



2025-2026
STUDENT HANDBOOK



southflorida.edu



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South Florida State College

JOIN US AT A LOCATION NEAR YOU

<div>Highlands Campus 600 West College Drive, Avon Park, FL 33825 863-453-6661 863-465-5300 ■ 863-494-7500 863-993-1757 ■ 863-773-2252 Campus Security (24/7) 863-453-0806</div>		
<div>DeSoto Campus 2251 N.E. Turner Avenue Arcadia, FL 34266 863-993-1757</div>	<div>Hardee Campus 2968 U.S. Hwy. 17 North Bowling Green, FL 33834 863-773-3081</div>	<div>Lake Placid Center 500 East Interlake Blvd Lake Placid, FL 33852 863-465-3003</div>
<div>Crews Center 200 U.S. Hwy. 27 South Avon Park, FL 33825 863-657-2335</div>	<div>The Hotel Jacaranda 19 East Main Street Avon Park, FL 33825 863-453-2211</div>	
<div>NOTE: For life-threatening emergencies at any campus/center, call 9-1-1 and then call the specific campus/center number listed above.</div>		

or visit us at

southflorida.edu

South Florida State College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award baccalaureate and associate degrees. South Florida State College also may offer credentials such as certificates and diplomas at approved degree levels. Questions about the accreditation of South Florida State College may be directed in writing to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097, by calling 404-679-4500, or by using information available on SACSCOC's website (sacscoc.org).



Introduction

The South Florida State College (SFSC) Student Handbook provides information that will facilitate your adjustment to college life and assist you in having a more productive and successful experience at SFSC. This Handbook describes the various services, organizations, and activities that are available at SFSC sites and provides a ready reference for often-used policies, regulations, and procedures.

This Handbook does not contain all the standards or regulations of the College. You should also be familiar with the College Catalog. Use this Student Handbook with your online College Catalog, Schedule of Classes, and other information posted and accessible from the official SFSC website at southflorida.edu. The Schedule of Classes is prepared and posted online for the fall, spring, and summer terms. The Student Services staff is ready to help students locate any additional information needed or desired. Every student is responsible for knowledge of the regulations and information contained in this Handbook.

SFSC's Vision, Mission, and Institutional Core Values are what drives the College's administration, staff, and faculty to serve the region's students and community members. The College believes wholeheartedly in these statements as they are instilled in every member of the SFSC family.

A vision statement looks to the future and describes the inspirational long-term desired change resulting from an institution's work in the community. It is intended to guide internal decision-making.

A mission statement is a concise explanation of a college's purpose and reason for existence. It is the roadmap for the accomplishing the vision statement.

The institutional core values are the essential principles that help guide and direct the College in decision-making and establish a standard against which actions can be assessed.

SFSC Vision

South Florida State College will become ... a globally aware academic destination driving regional transformation through innovative collaboration.

SFSC Mission

SFSC is an open-access, higher education institution dedicated to providing a learning-centered environment through quality programs, training, and services. Working in partnership with organizations and communities, the College provides leadership and a comprehensive range of opportunities for the educational, cultural, and economic development of the service district.

The College assists the people of its service district (DeSoto, Hardee, and Highlands counties) regardless of economic, social, or educational background to achieve success in:

- completing an associate degree in preparation for pursuing a baccalaureate or other professional degree or credential;
- completing a baccalaureate degree, associate degree, or certificate related to career and technical preparation to enter the workforce or to improve career circumstances;
- completing college preparatory programs of study including those leading to the high school diploma;
- obtaining basic skills in literacy, numeracy, and citizenship to prosper as a contributing member of society;



- gaining personal, cultural, and global awareness, appreciation, and understanding needed in a complex contemporary society;
- pursuing advanced academic preparation and credentials available through partnerships with colleges and universities; and
- participating in the social, cultural, environmental, and economic development of the communities served by the College.

We believe in the worth of each of our students and, through all of our educational programs and services, we seek to develop human potential and to create brighter futures.

SFSC Institutional Core Values

The attributes that guide our behavior as we pursue our vision are:

Integrity - We encourage the free exchange of ideas in an environment that embraces honesty, fairness, personal responsibility, and ethical leadership.

Service - We actively seek opportunities to enhance achievement and success in our local and world communities.

Community - We embrace cultural diversity, inclusiveness, collaboration, mutual respect, responsive, and productive partnerships, and the sharing of resources.

Learning - We are committed to providing opportunities for students and staff to succeed in a highly competitive environment so that they can become effective lifelong learners.

Excellence - We seek to provide high-quality, innovative, and flexible teaching and learning opportunities in a learning-centered environment.

Accountability - We value personal and institutional ownership through integrated planning and assessment of all programs.

Responsibility - We honor our commitments in all initiatives and leadership endeavors as well as promote environmental stewardship.

2025-2026 College Calendar

Classes for community education, workforce training, and selected certificate programs are ongoing. Adult Education classes are open-entry and are offered year-round. Please check our website at southflorida.edu or with a counselor/advisor for the most current offerings. Dual enrollment students check with a high school counselor for beginning and ending dates.

South Florida State College	Academic Dates and Deadlines		
	Fall 2025	Spring 2026	Summer 2026
Priority Date for SFSC Foundation Scholarships	Jul 15	Nov 15	Apr 1
Faculty Return	Aug 8	Jan 5	-
Last Day to Apply for Graduation	Oct 24	Mar 20	-
Last Day to Purchase Cap and Gown	Oct 31	Mar 27	-
Commencement/Graduation	Dec 11	May 12	-
Full Term	Aug 13 - Dec 3 (16 weeks)	Jan 9 - May 4 (16 weeks)	May 13 - Aug 3 (12 weeks)
Priority Registration for Students with over 40 hours including Veterans/Dependents using the GI Bill	Mar 31	Oct 6	Oct 6
Begin Registration for Students with over 20 hours	Apr 3	Oct 8	Oct 8
Begin Open Registration	Apr 7	Oct 13	Oct 13
Fee Payment Deadline	Aug 7*	Jan 6*	May 5*
CLASSES BEGIN	Aug 13	Jan 9	May 13
Registration Ends (Last Day to Add a Class)	Aug 15**	Jan 13**	May 15**
Deadline to Drop Classes w/Refund or Change Audit Status. Last date for Instructors to report NS (No-Show)	Aug 20	Jan 16	May 20
MANDATORY ATTENDANCE	Aug 13 - 20	Jan 9 - 16	May 13 - 20
Deadline to Withdraw with a Grade of W. Last date for Instructors to report NA (Non-Attendance)	Oct 17	Mar 23	Jul 1
Last Day of Classes	Dec 3	May 4	Aug 3
Exam Week	Dec 4 - 10	May 5 - 11	-
Faculty - Grades Due to Registrar's Office by NOON	Dec 11	May 12	Aug 4
First Flex Term	Aug 13 - Oct 6 (8 weeks)	Jan 9 - Mar 4 (8 weeks)	May 13 - Jun 24 (6 weeks)
Priority Registration for Students with over 40 hours including Veterans/Dependents using the GI Bill	Mar 31	Oct 6	Oct 6
Begin Registration for Students with over 20 hours	Apr 3	Oct 8	Oct 8
Begin Open Registration	Apr 7	Oct 13	Oct 13
Fee Payment Deadline	Aug 7*	Jan 6*	May 5*
CLASSES BEGIN	Aug 13	Jan 9	May 13
Registration Ends (Last Day to Add a Class)	Aug 15**	Jan 13**	May 15**
Deadline to Drop Classes w/Refund or Change Audit Status. Last date for Instructors to report NS (No-Show)	Aug 20	Jan 16	May 20
MANDATORY ATTENDANCE	Aug 13 - 20	Jan 9 - 16	May 13 - 20
Deadline to Withdraw with a Grade of W. Last date for Instructors to report NA (Non-Attendance)	Sep 16	Feb 10	Jun 8
Last Day of Classes	Oct 6	Mar 4	Jun 24
Faculty - Grades Due to Registrar's Office by NOON	Oct 7	Mar 5	Jun 25
Second Flex Term	Sep 9 - Dec 3 (13 weeks)	Feb 5 - May 4 (13 weeks)	Jun 25 - Aug 3 (6 weeks)
Priority Registration for Students with over 40 hours including Veterans/Dependents using the GI Bill	Aug 7*	Nov 17	Oct 6
Begin Registration for Students with over 20 hours	Aug 11	Nov 19	Oct 8
Begin Open Registration	Aug 13	Dec 1	Oct 13
Fee Payment Deadline	Aug 28*	Jan 22*	May 5*
CLASSES BEGIN	Sep 9	Feb 5	Jun 25
Registration Ends (Last Day to Add a Class)	Sep 11**	Feb 9**	Jun 29**
* Fees due on day of registration after deadline date			
**Ends at 11:59 p.m.			

South Florida State College				Academic Dates and Deadlines		
				Fall 2025	Spring 2026	Summer 2026
Second Flex Term - Continued				Sep 9 - Dec 3 (13 weeks)	Feb 5 - May 4 (13 weeks)	Jun 25 - Aug 3 (6 weeks)
Deadline to Drop Classes w/Refund or Change Audit Status.				Sep 16	Feb 12	Jul 2
Last date for Instructors to report NS (No-Show)				Sep 16	Feb 12	Jul 2
MANDATORY ATTENDANCE				Sep 9 - 16	Feb 5 - 12	Jun 25 - Jul 2
Deadline to Withdraw with a Grade of W. Last date for Instructors to report NA (Non-Attendance)				Oct 27	Apr 1	Jul 20
Last Day of Classes				Dec 3	May 4	Aug 3
Faculty - Grades Due to Registrar's Office by NOON				Dec 11	May 12	Aug 4
Third Flex Term				Oct 7 - Dec 3 (8 weeks)	Mar 5 - May 4 (8 weeks)	-
Priority Registration for Students with over 40 hours including Veterans/Dependents using the GI Bill				Mar 31	Oct 6	-
Begin Registration for Students with over 20 hours				Apr 3	Oct 8	-
Begin Open Registration				Apr 7	Oct 13	-
Fee Payment Deadline				Aug 7*	Jan 6*	-
CLASSES BEGIN				Oct 7	Mar 5	-
Registration Ends (Last Day to Add a Class)				Oct 9**	Mar 9**	-
Deadline to Drop Classes w/Refund or Change Audit Status.				Oct 14	Mar 12	-
Last date for Instructors to report NS (No-Show)				Oct 14	Mar 12	-
MANDATORY ATTENDANCE				Oct 9 - 14	Mar 5 - 12	-
Deadline to Withdraw with a Grade of W. Last date for Instructors to report NA (Non-Attendance)				Nov 7	Apr 13	-
Last Day of Classes				Dec 3	May 4	-
Faculty - Grades Due to Registrar's Office by NOON				Dec 11	May 12	-
Limited Services Available						
Convocation				Aug 11	-	-
Professional Development Day				-	Feb 20	-
Energy Saving Fridays				Holidays (No Classes - College Closed)		
No Classes/College Closed on Fridays in Summer (May 29, June 5, 12, 19, 26, July 3, 10, 17, 24, and 31, 2026). Exceptions: Community Ed., Workforce Training, and Adult Ed.				Labor Day - Sep 1	Martin Luther King - Jan 19	Memorial Day - May 25
				Thanksgiving - Nov 22-30	Spring Break - Mar 14-22	Independence Day - Jul 4
				Winter Break - Dec 13-Jan 4		
* Fees due on day of registration after deadline date						
**Ends at 11:59 p.m.						

Important Resources

Service	Phone#	Location/Building
Admissions, Registration, and Records	863-453-6661	B151 (1st Floor)
Adult Education/GED®	863-784-7441	H205 (2nd Floor)
Advising and Counseling Center	863-784-7131	B152 (1st Floor)
Applied Sciences and Technologies Division	863-784-7238	T01
Arts and Sciences Division	863-784-7330	B207 (2nd Floor)
Athletics Office	863-784-7035	E
Box Office	863-784-7178	A
Cafeteria (Highlands Campus)	863-784-7199	J
Career Development Center	863-784-7410	B111 (1st Floor)
Cashier/Refunds	863-784-7258	B150 (1st Floor)
College Recruiter	863-784-7447	B161
Community Relations and Marketing Office	863-784-7250	F108
Corporate and Community Education	863-784-7034	UC
Crews Center	863-657-2335	Avon Park
Cultural Programs	863-784-7177	A203 (2nd Floor)
Dental Education/Clinic	863-784-7020	T1-111
DeSoto Campus	863-784-7040	Arcadia
Driver Education	863-784-7388	UC123
Dual Enrollment	863-784-7167	B154
EA/EO Student Coordinator	863-784-7107	B167 (1st Floor)
Educational Technology (D2L Brightspace®)	863-784-7016	H112
English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)	863-784-7380	H207 (2nd Floor)
Farmworker Career Development Program (Hardee)	863-784-7072	Hardee 203
Farmworker Career Development Program (Highlands)	863-784-7166	T09
Financial Aid	863-784-7134	B168 (1st Floor)
Hardee Campus	863-784-7060	Bowling Green
Health Sciences Division	863-784-7225	HSC133
Highlands Campus	863-784-6661	Avon Park
Highlands Career Institute	863-784-7431	L
Honors Program	863-784-7247	B215
Human Resources	863-784-7132	I
Lake Placid Center	863-784-7082	Lake Placid
Library - Learning Resources Center (LRC)	863-784-7306	Y (2nd Floor)
Nursing Education	863-784-7118	HSC122
Ombudsman (Student Advocate)	863-784-7431	H206
Open Computer Lab	863-784-5121	Y101 (1st Floor)
Registrar	863-784-7139	B151 (1st Floor)
Security	863-453-0806	K1
SFSC Campus Store (Highlands Campus)	863-784-7112	B102 (1st Floor)
SFSC Foundation	863-453-3133	F
Student Disabilities Specialist	863-784-7176	B153 (1st Floor)
Student Government Association (SGA)	863-784-7450	D205
Student Services Division	863-784-7107	B167 (1st Floor)
Switchboard (Central)	863-453-6661	B155A
Testing and Assessment Center	863-784-7214	B255 (2nd Floor)
The Hotel Jacaranda	863-784-7338	Avon Park
Title IX	863-784-7039	B160 (1st Floor)
Tutoring and Learning Center (TLC)	863-784-7204	Y101 (1st Floor)
Veterans Services	863-784-7128	B161 (1st Floor)



Student Activities

You may participate in a variety of College clubs and organizations, cultural events, games, intercollegiate athletics, and other programs. Many of these activities are supported by student activity fees. You are encouraged to participate in the College's decision-making processes through active involvement in the Student Government Association (SGA) and various Collegewide committees such as the Student Judicial Committee, Curriculum Committee, and program advisory committees. Committee descriptions and procedures for participation and service are available from the SGA advisor and the vice president of student services. Students are also encouraged to use the Panther Activity Center (PAC), the GamePad, and the SFSC Fitness Center.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (SGA)

The SGA is the primary avenue for student participation in institutional decision making at SFSC. SGA serves as the voice of the students with direct liaison to College administrators for student issues and concerns. SGA is also responsible for approving all clubs and student activities and determines the use of student activity fees. SGA participates in state collegiate activities through the Florida College System Student Government Association (FCSSGA) of the Florida College System Activities Association (FCSAA). Among the many activities offered are social and cultural events, forums, art events, book fairs, athletic events, dances, guest speakers, blood drives, etc. Operations of the SGA are set in accordance with a constitution and bylaws and are sanctioned by the Office of the President with oversight by the vice president of student services.

SFSC SGA Office is located in Building D, Room 205, 863-784-7450. Instagram: @SFSC_SGA or contact the SGA advisor, Building D, Room 207, 863-784-7435. For more information on SGA, go online at southflorida.edu/student-government-association.

ATHLETICS AND INTRAMURAL SPORTS

SFSC participates in four varsity sports: men's baseball, women's volleyball, women's cross country, and women's softball. Information on student athletic participation and financial support data can be obtained from the athletic director in Building E on the Highlands Campus. Intramural sports are available based on student demand and may include volleyball, basketball, soccer, fitness activities, and others. If you are interested in intramural sports, you should contact the coordinator of student life, Building D, Room 207, 863-784-7435.

ACADEMIC TEAM (BRAIN BOWL)

The SFSC Brain Bowl academic team consists of outstanding scholars who compete at the regional and state levels against colleges in academic games requiring rapid recall of information and facts. The team that wins the State Brain Bowl Championship receives scholarships and other honors. If you are interested in participating on the Brain Bowl team, you should contact the SGA Office at 863-784-7450 to obtain the contact information for one of the current faculty advisors.

SFSC FITNESS CENTER

Come to the SFSC Fitness Center, located in the PAC on the second floor of Panther Gymnasium (Building D) on the Highlands Campus. The Fitness Center is designed to meet all the needs of an active student. With treadmills, stair climbers, and stationary bikes, the cardio-cravers can get their fill. If pumping iron is the goal, free weights are ready and waiting. You can achieve different levels of resistance to achieve your personal fitness goals. To enter the facility, present a valid SFSC ID.

GAMEPAD

Students, come join us at the GamePad, located in the Joseph E. Johnston Student Center (Building J) in the middle of the Highlands Campus. The GamePad is a video gaming area that has various video game consoles. Contact the Student Life Office for more information at 863-784-7435. To enter the facility, present a valid SFSC ID.



CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS

All students are encouraged to participate in at least one of the available College-sponsored clubs. Clubs and organizations are recognized and approved by SFSC only when they have met institutional requirements for establishing a charter to operate. Clubs, which have not been recognized by the College, are not permitted to operate on any College site without special approval of the vice president of student services. Contact the SGA advisor for additional information or call the SGA office. The following clubs have been chartered but may or may not be active. If 10 or more students are interested, the club can be activated. New clubs can also be initiated. Contact the coordinator of student life for more information at 863-784-7435:

- **African-American Association** - This association is an organization of primarily African-American students whose goal is to promote academic success and cultural development among its members. This organization exists to empower African-American students through the development of effective leadership skills. The intent of this organization is to create an environment in which the natural talents of the individuals are enhanced and the principle of “umojia” (unity) is encouraged.
- **American Dental Hygienists** - This organization is open to any student enrolled in the Dental Hygiene Program. Club members participate in various community service projects. Members provide oral health education, oral cancer screenings, and dental hygiene treatment to the public. Members even have the chance to attend Special Olympics where they volunteer in completing dental screenings.
- **Art Club** - This SFSC club strives to give students access to the visual arts both on campus and in the community. The Art Club plans artistic educational activities such as Artist Talks on campus and field trips to museums and art festivals around the state. Students are encouraged to show their personal artwork and get feedback from their peers during Art Club meetings. Opportunities for visual art volunteer work both on campus and in the community are supported.
- **Basketball Club** - The basketball club was developed to encourage leadership and promote the game of basketball while developing an environment of fair play and enjoyment.
- **College Democrats** - This is a political interest club that is active in the politics of the area, the state, and the nation.
- **College Republicans** - This is a political interest club that is active in the politics of the area, the state, and the nation.
- **Dental Students Association** - This association promotes optimum oral health within the local community, cultivates a sense of fellowship among students in dental health-related careers, and aids both Dental Assisting and Dental Hygiene students in preparation for their respective board examinations.
- **DeSoto Campus Ambassadors** - This association serves as the representative influence and voice of the students attending the SFSC DeSoto Campus with direct liaison through SGA. In addition to promoting educational and student social activities, this organization encourages good citizenship in the community through approved service activities.
- **Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA)** - This student-led club provides a safe and supportive environment for students, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. GSA aims to support students, build community, and create change.
- **Hardee Campus Ambassadors** - This association serves as the representative influence and voice of the students attending the SFSC Hardee Campus with direct liaison through the SGA. In addition to promoting educational and student social activities, this organization encourages good citizenship in the community through approved service activities.
- **Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI)** - This interprofessional group brings students from health professions programs together through a shared interest in learning about quality improvement and improving care for patients. IHI exists in health care organizations, creating a forum for like-minded students and residents to interact and help each other gain skills to improve care. IHI provides opportunities to learn, network with peers, connect with engaged and supportive faculty, and accomplish scholarly activities such as publishing and presenting work.
- **Jac Pac** - This is a student advisory council that assists student residents of the Jacaranda Residence Facility and provides a guide for the conduct of hall affairs. The council promotes cooperation among all residents of the facility, strengthens



the responsibilities for each person, provides opportunity for participation in the governance of a democratic community, sponsors student activities for the residents, and stimulates and develops high standards academically, socially, emotionally, and culturally.

- **Latin Student Organization** - This club provides an opportunity to learn about different Latin cultures within the community and at SFSC. It encourages students to take pride in their roots and history and promote empowerment as they keep moving forward with their academic pathways, professional development, and own self-improvement.
- **Phi Beta Lambda** - This business organization is for students in postsecondary colleges who are enrolled in business courses and are developing related competencies. Though this organization works with the Florida Business Association, it is not all work; members do have fun.
- **Phi Theta Kappa** - This is an international honor society that recognizes and encourages scholarship among College associate and baccalaureate degree-seeking students. SFSC's chapter, Tau Epsilon, was founded in 1968. The society provides an opportunity to develop leadership and service, promotes an intellectual climate for scholars, and fosters a continued interest in academic excellence. Eligible students must be currently enrolled in a college credit degree program and must have earned 12 or more college credit hours with a cumulative GPA of 3.25 or higher. If interested, call 863-784-7327 or 863-784-7368. Members do not need to be full-time students for eligibility.
- **Radiography Club** - This club is open to any student currently enrolled in the Radiography degree program. It offers students an opportunity to become involved in professional activities and helps to prepare them for involvement in the skilled profession. Upon successful completion of the College accredited program, students will be eligible to apply to take the American Registry of Radiologic Technologies (ARRT) national examination for certification and registration and join a professional organization.
- **Rotaract** - This club is an affiliate of Rotary International. It is for students who are interested in service, leadership, and fellowship with students of like interests and members of our business communities.
- **Soccer Club** - This club was created for students who have a desire to play soccer and meet fellow students to discuss soccer-related issues.
- **Student Nurses Association** - This association promotes professionalism in nursing, provides students in Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN), A.S. in Nursing (ADN), and Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) programs with a bridge to the graduate professional organization, and introduces students to political involvement that has an impact on health care.
- **Student Practical Nurses Association** - This organization encourages students to participate in community affairs and activities towards health care as well as the resolution of correlated social issues and to promote and encourage students' participation in interdisciplinary activities.
- **Theatre Club** - This club is a regular gathering where students interested in the performing arts learn and practice improvisational theatre games and perform scene work. Several times a year, the club attends performances in Highlands County and the Tampa/Orlando metro areas. The club is a terrific opportunity to meet creatives, build community, and explore career opportunities in the performing arts. You don't need prior acting experience to join the club, just an interest in theatre.
- **Veterans' Club of South Florida State College (VCSFSC)** - This club consists of students who are active duty, reservists, retired, veterans, spouses, and/or dependents of all military branches of services. VCSFSC meets on a regular basis to enhance their college experience through an exchange of ideas, engage in military-related service projects at all SFSC campuses and throughout the community, assist with the dissemination of valuable information to veterans, build upon their past and present military experience to further their own educational pursuits, and enrich the overall student population at SFSC.
- **Volleyball Club** - The purpose of the Volleyball Club is to promote camaraderie, teamwork, leadership, and promote the game of volleyball while providing an environment of fair play and enjoyment.



Student Services

South Florida State College (SFSC), an open-access institution of higher education, provides student support programs, services, and activities that are consistent with its mission and are intended to promote student learning and enhance student development. These programs, activities, and services are integrated into academic, social, and administrative functions of the institution, and seek to develop human potential and to create brighter futures. The division of student services offers a full range of support to all levels of students at all SFSC campuses and the Lake Placid Center. Services to students enrolled in distance education are equivalent to those provided on-campus.

VICE PRESIDENT OF STUDENT SERVICES

The vice president of student services oversees all student services programs and activities, including commencement. The Student Services Division plans, organizes, implements, and assesses student support programs including: Admissions, Registration, and Records; Advising and Counseling; Career Development Center; Financial Aid; New Student Orientation; Recruiting; Residence Life; Student Disability Services; Student Life; and the Testing and Assessment Center. In addition, the vice president of student services is responsible for the development and enforcement of the Student Code of Conduct found in the Student Handbook. The dean also acts as an institutional equity officer and the deputy Title IX coordinator.

Most student support programs, services, and activities are available at all campuses. Additionally, students can visit the Highlands Campus for services that are not available at all campuses or can call or email the appropriate office. Highlands Campus Student Services staff visit each campus or center as needed to provide services which include advising and counseling, assessment and testing, career services, disability services, financial aid, orientation, recruiting, and veterans' services. Online students can also visit the Highlands Campus, call, or email the appropriate office. Students are informed during orientation that they can always contact the Office of Student Services for information and support at 863-784-7107.

ADMISSIONS, REGISTRATION, AND RECORDS

The Admissions, Registration, and Records Office, under the leadership of the registrar, is the access point for maintaining all official student records which are managed under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Regulations. This office is the hub of student entry (admissions) through exit (graduation) from the College. Support staff in the Office of the Registrar manage the SFSC admissions process. The College utilizes Banner Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system for student database management. The Welcome Center, located on the Highlands Campus in the Catherine P. Cornelius Student Services and Classroom Complex (Building B), receives admissions applications for all programs at all sites. Since SFSC is an open-admissions institution, all students are accepted into the College. Limited access programs have additional admissions criteria. Prior to first enrollment, you will receive an individualized advising session to assess your entry-level placement. Staff members in the office will provide you with access to your individual records. They also offer weekly cohort comparisons in program enrollments to the administration; manage the interactive student records database; publish the online Schedule of Classes; coordinate and track room assignments; process student grades, course completers, graduating students; conduct transcript evaluations; issue official transcript and enrollment confirmations; manage degree audits (Degree Works™); and provide other related records services. You may contact the Admissions, Registration, and Records Office at 863-784-7416, email at Admissions@southflorida.edu for any registration, admission, transcript, and record needs.

High-pressure recruitment tactics for the purpose of securing enrollments of active duty military and veterans are banned. The College refrains from high-pressure recruitment tactics such as making multiple unsolicited contacts (three or more), including contacts by phone, email, or in-person, and engaging in same-day recruitment and registration for the purpose of securing active duty military and veteran enrollments.

ADVISING AND COUNSELING

The Advising and Counseling Center supports students through academic advising, personal counseling support, and general guidance. An early alert process is in place to assist students who are at risk for failing. Telephone, email, and walk-in advising services are available at each College location to provide information about programs and resources, academic planning,



scheduling and registering for classes, time management, conflict management, personal responsibility, and transfer services. For advising and counseling:

<u>Location</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Email</u>
• Highlands Campus	863-784-7131	Advising@southflorida.edu
• DeSoto Campus	863-784-7040	AdvisingDeSoto@southflorida.edu
• Hardee Campus	863-784-7060	AdvisingHardee@southflorida.edu
• Lake Placid Center	863-784-7082	AdvisingLakePlacidCenter@southflorida.edu

BayCare Behavioral Health is a 24/7 free, confidential counseling service that provides around-the-clock student assistance for any and all issues. In addition, students are also provided access to off-site counselors for face-to-face counseling as needed. To access their services, call 1-800-878-5470 or email BayCareSAP@baycare.org.

All SFSC students have access to FloridaShines (FloridaShines.org), an online student hub of innovative educational services that includes: academic advising services, career exploration, the ability to search libraries within the Florida statewide library system, searching for available statewide online courses, exploring colleges and universities, discovering of degree programs, finding ways to pay for college, and learning about Florida's top jobs.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER

The staff of the Career Development Center assists students, graduates, and members of the community with career planning and placement experiences. You can explore career profiles, take online interest inventories, use the center's resources to research careers, discuss career planning, receive assistance in goal setting, and establish opportunities for cooperative learning, job shadowing, or internships. Placement services are also available to assist students who wish to seek employment. Additionally, the Career Development Center staff coordinate annual career and job fairs (e.g., Comfort Keepers, NUCOR, UPS, Ferguson, Publix) that facilitate interaction with employers and universities. For more information, contact the Career Development Center at 863-784-7410, email at SFSCCareerCenter@southflorida.edu.

CAREERSOURCE HEARTLAND

CareerSource Heartland (CSH) offers a variety of employment-related services to assist students and job seekers. For more information, please visit CareerSourceHeartland.com.

COMMENCEMENT

Commencement is the culminating experience for each student at SFSC upon completion of the degree requirements for their chosen area of study. The graduation procedures for all programs, including all SFSC locations as well as distance education students, are provided on the SFSC website. Prior to graduation, you will be required to complete an application for graduation, perform a graduation audit with a counselor or advisor to ensure that all your course requirements have been met, and complete the Graduate Satisfaction Survey (GSS). For more information about graduation, call us at 863-784-7107.

FINANCIAL AID

The Financial Aid Office assists prospective and current students in securing the most suitable financial support to achieve their educational goals. Financial assistance and services available to all eligible students include a wide variety of programs: Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, federal and college-supported work-study, Florida Bright Futures grant programs, as well as scholarship funds offered through the SFSC Foundation, Inc. These financial aid programs assist students in a number of ways: general financial support, student work study, enrollment persistence, time to completion, self-sufficiency, and overall satisfaction with their college experience.

Financial aid is awarded on the basis of your academic ability or special talent, demonstrated financial need, and the availability of funds from federal, state, institutional, and/or local sources. Financial aid awards will not be processed until you have been admitted to a degree program or eligible certificate program. For information and assistance call 863-784-7134 or email at Finaid@southflorida.edu. To apply for financial aid, visit our financial aid webpage at southflorida.edu/financial-aid-scholarships.



PANTHER ACTIVITY CENTER

The Panther Activity Center (PAC) is located on the second floor of the Panther Gym (Building D). In an effort to support student engagement and retention, this space allows students to take a break from studying or unwind with friends. The PAC includes movie-style couches, 52" LCD televisions, Wi-Fi, DVD Player, billiards table, air hockey table, table tennis, dart board, foosball, and board games. Also, located in the PAC is a fitness center designed to meet the fitness needs of the students. The SFSC Fitness Center includes treadmills, stair climbers, stationary bikes, and a variety of weight-lifting equipment. To enter the facility, present a valid SFSC ID. For more information, contact the student life coordinator at 863-784-7435.

PANTHER PATHways

Panther PATHways at SFSC is an initiative designed to streamline the academic journey for students. This comprehensive program assists students from the initial stage of course selection to job placement in their field of study or seamless transfer to a four-year institution. Through access to academic advisors, a range of learning resources such as tutoring, study groups, workshops, and career preparation services, Panther PATHways is committed to equipping students to excel. With a wide range of PATHways to explore on the website, students can view program maps with helpful topics such as Pre-Degree Requirements, Recommended Soft Skills, Recommended Courses to Take by Term, Career Information, and Transfer Resources.

For students seeking a supportive, structured, and proactive academic journey, Panther PATHways offers the resources and guidance necessary for success. For more information, visit Panther PATHways, call 863-784-7131, or email Advising@southflorida.edu.

PETE'S PANTRY

Pete's Pantry is located on the Highlands Campus within the Student Services Office in Building B. Various dry food goods are offered to students at no cost, as well as personal hygiene items, when available. Availability of specific items may vary throughout the year. For more information, call 863-784-7107 or email SFSCStudentServices@southflorida.edu.

RECRUITING

In the SFSC service district, the College conducts outreach and recruiting including pre-collegiate opportunities, college information sessions, and open houses to promote a process of seamless transition from high school to college. The recruiting office encourages submission of applications by exploring the breadth of programs available, offering glimpses of what college life includes, and sharing the success and satisfaction of previous students. The College recruiter is supported by various SFSC staff including academic advisors and campus coordinators from all sites and outreach program managers/staff from the Farmworker Career Development Program and Take Stock in Children Program. Members of these programs participate in events hosted by local high schools, communities, and their local community organizations in an effort to increase awareness of SFSC's educational programs and services. Recruiting activities include College for a Day, high school-sponsored college nights, high school visits, campus tours, and open houses. Online catalogs, brochures, and recruitment materials are readily available to all students, both face-to-face and distance education. For more information, call the College recruiter at 863-784-7447, or email Recruiter@southflorida.edu.

RESIDENCE LIFE

The SFSC Foundation, Inc., operates a residence facility located inside The Hotel Jacaranda at 19 E. Main Street, Avon Park. This facility houses approximately 81 students. A full-time, live-in residence life coordinator and resident assistants are available to assist students with issues which might arise. In addition, the College has designated the residence hall as a wellness facility. Educational and social programming is offered to meet the psychosocial and health needs of today's college students. The resident life coordinator may be contacted at 863-784-7127, or email Housing@southflorida.edu.

STUDENT ADVOCATE

The College provides several avenues for students to express concerns and grievances through the SFSC Administrative Procedure 1100-Discrimination, Harassment, and/or Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedure to ensure that students are treated fairly and without prejudice. The student ombudsman or student advocate, is available to assist in conflict resolution and the appeals process through SFSC-established procedures. For more information, call 863-784-7431.



STUDENT LIFE (CLUBS AND ACTIVITIES)

The Student Life program, as outlined in the SFSC Student Handbook and College Catalog, provides opportunities for student engagement through student organizations and activities, Student Government Association (SGA), leadership training, and intramural athletics. Faculty and staff serve, advise, and strongly support student activities and organizations. The student activities program affords opportunities for engagement and personal growth as student leaders through participation in the wide variety of programs and activities.

SFSC supports academic excellence and recognizes exemplary student performance through acknowledgement on the President's and Vice President's honor lists, invitation to participate in Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) international honor society, and recognition at the SFSC Annual Awards Ceremony and commencement exercises.

The College has an intramural program and a fitness center that are open to all students, faculty, and staff. The program aims to promote a sense of community, school spirit, and physical fitness through encouraging an active, involved lifestyle. For more information about the Student Life Program, contact SFSC's student life coordinator at 863-784-7435, or email SFSCStudentLife@southflorida.edu.

STUDENT ORIENTATION

Student Orientation is an overview of College policies, services, programs, and resources. You must complete orientation before you may register for classes. The orientation is presented in a fully online, interactive format. Make sure you finish the orientation in its entirety, including all of the quizzes in the modules. Allow approximately 60 minutes to finish the self-paced orientation, which can be completed from a desktop computer, laptop computer, tablet, or cellphone with internet access. If you do not have personal computer access, you can complete the orientation in the SFSC Career Development Center (Highlands Campus, Building B, Room 111). Appointments are not necessary.

