint is considered resolved.
    - ii. If the student complainant is not satisfied with the response, the Conflict Resolution Center will forward the written grievance to the next level of supervision.
    - iii. These procedures will continue until the student complainant is satisfied or until the grievance reaches the Vice-President level.
  - b. Should the complaint reach the Vice-President level, the Vice-President may choose to hear the complaint personally or appoint an ad hoc committee to make a recommendation.

The decision of the Vice-President concludes the approved Texas Southmost College formal complaint process.

### Enrollment Appeal Committee

The Enrollment Appeal Committee (EAC) provides Texas Southmost College students with an opportunity to formally appeal an enrollment, registration or reinstatement issue resulting from a medical emergency, death in the family (parent, spouse, sibling or child), a life-changing incident or a perceived error by the College. Students must submit their appeal in writing, using the Enrollment Appeal Form, available from the Office of Admissions and Records.

### Statement of Equal Opportunity

No person shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity sponsored or conducted by Texas Southmost College on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, veteran status, or disability.

### **Rights of Individuals with Disabilities**

Texas Southmost College complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and does not discriminate on the basis of a disability in the areas of admission, accessibility, treatment, and employment. Individuals with disabilities, as defined under the law, who are otherwise qualified to meet the institution's academic and employment requirements will be provided with services and resources accordingly. Students and employees must submit the appropriate documentation of the disability by a qualified professional whose license or credentials are appropriate to diagnose. For students with disabilities, reasonable accommodations are made to allow the individual student to be successful at TSC. Accommodations are provided for those students who submit the documentation of the disability by a qualified professional whose license or credentials are appropriate to diagnose the disability. TSC supports efforts in making the campus more accessible and encourages individuals with disabilities to participate in all activities. Students seeking assistance should contact the office of disABILITY Support Services. Employees should contact the Human Resources Department.

### **Statement on Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco, Firearms and Other Substances**

In compliance with the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act Amendment of 1989 (Public Law 101-226) and Texas House Resolution 2253 and Senate Resolution 645 (passed in 1987), Texas Southmost College forbids the unlawful manufacture, possession, sale, use or distribution of illegal drugs and alcoholic beverages at on-and off-campus college-sponsored events. Each of these statutes requires colleges and universities to clearly inform students that no illegal drugs (including unlawful possession of alcohol) will be allowed on campus (inside buildings and on campus property), and that students who are found guilty of such violation(s) will be penalized.

TSC also prohibits smoking and the use of tobacco products in all college buildings. Violators of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action. Students seeking assistance or educational materials about alcohol, drugs, tobacco or other substances should contact the office of Student Life. Additionally, in accordance with the Texas Penal Code, 46.03 (Concealed Handgun Bill), no person may carry a firearm on the campus of an educational institution. Violators will be penalized.

### **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment in the workplace and schools is an illegal Practice under Section 703 of Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act as amended, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Texas Southmost College complies with Section 703 of Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, as amended, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Sexual harassment of employees or students at Texas Southmost College is strictly forbidden and will not be tolerated in any division, department, or any work unit by any employee or student.

Any employee or student who is found to have engaged in such conduct shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal or suspension. This policy shall be applied without regard to the gender of the employee involved.

### **Clery Act**

The Security department prepares this crime statistics report to comply with the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Crime Statistics Act. These statistics may also include crimes that have occurred in private residences or businesses that is not required by law. Each year, notification is made to all enrolled students providing the web site to access this report. Faculty and staff receive similar notification. Copies of the report may also be obtained at the Texas Southmost College Security department.

### **Accreditation**

The University of Texas at Brownsville/Texas Southmost College partnership is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award certificate, associate, baccalaureate, masters, and doctorate degrees.

Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of The University of Texas at Brownsville/Texas Southmost College.