First Year Experience Seminar (SLS 1106) is a one credit-hour college course to address skills for student success. Offered in a variety of models, including fully online, SLS 1106 is required for new, transfer, or returning degree-seeking students with fewer than 15 earned college credit hours. SLS 1106 is typically completed during your first term of study at SFSC. Contact SFSC'S Career Development Center at 863-784-7410 or email at SFSCGPSOrientation@southflorida.edu for additional information.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities are provided appropriate services by a disabilities specialist in the Advising and Counseling Center. Support and reasonable accommodations are provided on an individualized basis. Such assistance may include ensuring the students receive classroom and testing accommodations based on their documented disability by written notification to faculty and the Testing and Assessment Center. The disability specialist visits all campus locations and centers and works with distance education students to provide assistance and services. This office also coordinates services with external agencies such as Vocational Rehabilitation to provide necessary accommodations.

It is the responsibility of the student or prospective student to self-identify with the disabilities specialist and provide appropriate documentation. Individuals who choose not to self-identify may be ineligible for services and/or accommodations. For more information, contact the disabilities specialist through the SFSC website at southflorida.edu; by email at Disabilities.Specialist@southflorida.edu; call 863-784-7176; or in person at Building B, The Advising and Counseling Center, Room 152, Highlands Campus.

TESTING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER

The SFSC Testing and Assessment Center coordinates and proctors course performance exams, certification exams, national/state competency exams, and personal assessments in both online and paper/pencil formats. These exams are also used to determine course placement and entrance eligibility to limited access programs. Testing services include testing with accommodations for students with disabilities. Since SFSC is an open-admissions institution, it provides testing and assessment services with the primary responsibility of administering placement tests and assessments which will help determine a student's level of preparedness for the coursework and program of study selected. Contact the Testing and Assessment Center at 863-784-7214, or email Testing@southflorida.edu to schedule your exam (for more information refer to Testing and Assessment Center in the College Catalog).



VETERANS SERVICES

SFSC, recognized as a Military-Friendly College, provides an advisor to assist all veterans and their dependents. The advisor certifies enrollment so that students can receive benefits from the Veterans Administration. In addition, the advisor provides academic advising and referrals for additional support from other SFSC support personnel. For additional information, contact the Veterans Services Advisor, Building B, Room 111, Career Development Center, Highlands Campus, 863-784-7128 or SFSCVeterans@southflorida.edu.



Additional Student Support Resources and Information

ATHLETICS

SFSC offers interscholastic sports offerings for women in softball, volleyball, and cross country, and for men in baseball. These programs are all widely participated in throughout SFSC's surrounding service area as well as statewide, which provides outstanding recruiting and participation opportunities. For more information about SFSC's athletic teams, call 863-784-7035. Games and matches are free to attend.

CASHIER'S OFFICE

The Cashier's Office, located on the first floor of the Catherine P. Cornelius Student Services and Classroom Complex (Building B), processes student payments and other fees, distributes financial aid, in addition to overseeing parking registration and decals. Call 863-784-7258, or email CashierServices@southflorida.edu.

COLLEGE CAMPUSES AND FACILITIES ACCESS

Classes are typically scheduled Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Business hours for most office functions on all campuses are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Classrooms, labs, and other educational facilities are restricted to students, faculty, and staff who have a legitimate need to be there. For safety reasons, classrooms and labs are locked when not in use and are considered restricted from general public access. Except for special events, the College is closed to students and visitors during other hours. Hours may vary during the summer.

FOOD SERVICES

SFSC offers food services at each of its campus locations. The Highlands Campus houses Kelly's Bistro by the Bay and vending machines in the Joseph E. Johnston Memorial Student Center (Building J) and the Catherine P. Cornelius Student Services and Classroom Complex (Building B). Kelly's is open for breakfast 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. and lunch 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. daily. Hours vary in the summer and are posted in the cafeteria. SFSC also operates the [Hotel Jacaranda](#) Restaurant. The DeSoto and Hardee campuses, as well as the Lake Placid Center, have vending machines, microwave ovens, and student lounge spaces for breaks and meals. The Lunch Box is available at the DeSoto Campus, Hardee Campus, and Lake Placid Center of SFSC. These locations provide snacks and single-serving food items if students are in need of nourishment while on campus. The main sponsors of each location are:

- DeSoto - All Faiths Food Bank, Battle Creek Foundation, and Florida Power and Light
- Hardee - Hardee Helps, Heartland Food Bank, and Peace River Electric Cooperative
- Lake Placid - Heartland Food Bank and Florida Power and Light

HEALTH SERVICES

For medical emergencies call 911. No medical facilities are available to the students on campus. Campus emergencies will be handled according to the regular College procedure as outlined in the Safety and Security Guidelines also in this Handbook.

LOST AND FOUND

Any article found should be turned in to Lost and Found - Highlands Campus (Cashier's Office) 863-784-7142, DeSoto Campus 863-784-993-1757, Hardee Campus 863-773-3081, or Lake Placid Center 863-465-3003. SFSC will follow College Procedure 2072 for articles not claimed.

PARKING AND DECALS

SFSC provides ample parking to serve students and employees. Some parking spaces are reserved for specific purposes: visitors, disabled, loading zone, cosmetology patrons, trustees, faculty, staff, etc. Regular spaces are those not otherwise designated. Students are required to obtain parking decals for their vehicles if they wish to park on campus. This decal must be



displayed on the left side of the rear bumper or rear window of automobiles and in a visible spot on motorcycles. Parking decals may be obtained from the Cashier's Office in the Catherine P. Cornelius Student Services and Classroom Complex (Highlands Campus, Building B). **NOTE:** Campus speed limit is 15 MPH unless otherwise posted.

PLACEMENT TESTING

If you enroll in associate degree programs and some certificate programs, you may be required to have college placement test scores on file or take the placement test given by the College as a part of the admissions procedure. This placement test includes mathematics, reading, and English language skills.

You are not required to take the test, if you:

- have an A.A. degree or higher;
- are non-degree seeking;
- are registering for 11 credit hours or fewer (college-level math and English courses require placement test scores);
- are a transfer student who has completed all required college-level English and math courses;
- have records that indicate you have already taken one of the state-mandated tests within the last two years;
- entered the ninth grade in a Florida public school in the 2003-04 school year, or any year thereafter, and earned a Florida standard high school diploma; or
- are currently serving as an active duty member of any branch of the United States Armed Services.

If you are not required to take the common placement test and not required to enroll in development education you may opt to be assessed and enroll in developmental education. Always check with your advisor regarding placement test requirements. Call the Testing and Assessment Center for more information at 863-784-7214.

POSTERS/LEAFLETS/USE OF BULLETIN BOARDS

Bulletin boards are provided for the use of student organizations and general postings. Collegewide circulation of all notices and leaflets, which meet uniform and nondiscriminatory standards, shall be permitted with the approval of the director of institutional communications, Administration Building (Building F), Highlands Campus. Student organizations are to have clearance for an activity prior to posting or distributing information regarding that activity. Digital versions of notices and leaflets can be emailed to CommunityRelations@southflorida.edu, but all printed items require a stamp from Community Relations and Marketing. For any questions about posting and distributing information, call 863-784-7250.

REFUND POLICY

You must officially drop a course to obtain consideration for a refund. Refunds must be requested within the Drop with Refund Period at the Office of the Registrar (see College Calendar for drop with refund deadlines). Refund exceptions to this rule must be requested in writing to the Academic Appeals Committee and be based upon documented reasons beyond your control. Changes in your schedule may involve application of the refund policy. For example: If you drop a class during the refund period and add another, you will have the funds applied toward the added class. For more information on refunds, contact the Cashier's Office at 863-784-7258.

Fees paid by check will not be refunded until your check clears the College's bank. Refunds are paid using Bank Mobile or by crediting the credit card that paid the fees if applicable. Refunds are processed two to four weeks after the end of the Drop with Refund Period.

SFSC CAMPUS STORE (Highlands Campus)

The SFSC Campus Store is owned and operated by Follett Higher Education Group through a contractual agreement with SFSC. The store carries all required textbooks and supplies. Textbooks may be purchased in person at the SFSC Highlands Campus Store at the beginning of each term. The SFSC Campus Store is located on the first floor in Building B. Textbooks can also be purchased on the store's website. Instructional materials which are ordered by students at the other campuses can



be delivered to those campuses via College courier. When purchasing textbooks and other class materials, be sure that you have the right textbook for your class prior to breaking any shrink wrap or packaging materials, as opened packages cannot be returned. Access codes may be refunded in original purchase condition and receipt. Access cards that have been accessed, scratched off, or damaged are ineligible for refunds. Campus Store hours are Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Friday, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Closed Saturday and Sunday. During the summer term, hours are Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Closed Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

Textbooks may be returned only if the cash register receipt is available, the textbooks are undamaged, and the return is within the Drop with Refund Period (See SFSC Campus Store Policy). The Campus Store purchases used textbooks if the books are in reasonable condition and the College has an immediate need for them. The SFSC Campus Store serves Starbucks® coffee. For more information, call the SFSC Campus Store at 863-784-7112, email 1383mgr@follett.com or visit ShopSFSC.com.

SPORTS COMPLEX

The SFSC Sports Complex includes Panther baseball and fastpitch softball fields, Panther Gymnasium (Panther volleyball), beach volleyball court, tennis courts, Nautilus weight room, and intramural sport field.

STUDENT ID CARD

When requesting a new SFSC Student Photo ID, you must present one form of government-issued photo identification (e.g., state driver's license, state identification card, or passport) at the time the ID card is made. You may obtain a Student ID Card at the Highlands Campus (Welcome Center, Building B), Hardee Campus, or DeSoto Campus. The initial card is FREE. If lost or stolen, you may obtain a replacement card for a fee. Returning students do not need to obtain a new Student ID Card.

VOTER REGISTRATION INFORMATION

SFSC encourages all students who are 18 years of age and U.S. citizens to register to vote. Voter registration forms are available from your county Supervisor of Elections Office at VoteHighlands.com, VoteDesoto.com, or HardeeCountyElections.com.



Academic Information

ACADEMIC RECOGNITION

SFSC will recognize you for academic excellence during your course of study. You will be eligible each term for the following distinctions:

President's List - If you earn 6 or more credits for the term and earn a GPA of 3.8 to 4.0, SFSC's president will send you a recognition letter.

Vice President's List - If you earn 6 or more credits for the term and earn a GPA of 3.5 to 3.79, SFSC's vice president for academic affairs will send you a recognition letter.

Graduation with Distinction - If you graduate with an excellent GPA in the associate and/or baccalaureate degree programs, you will receive recognition on your diploma according to the following GPA: 3.9 to 4.0 summa cum laude; 3.7 to 3.89 magna cum laude; 3.5 to 3.69 cum laude.

If you attended no other postsecondary institution other than SFSC, your GPA is based on the GPA earned at SFSC. If you attended at least one other postsecondary institution and earned 45 or more credits at SFSC toward the associate degree or 90 or more credits at SFSC toward the baccalaureate degree, your GPA is based on the higher of either the GPA earned at SFSC or the cumulative GPA from all institutions attempted. If you attended at least one other postsecondary institution and earned less than 45 (90) credits at SFSC, your GPA is based on the cumulative GPA from all institutions attended.

If you have fulfilled the requirements for a College Credit Certificate or Career Certificate and achieved a 3.5 GPA or higher, you will graduate with distinction. Likewise, if you have earned a State of Florida High School Diploma with a score of 165 or higher on each of the General Educational Development (GED) tests, you will graduate with distinction.

To be recognized with distinction at the commencement ceremony, the determining GPA will be based upon your previous term cumulative GPA.

Honors Program - If you fulfill the requirements of the Honors Program, you will receive your Associate in Arts degree with an Honors endorsement on your transcript and diploma, and special recognition at the Commencement ceremony.

Outstanding Student Awards are given annually. If you show leadership in scholastic achievements, student activities, and athletics, you may be eligible.

ATTENDANCE

Instructors will explain their class attendance policies (this policy must be provided to you during the first week of class). If you are not registered for the class, you are not permitted to attend. Veterans in occupational programs and students receiving financial aid will have additional attendance requirements.

Absences from class may result in your being withdrawn by the instructor and possible loss of financial aid.

Withdrawal for Lack of Attendance

Your instructor has the authority to withdraw you for lack of attendance up to the last date for withdrawal specified in the SFSC College Calendar provided it is not your third or fourth attempt in a college credit or developmental course. Attendance expectations should be clearly specified in the course syllabus and covered by the instructor during the first week of class in a format appropriate to the class (written, oral, electronic). College credit and clock hour programs differ in the amount of time you must attend in order not to be dropped from the class. The instructor may withdraw you for lack of attendance in the following ways:

1. If you do not attend classes during the **MANDATORY ATTENDANCE PERIOD**, you may be reported to the Office of the Registrar as a "No Show" (NS).



2. If you stop attending class after the last day to withdraw with a **W**, your instructor may award the grade of **F** prior to the end date of the class.
3. If you are taking Online (W), Hybrid (HB), or Hybrid-Flexible (HF) courses, the Office of Educational Technology will be notified by the registrar to remove you with a grade of **W** or **F** and from access to the D2L Brightspace® course(s).
4. If extenuating circumstances beyond your control occur after the withdrawal date, you may petition the Academic Appeals Committee to request a withdrawal from the class with a grade of **W**.

For more information refer to Withdrawals in the College Catalog.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND PLAGIARISM

The faculty of SFSC is committed to a policy of honesty in academic affairs. Conduct for which you may be subject to administrative and/or disciplinary penalties, up to and including suspension or expulsion, includes:

1. **Dishonesty** consisting of cheating of any kind with respect to examinations, course assignments, or illegal possession of examination papers, including the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to produce academic work or to show academic progress. If you help another to cheat, you will be subject to the same penalties as the student you assisted.
2. **Plagiarism** consisting of the deliberate use and appropriation of another's work without identifying the source and the passing off such work as your own. If you fail to give full credit for ideas or materials taken from another, you have plagiarized.

In case of cheating or plagiarism, the instructor may take academic action consistent with College policy that may range from loss of credit for a specific assignment, examination, or project to removal from the course with a grade of **F**. You and your instructor should seek to resolve the problem to mutual satisfaction. Failing this, your instructor or you may request action from the appropriate instructional supervisor, dean, and the vice president for academic affairs (see Grade Appeals in the College Catalog) who adjudicates on the basis of College policy.

COPYRIGHT

In accordance with College policies, you must respect copyrighted material, in whatever medium or technological application you may find them. You must document sources appropriately when using any copyrighted material. **NOTE:** You should be in compliance if you use a recognized documentation system such as Modern Language Association (MLA) or American Psychological Association (APA) documentation guides.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

If you develop a product (of any sort) that could earn revenue and the product is developed on SFSC's campus/center, using SFSC's facilities or in conjunction with SFSC employees, the College may own some or all of the product. Ownership of the product is negotiated between you, the College, and any other interested parties and stated in a written contract. If you have questions regarding product ownership, contact the vice president for administrative services at 863-784-7218.

STANDARDS OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS

College Credit

I. Academic Probation 1

- A. If your cumulative GPA falls below 2.0 after completing 7 or more credit hours, you will be placed on Academic Probation 1.
- B. If you are on Academic Probation 1, you will be required to attend individual advising/counseling sessions, restricted to enrolling in not more than 13 credit hours, and must have your program of study approved by a counselor or advisor prior to your next registration.



- C. You will remain on Academic Probation 1 status until your cumulative GPA rises above 2.0 or until moved to Academic Probation 2 status.

II. Academic Probation 2

- A. If you have been placed on Academic Probation 1 and your GPA for any subsequent term falls below 2.0, you will be placed on Academic Probation 2.
- B. If you are on Academic Probation 2, you will be required to attend individual advising/counseling sessions, be limited to no more than a 13 credit hour class load, and be restricted to a prescribed program that may include courses to overcome skills deficiencies.
- C. You will remain on Academic Probation 2 status each term that your cumulative GPA remains below 2.0 unless you are moved to Academic Suspension status.

III. Academic Suspension

- A. If your GPA for any two consecutive terms falls below 2.0, you will be placed on Academic Suspension.
- B. The period of Academic Suspension is one term (enrollment period is defined as the fall, spring, or summer term).
- C. You may petition for a committee review of your case.
- D. While on Academic Suspension, you may audit two non-preparatory courses while receiving assistance in the Tutoring and Learning Center (TLC).
- E. If you are on Academic Suspension, you may not attend college credit classes for the term unless approved by review under the following procedure: "Removal of Academic Suspension/Probation."

IV. Removal of Academic Suspension/Probation Status

- A. You may be removed from Academic Probation 1 status by attaining a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher during the current term.
- B. You may be upgraded from Academic Probation 2 to Academic Probation 1 by achieving a term GPA of 2.0 or higher.
- C. If you are readmitted after Academic Suspension, you will enter on Academic Probation 2 unless your cumulative GPA is 2.0 or higher.

V. Determination of Satisfactory Progress

Determination of satisfactory progress will be measured at the end of each term.

VI. Transfer Students

When you transfer to SFSC, your cumulative GPA is determined by the transfer courses posted on your transcript. You must remain in good standing until your transfer credits have been officially evaluated and become a part of your academic record. In most cases, this should occur prior to advising/registration for your first term.

NOTE:

- A. The cumulative GPA does not include college preparatory courses.
- B. If you are a college credit student who has been suspended, you may enroll in a Career Certificate program, register for occupational classes, and be placed in good standing.
- C. If you transfer into the SFSC Associate in Arts degree program with less than a 2.0 GPA, you will be admitted on probation.



ACADEMIC APPEALS

Academic Suspension, Refunds, Withdrawal

- A. The Academic Appeals Committee reviews requests for exceptions to College academic procedures when extenuating circumstances and factors are beyond your control. The Committee hears requests for waiving academic suspensions, approving tuition refunds, and approving withdrawal from a class after the deadline. If the Committee is not available, the vice president of student services can hear the appeal.
- B. You have a maximum of six months following completion of a class to file an appeal for a tuition refund or withdrawal from a class after the deadline.
- C. If you are suspended for one term, a waiver for academic suspension must be filed prior to the last day of classes of the subsequent term.
- D. Documentation verifying extenuating circumstances is required for any request for refund, withdrawal, or academic suspension.
- E. You may obtain the Academic Appeals Form from any campus location, the College website, Panther Central, or the Office of the Registrar. The completed form along with supporting documentation is to be submitted to the Office of the Registrar for review.
- F. The Academic Appeals Committee will make a recommendation to the vice president of student services to approve or deny the request.
- G. The vice president of student services makes the final decision to approve or deny the request.
- H. The Office of the Registrar will inform you of the final decision.

Grade Appeals

- A. Members of the teaching faculty are responsible for issuing grades. If you believe you have received an incorrect grade, immediately request a conference with your instructor within 15 college working days after the grade is issued.
- B. If the conference does not resolve the disputed grade, you should make an appointment to discuss the problem with the instructor's director, instructional supervisor, or program manager within five college working days after meeting with the instructor.
- C. If the meeting with the director, instructional supervisor, or program manager still does not resolve the situation, you may submit a written appeal to the dean of the division within five college working days after meeting with the director, instructional supervisor, or program manager.
- D. If the meeting with the division dean does not resolve the situation, you may submit a written appeal to the vice president for academic affairs within five college working days after the conference with the division dean.
- E. The vice president for academic affairs makes the final decision to approve or deny the request for grade change.

Payment of the Full Cost of Instruction

For the third and fourth attempts of a college credit or college preparatory course, you will be assessed the full cost of instruction (equivalent to out-of-state tuition). This rule impacts only those students whose fee assessment is based on in-state residency.

You may not withdraw from the third or fourth attempt in any course.



Fourth Attempt Override Appeal

If you fail to pass a course after three attempts, you may request an override to take the course a fourth time, based on illness or some emergency beyond your control that prevented you from successfully completing the subject area within three attempts. Each request must be accompanied by appropriate documentation of the condition on which the request is made. The request should be made to the registrar. Per state statute, fifth attempts cannot be granted.

Appeal to Payment of Full Cost of Instruction

If you fail or withdraw from a course two times and wish to re-enroll in the course for a third attempt, you may appeal the payment of the full cost of instruction due to extenuating circumstances and/or financial hardship. Appeals should be made to the registrar and must include copies of supporting documentation of the circumstances and/or hardship. Extenuating circumstances are those determined by the College to be exceptional and beyond the control of the student, which may include, but are not limited to:

- documented medical condition preventing course completion
- death of an immediate family member

Criteria for determining and/or documenting financial hardship shall include, but not be limited to, qualifications for federal need-based financial aid.

RESIDENCY RECLASSIFICATION APPEAL PROCESS

If you are otherwise unable to qualify for in-state classification by the guidelines posted in the College Catalog, you may submit a petition to the Residency Appeals Committee in the Office of the Registrar. You must include documentation evidencing the grounds on which the appeal for in-state classification is based. Petition forms are available at any campus or center and on the Office of the Registrar's webpage. The Residency Appeals Committee will render a final residency determination in writing including the reason for the determination.



Safety and Security Guidelines

CAMPUS SECURITY AND CRIME WATCH

The well-being and personal safety of each student at SFSC is of great concern. Cooperation and involvement of every member of the College community is absolutely necessary to ensure maximum safety and security of personal belongings.

SFSC has developed a set of guidelines for reporting emergencies and criminal activities. It is important to note that each emergency situation or criminal activity has different circumstances requiring different actions. Each action should protect the safety and security of victims and others involved. Reporting guidelines are published in this Student Handbook and are posted throughout various college classrooms, offices and public areas. In addition, information is available on our College website and in Panther Central.

REPORTING EMERGENCIES AT SFSC

Students are encouraged to report any and all suspicious activity regardless of how insignificant it may seem. **NOTE:** For life-threatening emergencies at any campus/center, call **9-1-1** and then call the specific campus/center number listed below.

Highlands Campus 863-453-0806		
DeSoto Campus 863-993-1757	Hardee Campus 863-773-3081	Lake Placid Center 863-465-3003
Crews Center 863-657-2335		The Hotel Jacaranda 863-453-2211

When reporting an urgent situation or suspicious activity, provide the following information:

- your name and location
- the nature of the emergency or suspicious activity

In response to your call, security personnel are dispatched to the scene to lend assistance, investigate, or prepare a report. Local fire, emergency medical, or law enforcement personnel are called when appropriate.

ACTIVE SHOOTER ON CAMPUS

What to do if there is an active shooter on campus:

The following guidelines are being provided regarding how to respond if there is an active shooter/armed intruder on campus. Be aware no one can predict what actions are most appropriate for every situation that might occur. Campus personnel could learn of such an incident in several ways, including hearing gunshots, being notified through the College's emergency announcement system, or being told by another member of the campus community. If you hear a sound that could be gunshots, assume they are gunshots.

- **If you know the location of the intruder, quickly move away from the danger and encourage those around you to do the same.** Be aware, that if you move from indoors out into the open, you could be exposing yourself to the intruder. Also be aware that there could be more than one intruder. If you decide to move away, do so as quickly as possible until you are certain you are out of danger. If you remain in doors, move to a safe place with doors locked and blinds drawn until assistance arrives.



- **Your ability to move quickly and your perception of how close the intruder is will help you determine if it is safer for you to run, hide, or fight.**

The immediate actions you take upon notification of an active shooter on campus could prevent your death or serious injury. Our emergency first responders have been trained to respond to this type of incident and will do so immediately. Responding officers are likely to have very little information regarding the description of the intruder or the number of suspects involved. **If you must approach an officer during or immediately after such an incident, clearly show the officer you are not a threat by holding your hands in the air and complying immediately with verbal commands. Be aware that the officer's first priority is to locate the intruder/shooter, so they may not stop to speak with you or care for the wounded.**

If you are off-campus at the time you become aware of an active shooter on campus, stay away from the area. The entire campus will have become a protected crime scene and you will not be allowed in the area until it has been cleared.

The following guidelines are being provided regarding how to respond if there is an active shooter/armed intruder on campus. This guideline is designed to provide individuals with suggestions on how to better protect themselves during a crisis.

In the event of an active shooter on campus, take the following actions:

1. RUN - If an active shooter is in your vicinity:

- a. Evacuate regardless of whether others want to leave or not
- b. Leave your belongings behind
- c. Help others escape if possible
- d. Prevent others from entering the area where an active shooter may be
- e. Call **9-1-1**, when you are safe

2. HIDE - If evacuation is not possible:

- a. Act quickly and quietly
- b. Lock and/or blockade the door
- c. Silence your cellphone
- d. Hide behind large objects
- e. Remain very quiet
- f. Your hiding place should be out of the shooter's view, provide protection if shots are fired in your direction, and not trap or restrict your options for movement
- g. Lock and/or blockade the door with all items that you can safely move

3. FIGHT - As a last resort and only when your life is in imminent danger:

- a. Attempt to incapacitate the shooter
- b. Act with physical aggression
- c. Improvise weapons
- d. Commit to your actions

Active Shooter Behavioral Warning Signs:

1. There is not a "profile" of a school shooter, instead, the students who carried out the attacks differed from one another in numerous ways.
2. School shootings are rarely impulsive acts.
3. They are typically thought out and planned in advance.
4. Very few of past attackers ever directed threats to their targets before the attack.



5. The most common goal is retribution.
6. Many offenders experienced a significant personal loss in the months leading up to the attack, such as a death, breakup, or divorce in the family.
7. Be aware of the subject's online videos, blogs, and social networking activities.

Students and employees typically do not just “snap,” but display indicators of potentially violent behavior over time. If these behaviors are recognized, they can often be managed and treated. The list below is not comprehensive, nor is it intended as a mechanism for diagnosing violent tendencies.

- | | |
|--|--|
| • Abusive language | • Given to violent outbursts |
| • Apathetic | • Hurts animals/destroys property |
| • Attempted/talk of suicide | • Pessimistic |
| • Chronically angry | • Recently secured weapons |
| • Displays evidence of planning and preparation | • Sees injustice, no alternative to violence |
| • Emotional flatness | • Stalked target in past |
| • Engages in bullying/controlling/intimidation/
manipulation behavior | • Sullen |
| • Frequently angry/aggressive/confrontational | • Tells third parties of future violence |
| | • Used violence in the past |

TIMELY WARNINGS

In the event that a crime or situation occurs either on or off campus that poses an ongoing threat to the College community, a timely warning will be issued by the SFSC administration. These warnings will be posted on the SFSC website homepage. SFSC also uses mass text messaging to quickly disseminate announcements to students, faculty, and staff. As a redundancy, information may also be sent out through the College email and telephone systems to all students, faculty, and staff, and posted to social media channels.

REPORTING SEX-RELATED OFFENSES

The Federal Campus Sex Crimes Prevention Act (Section 1601 of Public Law 106-386) requires institutions of higher education to issue a statement advising the campus community where information concerning registered sex offenders may be obtained. It also requires that registered sex offenders provide notice, as required under state law, of each institution of higher education in that state at which the person is employed, carries on a vocation, or is a student. The website for securing the related information is fdle.state.fl.us.

Victims of sex-related offenses are strongly encouraged, but not required, to report the crime immediately by calling **9-1-1** from any campus phone, if possible. The primary concern of our security staff is the safety and well-being of the persons who have been the victims of this crime.

- When the security staff arrives, they can aid the victims with medical assistance. At this time, the information needed is a brief account of what happened, a physical description of the assailant, and their direction of travel.
- Later, a more detailed interview will take place. The sooner the crime is reported, the better the chance that the assailant will be caught.
- The victims are informed of their option to notify appropriate law enforcement authorities. Campus Security will provide assistance in notifying local authorities, if requested by the victims.
- Student Services staff members are also available to assist in filing a report.
- Preserving physical evidence will increase the chance of successfully prosecuting the assailant.
- The victims will be advised of the importance of preserving evidence.
- Although the victims will probably want to wash and change clothes, they should not do so until a Sexual Assault Forensic Examination (S.A.F.E.) has been performed at a hospital to gather and preserve the evidence needed if the victims wish to file an official report with law enforcement.



- Physical evidence may be found on the victims who have been assaulted as well as in the vicinity of the crime.

If the victims do not want to file an official law enforcement report of the incident, they can contact Campus Security for assistance.

Crisis intervention, emergency medical assistance, and counseling referral services are available to all students. The College respects and supports each individual's decision regarding whether or not to pursue any specific course of action following such incidents.

REPORTING FIRE EMERGENCIES

In the event of fire, stay calm.

- Pull the nearest fire alarm.
- Go to the nearest/safest phone, and call the fire department at **9-1-1** (pulling the building fire alarm does not dispatch the fire department).
- If there is time, call Campus Security.

Fire evacuation procedures

- Occupants will evacuate the premises to their designated rally point when the fire alarm sounds. Rally point information can be found in the Emergency Guides which are located near the classroom exit doors.
- Do not use any elevator during a fire.
- Do not congregate on roadways, as this impedes the access routes for emergency responders.

SECURITY CALL STATIONS

Strategically placed throughout the Highlands Campus parking areas are security call stations. Should you find yourself in need for security assistance, press the activation button to speak directly to a member of the security team. Release the button to listen. Indicate to the security personnel the type of assistance you are seeking/requesting.

CAMPUS CRIME AND FIRE STATISTICS

The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Crime Statistics Act is an U.S. Code (20 U.S.C. Section 1092(f)), with implementing regulations in the Code of Federal Regulations (34 C.F.R. Section 668.46) requires SFSC to publish an annual report that contains statistics for the previous three years concerning reported crimes that occurred on campus, at off-campus buildings owned or controlled by SFSC, and on public property immediately adjacent to and accessible from the campus. The report also includes institutional policies concerning campus security, such as the policies concerning alcohol and drug use, crime prevention, the reporting of crimes, sexual assault, and other matters. A copy of this report is located on the College's Safety and Security webpage. For ease of access, follow the direct link: [Annual-Security-and-Fire-Safety-Report](#). In addition to the crime statistics, the report contains annual fire safety information.

SAFETY TIPS

Campus Safety

- Keep emergency numbers programmed in your phone.
- At night, walk in well-lit areas. Walk or jog in pairs or groups, particularly at night or in isolated places. Do not ignore intuition; if you suspect you are being followed, change directions or head for a campus building or a group of people.
- Limit texting while walking. Distractions can cause loss of focus on your surrounding environment.
- Do not wear earphones. They block any audible warning of a stranger's approach.
- If a driver stops you to ask questions, do not get too close to the vehicle and risk being pulled inside.
- Placing a single key between your forefinger and middle finger when walking to or from your car to provide you with a discreet but effective weapon that you can use to defend yourself if you are assaulted.



Elevator Safety

- Trust your intuition. If you feel uncomfortable with individuals waiting to board an elevator, don't enter the elevator with them. In the event you are riding an elevator and become uncomfortable, step out at the next available stop.
- Stand near the controls. If necessary, you can press all the buttons or use the emergency alarm.

Vehicle Safety

- Park in a well-lit area at night. Check the parking lot before leaving the car. Walk to your car with keys ready.
- Check the back seat before entering. Someone could be hiding there.
- Keep enough gas in your tank for emergencies.
- If you are followed by another car, drive to a police station or business with lights and people. Do not go home with someone following you.

Nuisance Telephone Calls

- Hang up as soon as you know it is a crank call.
- Don't converse with strangers.
- Keep cool. Don't let the caller know you are upset.
- Call law enforcement if the problem persists.
- Keep a log of when you receive calls.

Social Media Safety

- Do not place your personal information on your social media networking site's profiles.
- Be careful when placing photographs of you or your children.
- Do not ever think that your social media networking page is private amongst only your friends and family. Check the privacy settings periodically.
- Be careful not to provide too much information (e.g., class and work schedules).
- Keep your profile clean. (Potential employers often check social media sites seeking information on prospective employees.)

Personal Property Theft Prevention

- The majority of thefts on campus occur because property was left unsecured or unattended. It is estimated that more than 80% of all theft on campus could be prevented.
- When in the library or any other public place (cafeteria, student center), backpacks, books, cellphones, laptop computers/tablets, other electronic devices, purses, and wallets should not be left unattended, even for a few minutes. In the time it takes to use the restroom, get a book or a meal, an item can easily be stolen.

Automobile Theft Prevention

- Lock your car and pocket the key whether you leave for a minute or several hours. Close the windows all the way and make sure the trunk is locked.
- Never leave an identification tag on your key ring. If your keys are lost or stolen, it will guide the thief to your car or home.
- Remove electronic items and valuables from plain view.
- Take everything of value with you or lock it in the trunk.
- Keep a record of your car's vehicle identification numbers (VIN) so you can identify it if it is stolen and recovered.



CAMPUS SECURITY CONTACTS

Highlands Campus 863-453-0806		
DeSoto Campus 863-993-1757	Hardee Campus 863-773-3081	Lake Placid Center 863-465-3003
Crews Center 863-657-2335		The Hotel Jacaranda 863-453-2211

CONTACT CAMPUS SECURITY IF AND WHEN ...

YOU ARE A VICTIM OF A THEFT

Contact Campus Security as soon as possible.

- Security staff will take a report from you and contact law enforcement upon request.
- It is important for recovery purposes to supply as much information as possible concerning the stolen property (serial number, make, model, color, and value).

YOU ARE ASSAULTED

Contact Campus Security as soon as possible.

- Try to remember as much about the person as possible. Important characteristics include sex, race, hair color and length, body size, clothing description, scars or tattoos and markings, mode of travel, vehicle type, color, and tag number.
- The campus will be searched immediately for suspects and local law enforcement agencies will be notified, if requested by the victim.

YOU SEE SUSPICIOUS PERSONS

Contact Campus Security as soon as possible.

- Do not approach the person yourself.
- Report the type of suspicious activity and give a general description of the subject (number of persons, sex, race, dress, vehicle, and location). Stay on the line with the officer. Public safety/security personnel will investigate your report immediately.
- If all members of the campus community become security-conscious and report suspicious activity, thefts, and related incidents will be measurably reduced.

YOU RECEIVE A BOMB THREAT

Obtain as much information from the caller as possible. Things to ask include: (1) location of the bomb, (2) time of explosion, and (3) type of bomb.

- Observe the caller's voice and any background noises you may hear. Such information may assist in identifying the caller.
- Contact Campus Security immediately. Do not panic. Trained public safety personnel will search the area involved and notify other appropriate agencies, if necessary. Emergency officials will recommend to the College president an appropriate response.



YOU ARE SICK OR INJURED

- In an emergency, call **9-1-1** and, if possible, contact Campus Security and advise the nature of the illness or injury and your exact location. Security staff will respond to assist.
- For non-life-threatening illness or injury, contact Campus Security for first aid.
- All campuses have emergency first aid stations.

YOU HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN A MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT

Contact Campus Security as soon as possible.

- If people have been injured, dial **9-1-1** and provide the requested information to the dispatcher.
- Have your driver's license, registration, and insurance card ready to assist the law enforcement officer who writes the report.
- Do not stand in the roadway as you wait for assistance to arrive.



General Information

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

SFSC seeks to ensure that programs, services, and facilities are accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities. If you are a qualified student with a disability, the College will make every effort to provide reasonable accommodations.

If you are a person with a documented disability, this Student Handbook is available to you in hard copy. Telephone or written requests should include your name, address, and telephone or TDD number. Your requests should be made to the ADA student coordinator, SFSC, 600 West College Drive, Avon Park, FL 33825, 863-784-7176 at least two weeks prior to the time you need the publication.

The following College staff members have been assigned to assist in ensuring that you have access to the College's programs, services, and facilities. If you require assistance or have general questions/concerns, contact:

Disabilities Specialist

Charla Ellerker, Counselor
863-784-7176, Building B, Room 152, First Floor
600 West College Drive, Avon Park, FL 33825
Charla.Ellerker@southflorida.edu

ADA Student Coordinator

Dr. Mark Bukowski, Dean, Student Services
863-784-7107, Building B, Room 167, First Floor
600 West College Drive, Avon Park, FL 33825
Mark.Bukowsk@southflorida.edu

DRUG-FREE CAMPUS

SFSC is committed to having drug-free campuses and centers. Illegal use of drugs or alcohol will not be tolerated at any SFSC campus or center or at any SFSC-sponsored event off campus.

Any student who uses illegal drugs on any SFSC site or SFSC-sponsored event off campus will be suspended. The student may apply for readmission consideration only after becoming drug free and after at least one academic term of suspension is completed.

Any student who sells or manufactures illegal drugs on any SFSC campus or SFSC-sponsored event off campus will be suspended. The student may apply for readmission consideration only after at least a full year of suspension is completed.

The College will refer for prosecution anyone engaging in illegal drug or controlled substance activity on our campuses or at our events. Students who are convicted of any drug offense must report it to the vice president of student services within five days. Students may contact the same office for an explanation of appeal rights for each step of the disciplinary process.

SFSC encourages any student with an addiction problem to seek help by contacting the TriCounty Human Services, Inc. To seek help, contact 863-452-0106 and/or BayCare 1-800-878-5470.

TOBACCO-FREE COLLEGE

SFSC is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for its employees, students, and visitors. The use, distribution, or sale of tobacco, or any object or device intended to simulate that use, is prohibited in all indoor and exterior areas (including roadways, trails, and pathways) of each campus, center, and other property under the control of the College.

College employees, students, visitors, contractors, and all others are expected to comply with SFSC's Tobacco-Free College policy and the Florida Clean Indoor Air Act (FCIAA) under Rule: 64I-4.001 Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.) at all times.



EQUAL ACCESS/EQUAL OPPORTUNITY (EA/EO)

SFSC pledges to provide equal access to education and employment opportunity to all regardless of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, ethnicity, age, disability, marital status, political affiliation, sexual orientation, pregnancy, or genetic information in admission to, or employment in, any of its educational programs or activities. The College adheres to federal and state laws that control equal access/equal opportunity. This pledge covers all aspects of the educational and employment relationship with our students and employees. If you have concerns regarding this pledge, address them to the EA/EO student coordinator at 863-784-7107. **Nothing contained within this Student Handbook is intended to discriminate on the basis of the previously mentioned factors.**

The following staff members have been assigned to assist in ensuring that you have access to the College's programs, services, and facilities. Contact these individuals, if you require assistance:

EA/EO Student Coordinator

Dr. Mark Bukowski, Dean, Student Services
863-784-7107, Building B, Room 167, First Floor
600 West College Drive, Avon Park, FL 33825
Mark.Bukowski@southflorida.edu

EA/EO Employee Coordinator

Donald L. Kesterson Jr., Director, Human Resources
863-784-7336, Building I, Room 100, First Floor
600 West College Drive, Avon Park, FL 33825
Donald.Kesterson@southflorida.edu

I. Purpose

To ensure that no applicant, employee, or student is illegally discriminated against because of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, ethnicity, age, disability, marital status, political affiliation, sexual orientation, pregnancy, or genetic information in admission to, or employment in, any of its education programs or activities.

II. Procedure

A. Continuous Notice

The College will continuously post its notice of nondiscrimination and the name or title, phone number, and address of the person(s) responsible for enforcement of applicable laws and discrimination-related inquiries in public places, including, but not limited to, facilities, websites, course catalogs, student and employee handbooks, code of conduct, etc.

B. Civil Rights Compliance Officer

The College president will appoint one or more individuals to be responsible for enforcement and publication of all applicable laws, as well as discrimination-related inquiries on behalf of applicants, students, and employees.

C. Implementation of the Equal Opportunity Program at South Florida State College (SFSC)

1. Employment

The College shall:

- a. Recruit, employ, and promote for all positions without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, ethnicity, gender, age, marital status, disability, political affiliation, sexual orientation, or genetic information except where gender or age is a bona fide occupational qualification.
 - i. The supervisor anticipating an open position is to submit a written request to the appropriate administrator for approval. The approved request is to be submitted to the director of human resources in time to permit 30 days of advertising for full-time instructional or administrative positions and seven days for professional and career positions prior to any recommendation being made to fill the position.



- ii. All applicants must complete the College's application process to be considered for employment. The Human Resources Office is responsible for ensuring that equal access and equal opportunity are provided to all applicants.
 - b. Base decisions on employment solely upon the individual's qualifications for the position being filled.
 - i. All applicants meeting the minimum qualifications for a new or vacant position are eligible for employment at SFSC.
 - ii. After interviewing qualified candidates, the recommendation for employment shall be handled in accordance with SFSC Administrative Procedures 5240 and 5242.
 - c. Base decisions on promotion solely upon the individual's qualifications in relation to the position being filled.
 - d. Ensure that all other personnel policies and procedures such as those governing salaries, benefits, transfers, separations, in-service programs, and social and recreational activities are administered without regard to race, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender, age, marital status, color, disability, political affiliation, sexual orientation, or genetic information.
 - e. Periodically evaluate all phases of the College's Equal Opportunity Program related to employment.
2. Student admissions, registration, matriculation, and activities:
- The College shall:
- a. Provide equal educational opportunities to all qualified students regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender, age, marital status, color, disability, political affiliation, sexual orientation, or genetic information.
 - b. Ensure nondiscrimination in all programs, events, and services made available to students and potential students regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender, age, marital status, color, disability, political affiliation, sexual orientation, or genetic information.
 - c. Ensure compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, U.S. Code (20 U.S.C. Section 1681), which prohibit sex discrimination; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act U.S. Code (42 U.S.C. Section 2000(d)); and the laws and regulations applicable to people with disabilities as required by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Public Law No. 93-112, 87 Statute 394, U.S. Code (29 U.S.C. Section 701) and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 U.S. Code (42 U.S.C. Section 12101).
 - d. Periodically evaluate all phases of the College's Equal Opportunity Program related to students.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

SFSC will allow students with infectious diseases, including, but not limited to, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), AIDS Related Complex (ARC), Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA), COVID-19, Meningitis, influenza, or those testing positive for Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), to participate in any student programs unless it can be demonstrated that such students are a direct threat to other students, employees, or the public. The College recognizes that such diseases represent significant public health threats and will provide up-to-date information aimed at prevention for all students and employees, to include appropriate curriculum, services, and counseling. Circumstances may dictate significant alterations to class scheduling, mode of delivery, on-campus housing assignments, and other restrictions (e.g., the wearing of facial coverings/masks, social distancing, contact tracing, isolation/quarantine, and other appropriate guidelines mandated by College officials).

The president of the College or designated representative(s) is/are authorized to review the facts and recommend whether or not action should be taken. "Reasonable accommodation" will be considered if it is determined that some type of action is needed. Each student/employee case will be evaluated to determine risk of transmission. Student or employee response to each known case of AIDS, ARC or positive HIV, COVID-19, or MRSA will be according to the individual known facts. Any student/employee with such diseases should notify the College of any changes in his/her medical condition. No person, group, agency, insurer, employer, or institution will be provided medical or other information without written consent from the affected person. Policies related to transmission of any communicable disease will be followed. Reasonable measures will be taken to safeguard the confidentiality of medical records or other information obtained. The College will work cooperatively with the community, health/mental health agencies, and other organizations to provide programs responsive to this policy. For updated information, visit southflorida.edu.



STUDENT RECORDS AND PRIVACY GUIDELINES

The Office of the Registrar maintains permanent educational records for all students who ever enrolled at SFSC. Your educational record may contain an application for admission, high school and/or college transcripts, the SFSC academic record or transcript, authorized changes to the record, and other documentation appropriate to your enrollment at the College.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) - is a federal law that applies to educational agencies and institutions that receive funding under a program administered by the U.S. Department of Education. The statute is found at U.S. Code (20 U.S.C. Section 1232(g)) and the regulations are found at Code of Federal Regulations (34 C.F.R. Section 99). Under FERPA regulations, colleges must generally grant you, if you are attending a postsecondary institution, access to your educational information, an opportunity to seek and have your records amended, and some control over the disclosure of information from the records. FERPA requires the College to protect the privacy of your record information with regard to access to your college records, the release of such records, and the opportunity to challenge records should they be inaccurate, misleading, or inappropriate.

No information, other than the data determined to be "directory information" can be provided to a custodial parent, non-custodial parent, or other third party without your written permission unless very specific criteria have been met. FERPA requires the College to establish a policy with regard to the data items that can be released to third parties upon request, and to establish the procedures for the release of such information. You have the option of making your "file" and "data" confidential. If you choose to have your data marked as confidential, you are identified in the student information system, and your information is excluded from the College's directory information.

Disclosure of Education Records

The College must:

1. have your written consent prior to the disclosure of education records; and
2. ensure that the consent is signed and dated and states the purpose of the disclosure.

Schools are generally prohibited from disclosing personally identifiable information about a student without written consent. Exceptions to this rule include:

1. disclosures made to school officials with legitimate educational interests;
2. disclosures made to another school at which the student intends to enroll;
3. appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
4. organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
5. accrediting organizations;
6. to comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
7. appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies;
8. disclosures made to state or local education authorities for auditing or evaluating federal- or state-supported education programs, or enforcing federal laws that relate to those programs; and
9. disclosures including information the school has designated as "directory information."

When a student turns 18 years old or enters a postsecondary institution at any age, all rights afforded to the parent under FERPA transfer to the student ("eligible student"). However, FERPA provides ways in which a school may, but is not required to, share information from an eligible student's education records with parents, without the student's consent. For example:

- Schools may disclose education records to parents if the student is claimed as a dependent for tax purposes.
- Schools may disclose education records to parents if a health or safety emergency involves their son or daughter.
- Schools may inform parents if the student, if he or she is under age 21, has violated any law or policy concerning the use or possession of alcohol or a controlled substance.
- A school official may generally share with a parent information that is based on that official's personal knowledge or observation of the student.



Students may choose to have your records provided to a parent, or other third party, on a one-time or one-year basis by completing the student Release of Academic Information form.

Health or Safety Emergency - The College is allowed to disclose without your consent education records, including personally identifiable information from those records, to protect your health and safety and that of other individuals. At such times, records and information may be released to appropriate parties such as law enforcement officials, public health officials, and trained medical personnel. This exception to FERPA's general consent rule is limited to the period of the emergency, and generally does not allow for a blanket release of personally identifiable information.

Disciplinary Records - While your disciplinary records are protected as education records under FERPA, there are certain circumstances in which disciplinary records may be disclosed without your consent. The College may disclose to an alleged victim of any crime of violence or non-forcible sex offense the final results of a disciplinary proceeding conducted by the College against the alleged perpetrator of that crime.

The College may disclose to anyone the final results of a disciplinary hearing, if it determines that you are an alleged perpetrator of violence or non-forcible sex offense and with respect to the allegation made against you, you have committed a violation of the College's rules or policies.

Law Enforcement Units and Records - For enhanced security, a Highlands County Sheriff's Office College Resource Deputy Officer has been assigned to the Highlands Campus (service hours vary). Investigative reports and other documents created and maintained by law enforcement are not considered to be educational records subject to FERPA. Accordingly, institutions may disclose publicly obtained information from law enforcement records to anyone, including outside law enforcement authorities.

Directory Information - Directory information may be released to the public without your consent following specific request procedures. Directory information will not be released if you requested in writing to keep your information confidential. At any time, you may complete a form in the Admissions, Registration, and Records Office to mark your records as confidential.

The SFSC directory information includes:

- Your name
- Date of attendance
- Academic program
- Honors received (president's and vice president's lists, cum laude, etc.)
- Degree received and date conferred
- Lists of prospective graduates/graduates
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height of athletic team members
- Identification card, digital photographs

SFSC reserves the right to provide additional information, such as street address and telephone number, where there is a signed articulation agreement with another postsecondary institution for purposes of recruitment, and in cases that are superseded by the Solomon Amendment giving military recruiters access to your recruiting information.

Any other information is considered to be personally identifiable information and cannot be released to a third party, including parents, without your written consent.

Directory Requests - The procedure to request SFSC directory information is indicated below. Directory information requests are not recorded in your individual records.

1. The request must be made in writing on the letterhead of the company, agency, or school requesting the information.
2. If the request is being made by an individual, the request needs to indicate the name, address, and phone number of the requestor and the reason for the request.



3. Requests for the entire student directory, requests from any military sources under the Solomon Amendment, or requests for a “class” of students, such as all students in any one major, should be directed to the Office of the Registrar.

Student Access to Educational Records - The College is required by FERPA to:

1. provide you with an opportunity to inspect and review your education records within 45 days of receipt of the request;
2. provide you with copies of education records or otherwise make records available to you if you, for instance, live outside of commuting distance of the College; and
3. redact the names and other personally identifiable information about other students that may be included in your education records.

Amendment of Educational Records - Under FERPA, the College must:

1. consider your request to amend inaccurate or misleading information in your education records;
2. offer you a hearing on the matter, if it decides not to amend the records in accordance with the request; and
3. offer you a right to place a statement to be kept and disclosed with the record, if as a result of the hearing, the College decides not to amend the record.

The College is not required to consider requests for amendment under FERPA that:

1. seek to change a grade or disciplinary record; and
2. seek to change the opinions or reflections of a College official or other person reflected in an education record.

You have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the College to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:

**Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-5901**

Questions about the administration of FERPA at SFSC and the release or amendment of any of your records, should be addressed to the registrar.

Student Requests

- **Change in Records** - A written request to change your record. Typical changes include name, address, telephone number, social security number, and program code (major). Most changes require you to present appropriate documentation.
- **Enrollment Verification** - An official College statement indicating term of enrollment and your status (e.g., full or part time).
- **Transfer Credit Evaluation** - A statement of all coursework and grades accepted from another postsecondary institution.
- **Non-Release of Directory Information** - A request submitted for non-release of directory information by completing a form in the SFSC Office of the Registrar. This non-release request will remain in effect until you request a removal of the non-release hold.
- **Official Transcripts** - Transcripts are processed through the National Student Clearinghouse's website StudentClearingHouse.org. Once you are on the National Student Clearinghouse homepage, you need to select the Student tab from the main page, and then select “order or Track a Transcript” and follow the instructions provided by National Student Clearinghouse. All you need to know is your name and Social Security Number (SSN).



SFSC PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEOGRAPHY USAGE DISCLAIMER

SFSC reserves the right to use any photograph/video taken on College property or during any event sponsored by or participated in by the College without the express written permission of those attending and/or included within the photograph/video. College events include, but are not limited to, award ceremonies, athletic events, cultural events, field trips, tours, and graduations. Photographs/videos may be used in publications or other media materials produced, used, or contracted by SFSC including, but not limited to, viewbooks, catalogs, handbooks, newspapers, newsletters, television, websites, research documents, social media, etc. for the purposes of instruction or promoting SFSC and its programs. All SFSC images/videos are the exclusive property of the College, and as such, they represent the authority and backing of the College.

These images are used by members of the College community to inform its public of the College's role in the sponsorship of its services and products. Individuals or organizations that would like to download or reproduce these images and demonstrate affiliation or partnership with SFSC may request permission by contacting the SFSC Office of Community Relations and Marketing on the Highlands Campus at 863-784-7379 or 863-784-7250.

Any person who desires not to have his or her photo taken and reproduced or distributed must contact the Office of Community Relations and Marketing in writing of his or her intentions and include a photograph. Send to: Director of Institutional Communications, South Florida State College, 600 West College Drive, Avon Park, FL 33825. The photo will be used for identification purposes only and will be held in confidence by the Office of Community Relations and Marketing.

Any individual, organization, or company wishing to engage in still photography, videotaping, or filming for production, broadcast, or public dissemination by any means on or in property owned by SFSC must obtain permission in advance from an appropriate College official. A member of the Community Relations and Marketing staff may accompany the photographer.

NOTIFICATION OF SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER (SSN) COLLECTION AND USE

In compliance with Section 119.071(5), Florida Statutes (F.S.), under Rule 6A-1.0955(3)(e), State Board of Education (S.B.E.), SFSC issues this notification regarding the purpose of the collection and use of your SSN.

SFSC collects your SSN for use in performance of the College's duties and responsibilities. To protect your identity, SFSC will secure your SSN from unauthorized access. SFSC will never release your SSN to unauthorized parties, and each student at SFSC will be issued a unique student identification number (GID). Your GID number is used for all educational purposes at SFSC including registration and access of your online record.

Federal legislation relating to the Hope Tax Credit, Section 25A, Internal Revenue Code (I.R.C.), requires that all postsecondary institutions report the SSNs of all postsecondary students to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). This IRS requirement makes it necessary for colleges to collect the SSNs of every student. A student may refuse to disclose his/her SSN to the College, but refusing to comply with the federal requirement may result in fines established by the IRS.

In addition to the federal reporting requirements, the public school system in Florida uses the SSN as a student identifier. This use is authorized in Section 229.559, Florida Statutes (F.S.), and in Section 1008.386, School Code Section (S.C.S.). In a seamless K-20 educational system, it is beneficial for postsecondary institutions to have access to the same information for purposes of tracking and assisting students in the transition from one educational level to the next. All SSNs are protected by federal regulations and are never released to unauthorized parties.

- **Athletics Office** - If you are awarded a scholarship through the Athletics Office but have not yet been officially admitted to the College and assigned a College ID, your SSN will be used to report the scholarship award.
- **Corporate and Community Education/Driver Education Program** - According to Florida state education reporting requirements, you must submit your SSN when enrolling in Corporate and Community Education Driver Education classes. In addition, the Driver Education Program is required to provide your SSN to the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles after completion of specific courses. For professional development and licensing classes, your SSN is used for state licensure reporting requirements. For adult education and workforce grant-funded programs, your SSN is used as an identifier for program enrollment and completion.
- **Financial Aid Office** - The Financial Aid Office at SFSC requires that you submit your SSN on various forms to correctly identify you, match your financial aid record with your student record, and to help coordinate state and federal aid programs.

The Financial Aid Office collects SSNs as mandated by the following: U.S. Code (20 U.S.C. Section 1078); Education Service Center (20 E.S.C. Sections 1090, 1091 and 1092); Section 483 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (Collection of SSNs of Students and Parents); and Codes of Federal Regulations (34 C.F.R. Section 668.16 (Standards of Administrative Capability), 34 C.F.R. Section 668.33 (Citizenship and Residency Requirements), and 34 C.F.R. Section 668.36 (Verification via FAFSA®)).

- **Human Resources and Payroll Offices** - The College's Human Resources and Payroll Offices collect your SSN for the following purposes: classification of accounts; identification and verification; credit worthiness; billing and payments; data collection, reconciliation, tracking, benefit processing and tax reporting; and for fingerprint submissions to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. Your SSN is also used as a unique numeric identifier and may be used for search purposes. Providing your SSN is a condition of employment at SFSC.
- **Institutional Effectiveness Office** - The College's Institutional Effectiveness Office uses your SSN for data collection and required state and federal reporting.
- **SFSC Foundation** - The SFSC Foundation collects your SSN for the following purposes: as a unique numeric identifier and for reporting scholarship recipients to the Florida Department of Education and the Florida Community College Foundation. Your SSN is also required by certain scholarship donors in accordance with their trust or scholarship agreements.

COLLECTION AND USE OF SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS				
Purpose	Required use of SSN	Notice Requirements	Statute	Mandatory
Student Financial Aid	Requires institution to verify student's SSN, collection of information, including parents of dependents seeking aid. Requires student to submit SSN to obtain grant, loan, or work assistance. Requires institution to verify SSN in national database and reporting. Required to complete FAFSA, Bright Futures, and other scholarships for eligibility purposes.	Notice through FAFSA and applications	20 U.S.C. Section 1078; 20 U.S.C. Sections 1090, 1091, 1092; Section 483 of the Higher Education Act of 1965; 34 C.F.R. Section 668.16; 34 C.F.R. Section 668.33; 34 C.F.R. Section 668.36.	Yes, to be eligible for assistance.
Student Admissions Application	Requires SSNs for tracking students and authorizes collection under IRS code	Application	Section 1008.386 F.S. (College may not require SSN as a condition of admission or graduation). S.B.E. Rule 6A-1.0955(3) (e). I.R.C. Section 25A (Hope/Lifetime Learning Credit). Section 119.071(5)(a) F.S. (Collection and disclosure).	Student may refuse, but may be subject to a \$50 penalty under IRC Section 25A. (Hope/Lifetime Learning Credit). Pursuant to Section 1008.386 College may not require SSN as a condition of admission or of graduation.
Student Income Taxes	Issuance of Forms 1098T	NA	26 U.S.C. Sections 3402, 6051. 26 C.F.R. Section 1.6050.	SSN or TIN is required for filing.
Hope/Lifetime Tax Credit	Reporting of SSNs to IRS	NA	Federal Register, June 19, 2000 I.R.C. Section 25A.	Student may refuse but be subject to a fine.



PANTHER CENTRAL AND D2L BRIGHTSPACE®

Students may register, view class schedules, view grades and courses credits, browse the current Schedule of Classes, view financial aid status, and update address and telephone numbers online through Panther Central. D2L Brightspace® is SFSC's learning management system. Students may access D2L Brightspace® through the student tab in Panther Central. Through D2L Brightspace® students may access course content, email instructors, participate in discussion boards and complete online quizzes and exams. Computer stations are available in the Welcome Center and Career Development Center on the Highlands Campus and in all College library locations.

In addition to Panther Central and D2L Brightspace®, several technology services are available to SFSC students:

- **Degree Works™** is a web-based tool that helps you monitor your progress toward degree completion. You may access Degree Works™ by visiting the "Student" tab in D2L Brightspace®.
- **Everbridge™** is used by SFSC to send students emergency or time-sensitive information by email or text message. All students are automatically enrolled in Everbridge™ during the application process.
- **National Student Clearinghouse** allows you to print enrollment verification certificates, view your enrollment history, view processed loan deferments, obtain an individualized list of your lenders, and order transcripts. This service is available 24/7. The National Student Clearinghouse is the official provider of enrollment verification and degree certifications for SFSC. Certifications and verifications can be used by insurance companies, court officials (for jury duty waiver requests), employment agencies, credit card companies, lending agencies, housing providers and other entities who require proof of enrollment at or having received a degree from SFSC.

You also have the opportunity to stay connected with SFSC on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, and X (formerly Twitter).

ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY AND ACCEPTABLE USE

SFSC makes no warranties of any kind, either expressed or implied, for the electronic access services it is providing. SFSC is not responsible for damages which include, but are not limited to, delays, computer viruses, non-deliveries, mis-deliveries, or service interruptions of any kind. SFSC specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its electronic access services.

Student User Responsibility - Students using SFSC's technology and/or its electronic access services are expected to:

- Comply with all existing College policies as they may be interpreted to apply to technology resources, including but not limited to student discipline, religious, racial, and sexual harassment/violence policies
- Respect the privacy of other users and not intentionally seek information about, obtain copies of, delete, or modify files or other data belonging to other users
- Comply with legal protection provided by copyright and license to programs, data, and documents
- Maintain the security of SFSC technology resources by adhering to all campus-wide and site-specific rules and policies
- Comply with the acceptable use policies of all technology resources to which SFSC has access

Acceptable Use - Acceptable use of SFSC's technology and/or its electronic access services:

- Is consistent with the mission of SFSC
- Encourages efficient, cooperative, and creative methods to perform the user's educational tasks
- Is related to instructional and/or other support activities considered consistent with the mission of the College
- Permits authorized and appropriate access to voice, video, and data systems and software or data on all SFSC campuses and other remote locations

Unacceptable Use - Unacceptable use of SFSC's technology and/or its electronic access services occurs if a user attempts to:

- Provide, gain, or assist in gaining unauthorized access to technology resources, including any type of voice, video, or data information



- Interfere with the ability of students or staff members to use SFSC's technology resources or other connected services effectively
- Access other users' work without instructor or system administrator permission
- Tamper with or vandalize the College's hardware, software, or security systems
- Distribute any material which may cause congestion of the College's information systems
- Use SFSC's technology resources for the distribution or collection of obscene, abusive, or threatening material via telephone, video, email, internet, or other means
- Use SFSC's technology resources for a commercial, political, or profit-making enterprise
- Download or install any commercial software, shareware, or freeware onto SFSC drives, or disks, without written permission from the instructor or system administrator

Any student action that is determined by an instructor or system administrator to constitute an inappropriate use of technology resources is a violation of these acceptable-use guidelines. Failure to comply with this policy may result in failure of the course, administrative withdrawal from the College, or other disciplinary and/or legal action as appropriate.



Student Rights and Responsibilities

When you are admitted to SFSC, you are subject to the jurisdiction of the College during your enrollment. As a member of the College community, you are expected to act responsibly in all areas of personal and social conduct. You are responsible for the observance of all SFSC District Board of Trustees' policies and procedures as published in the College Catalog, the Student Handbook, and other College information bulletins. Violation of any of these rules may lead to disciplinary action in accordance with prescribed procedures for the handling of disciplinary cases and may range from reprimand to expulsion from the College.

The disciplinary function at SFSC is an integral part of the educational mission of the College. Discipline is seen as a tool for guiding and teaching rather than punishment. Unacceptable behavior is often symptomatic of attitudes, misconceptions, and emotional crises; the treatment of these symptoms through education and rehabilitative activities is an essential element of the disciplinary process. Severe disciplinary action against a student, such as suspension or expulsion, is considered and invoked only when other remedies fail. Even in the case of irrevocable expulsion for misconduct, the process will not be considered punitive in the criminal sense but rather the determination that the student is unqualified to continue as a member of the College community.

RIGHTS

Upon registration, students are entitled to the following freedoms and/or rights provided that their exercise is accomplished in accordance with College procedures and does not result in disruption or disturbance:

- **Right to a quality education.**
- **Right to fair and equitable treatment in all interactions.**
- **Right to participate in activities according to guidelines set forth in the course syllabi and general College policies and procedures.**
- **Right to freedom of access to higher learning within the limits of its facilities.** SFSC is open to all persons who are qualified according to its admissions and good standing policies. It is the responsibility of the College to make available the criteria it shall use in evaluating student success in all programs. It is the responsibility of the students to avail themselves of knowledge of these objectives and criteria as published and set forth by the College. The facilities and services of the College will be open to all enrolled students provided facilities are used in a manner appropriate to the academic community and in compliance with College policies.
- **Right to freedom of expression in the classroom.** Instructors in the classroom and in conference will encourage free discussion, inquiry, and expression where relevant and appropriate to the educational objectives of the course. Students are free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion; however, they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled. Student grading is done solely on an academic basis according to the course grading policy and not on opinions expressed by students in or outside of class.
- **Right to freedom of inquiry.** Students and student organizations are free to examine and to discuss all questions of interest to them and to express opinions publicly and privately. You are free to support causes by orderly, peaceable, and acceptable means which do not disrupt the regular and essential operations of the College.

When anyone wishes to invite a speaker to the SFSC campus, certain rules must be met by the inviting person or persons. Any speaker, entertainer, consultant, or other person(s) not employed by the College or enrolled in the College, invited or uninvited to the campus for the purpose of addressing, entertaining, consulting, or otherwise contacting any group of students, faculty, or other employees of the College, must provide information to the Office of Community Relations and Marketing at 863-784-7379 in advance of the visit. If the person or persons desire to come on campus uninvited, then it will be the responsibility of the person or persons to notify the Office of Community Relations and Marketing in advance of the visit if a gathering of 100 or more is anticipated.



The institutional control of the campus facilities will not be used as an instrument of censorship. It is the responsibility of the persons who invite outside speakers to make it clear to the College and outside community that all views expressed are not those of the students, faculty, or employees of SFSC.

- **Right to** protection against improper disclosure. Information about student views, beliefs, and political associations which instructors, counselors, and advisors acquire in the course of your work is considered confidential.
- **Right to** privacy. The privacy and confidentiality of all student records shall be preserved. Official student records, supporting documents, and other student files shall be handled only by members of the College staff authorized for that purpose.

Regulations of the State Board of Education prescribe the content and custody of limited access records that a college may maintain on its students (see section on Records and FERPA in this Handbook) and states that health and medical records of personal counseling, required student and family financial income records, transcript or student permanent academic records, and student placement records shall be open to inspection only by the student, the parents or guardian of minor students, and such members of the professional staff of the College as have responsibility for working with the students. The custodian of student records may release information from these records to others only upon authorization in writing from the student, parent of a minor, or upon order of a court of competent jurisdiction or by federal law. Students interested in access to these records should contact the Office of the Registrar.

- **Right to** initiate changes at the College. If you have an idea or want to make a request for improvement in the regulations and conditions governing student life at SFSC, you should make your desires known to the Student Government Association (SGA). The SGA will evaluate the proposal and, through the SGA coordinator and designated representatives, make suggestions and recommendations to an appropriate member of the College staff for consideration and action. If this process does not result in a mutually acceptable outcome, you may request that the proposal be reviewed in the following order:
 1. The Learning and Student Success (LASS) Committee;
 2. The vice president of academic affairs and student services;
 3. The president of the College; and
 4. The SFSC District Board of Trustees.

At any step in this process, you may request a recommendation from the vice president of student services of the College.

- **Right to** know information. Reports, policies, and general information are available to you and potential students upon request from the dean of student services, Building B, Room 167, Highlands Campus.

RESPONSIBILITIES

As a student, you have a responsibility to:

1. Complete all admissions and enrollment requirements.
2. Review and consider all information about a program(s) before enrolling.
3. Keep the College informed of name and/or mailing address changes. These changes should be directed to the Office of the Registrar.
4. Report an accident or illness occurring on campus. You, another student, or a College representative should contact the vice president of student services to report any accident or illness at 863-784-7107. Although the College has no medical resources, hospitals are close by. Emergency first aid kits are located in each building on campus, and Student Services will notify the family or designated person of an injured or ill student. Any student involved in an accident on campus should contact the vice president of student services and complete an incident report. See safety information in this Handbook.
5. Arrange for payment of all fees before classes begin.



6. Attend class. Absences may result in a student being administratively withdrawn from a class. Students receiving state or federal financial aid assistance who are withdrawn from classes may be required to repay the funds. Instructors will explain class attendance policies to all students during their first week of class. Individuals not registered for a class are not permitted to attend the class. Veterans and students receiving financial assistance have other attendance requirements.
7. Contact your instructors (or your counselor/advisor) immediately if any concern or situation arises that may interfere with your progress or completion of the courses in which you are enrolled.
8. Contact your counselor or advisor if you wish to discuss concerns or situations of an academic, career, or personal nature.
9. Complete and submit the appropriate paperwork to drop or withdraw from a course or courses.
10. Abide by the policies and procedures of the College as set forth in the SFSC College Catalog and Student Handbook.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT AND JUDICIAL PROCEDURES

SFSC has established regulations which are considered necessary to preserve and maintain an environment conducive to learning, to ensure the safety and welfare of members of the College community, to encourage students in the development and practice of good citizenship and self-discipline, and to protect property and equipment of the College. The vice president of student services is responsible for consideration and action regarding all disciplinary matters. This consideration and action will be based on College policies. Following are the standards of conduct expected of students and other members of the College community:

Definitions

- A. The term "College" means South Florida State College.
- B. The term "Code" may be referred to hereinafter as the Student Code of Conduct.
- C. The term "student" includes all persons taking courses at SFSC, both full-time and part-time. Persons who are not officially enrolled for a particular term but who have a continuing relationship with SFSC are considered "students."
- D. The term "faculty member" means any person hired by SFSC to conduct instructional activities.
- E. The term "SFSC official" includes any person employed by SFSC performing assigned administrative or professional responsibilities.
- F. The term "member of the SFSC community" includes any person who is a student, faculty member, SFSC official, or any other person employed by SFSC. A person's status in a particular situation shall be determined by the vice president of student services or designee.
- G. The term "SFSC premises" includes all land, buildings, facilities, and other property in the possession of or owned, used, or controlled by SFSC.
- H. The term "organization" means any number of persons who have complied with the formal requirements of SFSC recognition/registration as an official student group.
- I. The term "judicial body" means any person or persons authorized by the vice president of student services or designee to determine whether a student has violated the Code and to recommend imposition of sanctions.
- J. The term "shall" is used in the imperative sense (e.g., "must do" or "is obligated to do").
- K. The term "may" is used in the permissive sense (e.g., "may or may not do").
- L. The term "policy" is defined as the written regulation of SFSC as found in, but not limited to, the Student Code of Conduct, Student Handbook, and the College Catalog.



- M. The term “cheating” includes, but is not limited to: (1) use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; (2) dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, taking tests solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; or (3) the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the SFSC faculty or staff.
- N. The term “plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work or ideas 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.

INTERIM ACTIONS FOR EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

The president of the College is authorized to develop procedures to implement this policy including procedures for interim actions in emergency situations.

The vice president of student services, or designee, is authorized to determine if an alleged violation of the Student Code of Conduct warrants interim action. Interim action may be implemented at any time prior to the conclusion of the conduct process, including the appeal process.

A. The criteria used in making this determination is:

1. Whether a student poses an ongoing threat of harm, disruption of, or interference with the normal operations of the College; and whether interim suspension is necessary to protect the health (physical and mental), safety or general welfare of the College community or to preserve College property.

B. Interim action includes, but is not limited to, one or more of the following:

1. Interim Suspension. If the vice president of student services, or designee, determines that other interim measures are necessary to protect the health, safety, or welfare of the student or the College community, they may:
 - a. Restrict or ban attendance of any or all classes.
 - b. Restrict or ban access or contact with individuals in the College community.
 - c. Restrict or ban access to College property, places, facilities, or equipment.
 - d. Restrict or ban participation in College activities or organizations.
 - e. Restrict or ban from College housing.
 - f. Suspend an SFSC student organization.
 - g. Otherwise restrict conduct or ban access to College resources.
2. The vice president of student services, or designee, may immediately place a registration hold on any student who has interim action taken against them, which prevents the student from accessing, changing, or altering his or her course registration and/or admission status.
3. The vice president of student services, or designee, may also request that a student's access to the portal, email, online course rooms, and other online information access be suspended.

Implementation of interim action, such as interim suspension, requires the student be notified in writing immediately upon the determination that an interim action(s) is warranted. The notice shall state the basis for the interim actions(s) and that the student will have the opportunity to inspect all information that initiated the interim action(s). The written notice will be sent to the student's College email account. The College may also communicate the determination verbally to the student but must also concurrently deliver the written notice as described above. The student has three business days from the date of the notice to make a written request to appeal the interim action(s). The appeal of the interim action(s) will be heard by the vice president of academic affairs and student services, or designee, within three business days of receipt of the appeal. The hearing may be delayed due to a term break or closing of the College. The notification of decision shall be in correspondence via email to the student within three business days of hearing the appeal. The student's appeal of the interim action(s) must be based on one of the following:



- a. An egregious error pertaining to the student's or organization's involvement contention that the violation, even if proven, does not pose a threat to the health, safety, or general welfare of the College community and thus does not warrant interim action.
- b. As a result of an appeal, if it is determined by the vice president of academic affairs and student services, or designee, that the interim action be overturned, the student's status will be reinstated and the conduct process will continue in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.
- c. If the student does not appeal the interim action the conduct process will continue in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

Judicial Authority

- A. The vice president of student services shall develop policies, procedures, and assurances for administering the judicial program and procedural rules for the conduct of hearings, which are consistent with provision of the code and College policies.
- B. Decisions made by a judicial body shall be final, pending the normal appeal process.
- C. A judicial body may be designated as arbiter of disputes within the student community in cases which do not involve a violation of the Code. All parties must agree to arbitration, and to be bound by the decision with no right of appeal.
- D. With the exception of acts of violence, or sexual misconduct (which is addressed separately by the College's sexual harassment policy), accusations which allege a violation of the Student Code of Conduct may be handled in an informal manner, and not by hearing, based upon initial review by the vice president of student services, or designee.

Hearings

- A. Two types of hearings (administrative and committee) are provided for by the Code. Administrative hearings are more informal, can be scheduled more quickly than committee hearings, and are usually better suited to cases involving fewer questions of fact. Committee hearings are generally more appropriate for cases involving more serious charges.
- B. The administrative hearing will be conducted by the vice president of student services or designee.
- C. The committee hearing will be conducted by the Student Judicial Committee (SJC). The Committee, as a standing committee, is composed of three students (one from the Division of Arts and Sciences, one from the Division of Applied Sciences and Technologies, and one from Division of Health Sciences), three faculty members (one from the Division of Arts and Sciences, one from the Division of Applied Sciences and Technologies, and one from Division of Health Sciences), three administrators, and a hearing officer appointed by the president of the College. The hearing officer is a nonvoting member of the committee. Student members are to be selected by the vice president of student services from a list of students submitted by the SGA no later than Sept. 15 of each year. A voting quorum of four is required for transaction of business. No member of the committee who has an interest in the case shall sit in judgment. The Committee is responsible for hearing charges lodged against students for conduct under District Board of Trustees Policy 3.33, Control and Discipline of Students.
- D. Normally, students may choose the hearing type to adjudicate their case. However, the vice president of student services or designee reserves the right to choose the appropriate hearing type based on the nature and circumstances of the case.
- E. If the student in question fails to appear for the hearing, the hearing may be held in the student's absence.
- F. The hearing body will consider prior records of disciplinary action and victim impact statements only in the sanctioning phase of deliberations.
- G. The hearing body's determination of "responsible" or "not responsible" will be based solely on information presented at the hearing. The standard of proof required to render a decision will be Preponderance of the Evidence.



Proscribed Conduct

- A. The College's jurisdiction and discipline are generally limited to conduct which occurs on College premises or conduct which adversely affects the College community and/or the pursuit of its objectives. However, SFSC will exercise its right to discipline a student for activities, which take place off campus when those activities adversely affect the College community. The vice president of student services will consider and determine on a case-by-case basis any off-campus activity in which the College jurisdiction should be asserted.
- B. Any student found to have committed the following misconduct is subject to the disciplinary sanctions as outlined under Judicial Policies, section B: Sanctions. All students, including students with disabilities, have the responsibility to meet the code of conduct by adapting behavior to the educational environment. Code of conduct violations and disruptive behavior, in particular, are to be defined as disciplinary in nature and not issues of mental health:
1. Acts of dishonesty, including but not limited to the following:
 - a. Cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty, including the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to produce academic work or to show academic progress.
 - b. Furnishing false information to any SFSC official, faculty member or office, including writing bad checks to SFSC for payment of fees,
 - c. Forgery, alteration, or misuse of any SFSC document, record, or instrument of identification, and
 - d. Tampering with the election of any SFSC-recognized student organization.
 2. Disruption or obstruction of teaching, research, administration, disciplinary proceedings, or other SFSC activities, including its public service functions on or off campus, or other authorized non-SFSC activities, when the act occurs on SFSC premises.
 3. Attempted or actual theft of and/or damage to property of SFSC or property of a member of the SFSC community or other personal or public property, including the theft of textbooks or library books.
 4. Participation in a campus demonstration which disrupts the normal operations of SFSC and infringes on the rights of other members of the SFSC community; leading or inciting others to disrupt scheduled and/or normal activities within any campus building or area, intentional obstruction which unreasonably interferes with freedom of movement, either pedestrian or vehicular, on campus.
 5. Electronic theft or other abuse of computer time, systems, and internet access including but not limited to:
 - a. Unauthorized entry into files or systems to use, read, change the contents, or for any other purpose,
 - b. Unauthorized use of another individual's identification, password, or access privileges,
 - c. Unauthorized use of the SFSC name, logos, insignia, copyrights, or identifiable properties,
 - d. Use of computing facilities to interfere with the work of another student, faculty member, or SFSC official, and
 - e. Other uses that violate the SFSC technology access and use policy.
 6. Physical abuse, including but not limited to, sexual battery, assault or rape, verbal abuse, threats, intimidation, harassment, coercion, stalking, retaliation, and/or other conduct which threatens or endangers the health or safety of any person.
 7. Hazing, defined as an act which endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student, or which destroys or removes public or private property, for the purpose of initiation, admission into, affiliation with, or as a condition for continued membership in a group or organization.
 8. Failure to comply with directions of SFSC 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.
 9. Unauthorized use of premises and/or possession, duplication, or use of keys or entry codes to any SFSC premises.
 10. Violation of published SFSC policies, rules, or regulations.



11. Violation of federal, state, or local law on College premises or at SFSC-sponsored or -supervised activities.
12. Use, possession, or distribution of narcotic or other controlled substances except as expressly permitted by law.
13. Use, public intoxication, and possession or distribution of alcoholic beverages except as expressly permitted by the law and SFSC regulations.
14. Illegal or unauthorized possession of firearms, explosives, other weapons, or dangerous chemicals on SFSC premises.
15. Obstruction of the free flow of pedestrian or vehicular traffic on SFSC premises or at SFSC-sponsored or -supervised functions.
16. Conduct which is disorderly, lewd, or indecent; breach of peace; or aiding, abetting, or procuring another person to breach the peace on SFSC premises or at functions sponsored by or participated in by SFSC.
17. Abuse of the judicial system, including but not limited to:
 - a. Failure to obey the summons of a judicial body,
 - b. Falsification, distortion, or misrepresentation of information before a judicial body,
 - c. Disruption or interference with the orderly conduct of a judicial proceeding, or any other SFSC proceeding including class,
 - d. Institution of a judicial proceeding knowingly without cause,
 - e. Attempting to influence the impartiality of a member of a judicial body prior to or during the judicial proceeding,
 - f. Harassment (verbal or physical) and/or intimidation of a member of a judicial body prior to, during, or after a judicial proceeding,
 - g. Failure to comply with the sanction(s) imposed under the Code, and
 - h. Influencing or attempting to influence another person to commit an abuse of the judicial system.
18. Sexual battery in any form, including attempted or acquaintance rape, will not be tolerated by the College. There is also a range of exploitative behavior, which does not amount to assault, which may result in disciplinary action against the perpetrator. Attempts to obtain sexual favors through psychological coercion, including but not limited to threats to embarrass or intimidate the victim (in a way that does not include threat of force) are examples of behavior that may result in disciplinary action. Greater detail is covered in the sexual misconduct procedures (available from the vice president of student services and Title IX coordinator).
19. Violation of Florida Statute § 553.865 "Safety in Privacy Spaces Act" - As provided by Section 553.865, F.S., willfully entering a restroom or changing facility designated for the opposite sex on the premises of the College and refusing to depart when asked to do so by any College administrative personnel, faculty member, security personnel, or law enforcement personnel, except when entering for these purposes:
 - a. To accompany a person of the opposite sex for the purpose of assisting or chaperoning a child under the age of 12, an elderly person as defined in Section 825.101, F.S., or a person with a disability as defined in Section 760.22, F.S., or a developmental disability as defined in s. 393.063, F.S.
 - b. For law enforcement or governmental regulatory purposes
 - c. For the purpose of rendering emergency medical assistance or to intervene in any other emergency situation where the health or safety of another person is at risk
 - d. For custodial, maintenance, or inspection purposes, provided that the restroom or changing facility is not in use
 - e. If the appropriate designated restroom or changing facility is out of order or under repair and the restroom or changing facility designated for the opposite sex contains no person of the opposite sex

Students have the right to file a complaint with the Attorney General should they feel that an educational institution has failed to meet the minimum requirements for restrooms and changing facilities under s. 553.865(4) and (5), F.S.



20. On occasion, situations may arise not specifically covered by College regulations or the Code, but which are harmful to the welfare of the College community or are obstructive to the orderly processes of the College. In these incidents, interpretation will be made by representatives of the College and appropriate action will be taken.
21. SFSC students may record video or audio of class lectures in courses in which they are enrolled. Effective 07/01/2021 and per Federal and State privacy laws and regulations, students may record class lectures for three reasons, as delineated in [Florida Statute 1004.097 \(3\) \(g\)](#):
- a. for their education use;
 - b. in connection with a complaint to the public institution of high education where the recording was made; or
 - c. as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding.

Recordings **may not be used** to engage in academic dishonesty and as a substitute for class participation and class attendance.

A class lecture is defined as a formal or methodical oral presentation by the faculty member as part of a SFSC class session intended to present information or teach the enrolled students about particular subjects.

Students are **prohibited from recording class activities other than lectures**, including but not limited to lab sessions, student presentations (whether individually or as part of a group), class discussion (except when incidental to and incorporated with a class lecture), clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving student participation, tests or examination administrations, field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty member, and guest speakers during a class session.

A class lecture does not constitute other class activities such as class discussions unless these discussions are incidental to and incorporated within a class lecture. That means that questions asked by students in the class and answered by the faculty member during the lecture portion of the class may be recorded, while the classroom discussion portion of the class after the lecture may not. Classroom activities other than a lecture may not be recorded without the express consent (a clear and direct statement of agreement) of all participants.

NOTE: Your faculty member may or may not announce when the lecture portion of the class has ended, but it is up to the student to ensure not to record at an impermissible time and portion of the class session.

Student recordings of lecture **may not be published** or shared without the written consent of the faculty member. In this case, the word “**publish**” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or otherwise provide access to the recording, regardless of the format to another person or persons, including but not limited to another student in the class. Also prohibited is the recording, or transcript of the recording, to be published, posted on, or uploaded to a media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, leaflet, picket sign, or printed anywhere. Failure to adhere to these requirements may constitute a violation of the SFSC Student Code of Conduct and a violation of the law.

[Florida Statute 1004.097 \(4\) \(a\)](#) also provides a cause of action for declaratory and injunctive relief, damages, and reasonable attorney fees and court costs for those harmed by a violation of the Bill's provisions.

If a student shares or “publishes” a recording of a class lecture without the faculty member’s written consent, and, per HB 233, a student’s unauthorized use of a recorded lecture allows the faculty member to take it to court for damages, including attorneys’ fees, totaling up to \$200,000. Additionally, a student may face potential violations of the Student Code of Conduct.

Student accommodations to receive support services from the College Disabilities Office are made in advance. Recording of class lectures or other class activities are traditionally part of the course accessibility support provided to students with disabilities. [Florida Statute 1004.097](#) will not impact activities as an approved auxiliary aid.

- C. Violations of civil or criminal law will be referred to the appropriate law enforcement agency.



Judicial Policies

A. Charges and Hearings (Complaints)

A student who wishes to register a complaint should contact the specific source of the problem (person/office) with an explanation of the details. If no resolution comes of the discussion with the source, the student should follow the hierarchy by contacting the supervisor/chairperson, and subsequently the director/dean of the person or office. If no satisfaction or resolution is reached, then a formal complaint should be filed in writing to the vice president of student services. The vice president of student services will inform the student of the procedures and timeframes involved in the process.

A student who believes that he or she has been subjected to harassment or discrimination or any such conduct that has the effect of unreasonably interfering with the student's educational experience should report such behavior to a College official who should notify the vice president of student services of the complaint. Confidentiality shall be maintained to the greatest extent possible within the law and the requirements needed for conducting appropriate investigation. If no satisfaction or resolution is reached, then a formal complaint should be filed in writing to the vice president of student services who will inform the student of the procedures and timeframes involved in the process.

If a complaint is filed against a student, the student in question will be guaranteed the following rights inherent in due process:

1. The student shall be notified by the vice president of student services in writing by certified mail, return receipt requested, addressed to the student at his/her last known residence, and/or by handing a copy to the student. The notification will include that he/she is accused of violating a regulation and will explain the nature of the proceedings against him/her.
2. The student shall be entitled to the following:
 - a. Written notification of the charge(s) and the time and place of the hearing at least five days prior to the hearing.
 - b. Written notification of the names of the witnesses who are directly responsible for having reported the alleged violation or, if there are no such witnesses, written notification of how the alleged violation came to be reported.
 - c. Written notification of the evidence to be received at the hearing.
3. The student shall be entitled to attend in person throughout the presentation of evidence; to know the identity of witnesses against him/her; to present evidence; and to receive a case summary after the hearing. The student also may elect not to appear before the judicial body. Should the student elect not to appear, the hearing shall be held in his/her absence.
4. If the student has been charged with a violation of College policy or a criminal act, he/she may bring a legal counselor to the hearing provided that:
 - a. The vice president of student services is notified by the student of his/her intention to bring a legal counselor to the hearing within two College work days after receiving notice of the hearing, and
 - b. The legal counselor is aware that he/she may provide only passive assistance to the student. The counselor is not allowed to speak to any witness or member of the judicial body.
5. The student shall be entitled to remain in class until charges have been heard and disciplinary action imposed unless it is determined that the student may pose a threat to the health and safety of the College community.
6. The student shall be entitled to ask questions of the judicial body or any witnesses.
7. The student shall not be required to testify against himself.
8. The student shall be entitled to an expeditious hearing of their case.
9. The student shall be entitled to an impartial decision-maker.
10. The student shall be entitled to present a defense.
11. The student shall be entitled to make a transcript of the hearing.



12. The student shall be entitled to have the hearing open to the public if the facilities for such a meeting are available without undue hardship to the College.
13. Should the student admit to the facts charged, they will be afforded the right to a hearing on the disciplinary action to be imposed.
14. The student may appeal the initial hearing decision with the vice president for academic affairs, or designee, within seven days from date of the letter notifying the student of the judicial body's decision.
15. The decision of the vice president for academic affairs shall be final.

B. Sanctions

1. A student violating the rules and regulations of the College shall be subject to the following disciplinary action determined by the nature of the offense, considering the student's previous conduct record:
 - a. **Reprimand/Warning** - A notice in writing to the student that the student is violating or has violated College regulations.
 - b. **Probation** - Probation is for a designated period of time and includes the probability of more severe disciplinary sanctions if the student is found to be violating any institutional regulation during the probationary period.
 - c. **Requirement of Restitution** - Compensation for loss, damage, or injury. This may take the form of appropriate service and/or monetary or material replacement.
 - d. **Academic Penalty** - For academic dishonesty violations, the student will be given a zero (**F**) for the assignment/course as indicated by the case.
 - e. **Discretionary Sanctions** - Work assignments, service to SFSC, community service, or other related discretionary assignments.
 - f. **Loss of Privileges** - Denial of specified privileges for a designated period of time.
 - g. **Fines** - Previously established and published fines may be imposed.
 - h. **Dean's Hold or Other Departmental Hold** - A hold is placed on a student who has unfinished business with a College official or department. A hold prohibits a student from the following: obtaining transcripts, obtaining a diploma, receiving funds, and registering for and attending classes. The hold is lifted only if the student attends to the matter which initiated the hold.
 - i. **Suspension** - Separation of the student from the College or residence hall for a definite period of time, after which the student is eligible to return. Conditions for readmission may be specified.
 - j. **Dismissal** - Separation from the College or residence hall for an indefinite period of time. Readmission may be possible, based on meeting all readmission criteria and obtaining clearance from the vice president of student services or designee.
 - k. **Expulsion** - Permanent separation of the student from SFSC or residence hall. **NOTE:** When a student is found guilty of unacceptable conduct which warrants suspension or expulsion, the vice president of student services shall forward the findings and recommendations of the case to the vice president for academic affairs for review prior to the effective date of implementation of the action to be taken.
2. More than one of the sanctions listed above may be imposed for any single violation.
3. First offense students who are found guilty of academic dishonesty as determined by the instructor of the course will have the following sanctions applied:
 - a. Be given a grade of zero (**F**) for the assignment/exam involved,
 - b. If successful completion of the assignment/exam is required for the course, the student will also be given a grade of **F** for the course, and



- c. A copy of the action will be forwarded to the vice president of student services where it will be maintained in a disciplinary file. Should the student be charged a second time for academic dishonesty, the student will be required to go through the judicial process as outlined in the SFSC Student Handbook.
4. Other than SFSC expulsion, disciplinary sanctions shall not be made part of the student's permanent academic record, but shall become part of the student's confidential record. Upon graduation, the student's confidential record may be expunged of disciplinary actions other than suspension or expulsion, upon application to the vice president of student services. Cases involving the imposition of sanctions other than suspension or expulsion shall be expunged from the student's confidential record three years after final disposition of the case or according to state laws.

C. Appeals

Appeals of the judicial body, or vice president of student services, or designee's decision, must be filed within five College business days of the decision rendered to the student. If an appeal is not filed within this timeframe, the student is considered to have accepted the decision and sanctions, and the case is considered closed. Except as required to explain the basis of new evidence not reasonably available at the time of the hearing, an appeal shall be limited to review of the verbatim record of the initial hearing and supporting documents for one or more of the following purposes:

1. To determine whether the original hearing was conducted fairly in light of the charges and evidence presented, and in conformity with prescribed procedures giving the complaining party a reasonable opportunity to prepare and present evidence that the Code was violated, and giving the student in question a reasonable opportunity to prepare and to present a rebuttal of those allegations.
2. To determine whether the decision reached regarding the student in question was based on substantial evidence, that is, whether the facts in the case were sufficient to establish that a violation of the Code occurred.
3. To determine whether the sanction(s) imposed were appropriate for the violation of the Code, which the student was found to have committed.
4. To consider new evidence, sufficient to alter a decision or other relevant facts not brought out in the original hearing, because such evidence and/or facts were not known to the person appealing at the time of the original hearing.
5. If an appeal is upheld by the vice president for academic affairs (VPAA), or designee, the matter may be resolved by the VPAA, or designee, or may be remanded to the original judicial body for re-opening of the hearing to allow reconsideration of the original determination and/or sanctions.
6. In cases involving appeals by the student in question of violating the Code, review of the sanction by the VPAA, or designee, may not result in more severe sanction(s) for the student in question. Instead, following an appeal, the VPAA, or designee may, upon review of the case, reduce, but not increase, the sanctions imposed by the judicial body or vice president of student services.
7. In all cases, once final action has been taken, the vice president of student services shall inform the complainant in writing of that action.
8. The decision of the VPAA, or designee, is the final decision of the College.

Student's Rights

A. Rights of the Student in Question

1. To have a presumption that no violation occurred.
2. To have an impartial hearing officer.
3. To be given a written notice of the Student Code of Conduct charge and the allegations upon which the charge is based.



4. To be given an information session, at which time the judicial process and the student's rights will be fully explained. The student will be permitted to review all materials related to the charge and then confirm the forum in which the case will be heard. An agreed upon date will then be set for the hearing. This must be requested by the student at least two College working days prior to the date of the hearing of the case.
5. To have the hearing handled in a forthright and timely fashion and be notified of all timelines.
6. To be accompanied during the hearing by an advisor of the student's choice, who is not serving in any other role.
7. To be given a fair and impartial hearing, during which the student will be permitted to address the charges and provide information, including witnesses. The student may remain silent and has a right against self-incrimination.
8. To know that a recording will be made of the entire hearing process.
9. To appeal the decision of the hearing body.

B. Rights of the Alleged Victim or Complainant

1. To have a judicial referral handled in a forthright and timely fashion.
2. To be accompanied during the hearing by an advisor of the complainant's choice.
3. To have unrelated past behavior excluded from the judicial process.
4. To submit questions to the hearing body. The hearing body will then consider posing the questions to the charged student.
5. To submit a statement about the impact of the offense, to be considered by the hearing body only in the sanctioning phase of deliberations if the student in question is found responsible for the charge.
6. To be present throughout the hearing, or portions thereof, as approved by the hearing chair.
7. To be notified of the outcome of the hearing process. In the case of sexual assault, both parties are to be notified at the same time.
8. To know that a recording will be made of the entire hearing process.

Interpretation and Revision

- A. Any question of interpretation regarding the Code shall be referred to the VPAA or designee for final determination.
- B. The Code shall be reviewed annually by the vice president of student services under the direction of the VPAA.

DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND/OR SEXUAL HARASSMENT COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

I. Purpose:

The purpose of this procedure is to specify the appropriate process for students, employees, applicants for admission or employment or third parties alleging discrimination or harassment based on race, color, religion, gender, national origin, ethnicity, age, disability, marital status, political affiliation, sexual orientation, genetic information, or pregnancy for filing a discrimination or harassment complaint.

- A. *Student:* This procedure does not apply to complaints related to matters such as academic problems, academic grades, mistreatment by any College employee that is not related to discrimination, wrongful fee assessment, financial aid concerns, records and registration errors, and student employment of a general nature.



- B. *Employee*: This procedure does not apply to employee performance appraisals, unless it is alleged that the appraisal is based on factors other than the employee's performance.

II. Definitions:

- A. *Student*: Throughout this procedure, the term "student" includes current students and applicants for admission.
- B. *Employee*: Throughout this procedure the term "employee" includes current employees and applicants for employment.
- C. *Complaint*: The dissatisfaction that occurs when an employee believes that any condition of employment is unjust or inequitable based on discrimination or harassment or when a student believes that any condition of his or her educational experience is unjust or inequitable based on discrimination or harassment.
- D. *Complainant*: An individual or group of individuals who file a complaint against another individual or group of individuals.
- E. *EA/EO (Equal Access/Equal Opportunity) Coordinator*: Individual(s) appointed by the president to assist a student or employee in defining the specifics of an incident or complaint, facilitate the following procedures, and monitor the case through to its conclusion. The EA/EO coordinator does not represent the student or employee. Specific contact information for the EA/EO employee coordinator and the EA/EO student coordinator is provided below. In addition, this information is prominently displayed throughout all the campuses and centers and can be found on the College's website (Title IX Sexual Harassment and Discrimination page).

EA/EO Student Coordinator

Dr. Mark Bukowski, Vice President of Student Services
863-784-7107, Building B, Room 167, First Floor
600 West College Drive, Avon Park, FL 33825
Mark.Bukowski@southflorida.edu

EA/EO Employee Coordinator

Donald L. Kesterson Jr., Director of Human Resources
863-784-7336, Building I, Room 100, First Floor
600 West College Drive, Avon Park, FL 33825
Donald.Kesterson@southflorida.edu

- F. *Harassment*: Consists of verbal or physical conduct on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, ethnicity, age, disability, marital status, political affiliation, sexual orientation, genetic information, or pregnancy that:
1. is intended to or is reasonably likely to embarrass, distress, agitate, disturb or trouble the person or designated group to whom it is directed or to create an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational or work environment;
 2. has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the individual's work or school performance or participation; or
 3. otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment or educational opportunities.

Harassment, as defined above, may include, but is not limited to, repeated remarks of a demeaning nature, implied or explicit threats, slurs, innuendoes or gestures, demeaning jokes, stories, pictures, objects or activities directed at recipient which reflect upon the recipient's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, ethnicity, age, disability, marital status, political affiliation, sexual orientation, genetic information, or pregnancy.

- G. *Sexual Harassment*: A form of discrimination which is against the law and is against Board policy. The College will not tolerate sexual harassment activities by any of its students or employees. Sexual harassment is behavior based on sex which falls under one of the following categories:
1. Harassment which culminates in a tangible employment or academic action such as discharge, demotion, undesirable reassignment, or lowered grading; or
 2. Harassment in which no adverse tangible employment or academic action is taken but which is sufficient to constructively alter an employee's working conditions or student's educational experience.

- H. *Respondent*: An individual or group of individuals against whom a complaint is filed.



III. Guiding Principles

- A. *Retaliation* - It is a violation of College policy to retaliate or take reprisal against any person who has filed a complaint or who has complained about discrimination, harassment or sexual harassment based on the fact that the employee raised an issue about discrimination, harassment, or sexual harassment to his or her supervisor, or any supervisor, or manager of the College, to any dean, vice president, or other administrator, to any other person, entity, or human rights agency.
- B. *False or Malicious Complaints* - Any student or employee found to have acted dishonestly or maliciously in filing a complaint, or in their actions or witness statements during an official investigation, shall also become subject to possible disciplinary action.

IV. Procedure

- A. The College will thoroughly investigate and resolve all appropriate complaints.
- B. The privacy of both the complainant and the respondent will be respected, consistent with the College's legal obligations under state and federal laws and with the necessity to investigate allegations of misconduct and take corrective action when this has occurred.
 - 1. *Student*: During an investigation, the College reserves the right to reassign a student in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.
 - 2. *Employee*: During the investigation, the College reserves the right to reassign an employee or place an employee on paid leave.
- C. The EA/EO coordinators are responsible for investigation of all employee and student complaints.
 - 1. *Student*: All communications, documents, and records, paper or electronic, pertinent to a student complaint process shall be kept in files separate from student academic records.
 - 2. *Employee*: All communications, documents, and records, paper or electronic, pertinent to an employee complaint process shall be kept in files separate from human resource records.

D. Filing a Complaint

In the event that a student or employee believes that he/she has been the subject of discrimination, harassment, or sexual harassment and cannot resolve the issue with the alleged party, that individual shall report his/her complaint to the appropriate EA/EO employee coordinator or the EA/EO student coordinator within 60 working days of the alleged incident. Information on contacting the EA/EO coordinators is available on the College website and prominently displayed throughout College facilities.

- 1. *Student*: In the event that the alleged party is the EA/EO coordinator, the student should report his/her complaint to the vice president for academic affairs. Contact information for the vice president for academic affairs is available on the College website.
- 2. *Employee*: In the event that the alleged party is the EA/EO coordinator, the employee should report his/her complaint to the vice president of administrative services. Contact information for the vice president of administrative services is available on the College website.

Any administrator or faculty who is informed of a complaint must refer the complainant to the appropriate EA/EO coordinator immediately. The EA/EO coordinator will describe the complaint process to the complainant and review information relative to the complaint. If a complainant cannot state a sufficient basis in fact or law to support a discrimination, harassment, or sexual harassment claim, the EA/EO coordinator shall assist the complainant with selecting a more appropriate internal means of resolving the specific complaint.

Additionally, any administrator or faculty who has knowledge of a complaint must refer the complainant to the appropriate EA/EO coordinator. The College has an obligation under law to investigate all reports of discrimination, harassment, and/or sexual harassment, whether or not a complaint has been filed by the victim.



E. Investigation

1. *Informal* - The EA/EO coordinator will attempt to resolve the allegation informally by meeting with both parties, either individually or together. The informal resolution process is an attempt to resolve complaints quickly and to the satisfaction of all parties, while protecting confidentiality to the extent authorized by law. The aim of the informal dispute resolution is not to determine if there was intent to discriminate or harass, or actual discrimination, harassment and/or sexual harassment, but to ensure that the alleged discriminatory and/or harassing conduct ceases and the matter is resolved promptly at the lowest possible level. Both parties must agree to an informal resolution process. The EA/EO coordinator will complete the informal investigation within 30 working days.

If the complaint is resolved by mutual agreement of the parties, the matter will be considered settled. The EA/EO coordinator will file a written report outlining the result of the informal complaint to both parties and the president within 15 working days of final resolution of the informal complaint.

2. *Formal* - If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, the complainant shall file a formal, written complaint with the EA/EO coordinator.
 - a. All complaints should be in writing. Written complaints may be submitted in the form of a letter or memo. The complaint should include the following:
 - Complainant's name and signature
 - Description of the act or acts complained of
 - Identity of the person or persons involved in the complaint (the "respondents")
 - Date(s) on which alleged acts occurred
 - Names and contact information of potential witnesses
 - Effect the alleged acts have had on the complainant
 - Complainant's desired resolution
 - Any other information the complainant believes is relevant
 - b. Written complaints must be filed within 10 working days after receipt of the informal report. Upon receipt of the written complaint, the following will occur:
 - The EA/EO coordinator will review the formal complaint process with the complainant and provide a copy of the applicable College policy and procedure.
 - The EA/EO coordinator will notify the president and the appropriate department administrator of the formal complaint.
 - The EA/EO coordinator will conduct a prompt and thorough investigation by reviewing documents and interviewing witnesses.
 - Any persons thought to have information or evidence relevant to the complaint shall be interviewed and such interviews shall be appropriately documented.
 - If determined necessary, an appropriate senior-level administrator will conduct interviews jointly with the EA/EO coordinator.
 - While interviewing witnesses, the EA/EO coordinator will not disclose information gathered from witness interviews to anyone other than the complainant and respondent. Both the complainant and the respondent have the right to know the statements made and the identification of persons making statements.
 - The EA/EO coordinator may remind a reluctant witness that it is his or her duty to cooperate with the investigation.
 - The EA/EO coordinator may secure any information that was given during the informal process.



- Other acceptable methods for gathering information include, but are not limited to, visual inspection of offensive materials and follow-up interviews as necessary.
- In determining whether the alleged conduct constitutes discrimination, harassment and/or sexual harassment, the totality of the circumstances, the nature of the conduct, frequencies, and the context in which the alleged conduct occurred will be investigated.
- The EA/EO coordinator will provide a copy of the written complaint to the respondent.
- The EA/EO coordinator will file a written report with the appropriate vice president and the president within 30 working days after the formal complaint has been filed. The report shall include :
 1. an outline of the basis of the complaint,
 2. the names of the persons involved,
 3. a description of the facts of the case that were in dispute,
 4. a description of the findings of the investigation, and
 5. the final resolution of the investigation.
- The EA/EO coordinator will meet individually with the complainant and respondent to discuss the findings and provide a written summary of the overall findings. The College will take appropriate action to ensure nondiscrimination.

F. Appeal/Final Resolution of Complaint

1. *Right to Appeal* - Both the complainant and the respondent have the right to appeal the equity officer's findings. The appealing party may petition the president for review of a decision by the EA/EO coordinator within five working days of the date of the decision. The written petition shall state the facts of the case, a summary of the findings of the equity officer and the appealing party's reason for petitioning the president for review. The president's action will be limited to review of the basis for the EA/EO coordinator's disposition and will not necessarily involve a new factual investigation. Notwithstanding the above, the president may, but is not required to, direct that further facts be gathered, direct a group (no more than three) to review the facts and make a recommendation to the president, or direct that additional remedial action be taken.

The president will act on the matter by letter, memo, or directive with notification to the complainant, the respondent and other appropriate persons within 15 working days of the receipt of the petition of appeal. The decision of the president shall be final.

2. *Decline to Appeal* - In cases where no appeal is filed within five working days of receipt of the summary report and findings of the formal investigation, the determination of the EA/EO coordinator will be final.
3. *Withdrawal of Complaints* - Once filed, the College has an obligation to investigate complaints raising claims of discrimination, harassment or sexual harassment. However, in appropriate circumstances, and at the discretion and judgment of the president, the College may agree upon a written and signed request to do so by the complainant, to withdraw a complaint. Both the complainant and the respondent will be notified of the withdrawal.

TITLE IX

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. Section 1681) is a federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs and activities at institutions that receive federal financial assistance. Sexual harassment, which includes acts of sexual violence, is a form of sex discrimination prohibited by Title IX. Sex discrimination is a continuum of behaviors ranging from sexual harassment and intimidation to sexual assault.

SFSC is committed to maintaining a learning environment free from discrimination on the basis of sex, which includes sexual harassment and sexual violence. These acts violate an individual's fundamental rights and personal dignity and will not be tolerated. SFSC seeks to address sex discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual violence through education, policy enforcement, and



by providing mechanisms for students, faculty, staff, and visitors to report concerns or complaints. Prompt corrective measures will be taken to stop sex discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual violence whenever it occurs. Policies and procedures related to Title IX can be found on the SFSC website at southflorida.edu/title-ix-sexual-harassment.

In accordance with Title IX regulations, SFSC has designated the following individuals to ensure that all sex discrimination complaints, which includes sexual harassment and sexual violence, are responded to both thoroughly and in a timely manner.

These individuals are responsible for overseeing the monitoring and application of College policy with regards to Title IX law developments; implementation of grievance procedures, including notification, investigation and disposition of complaints; provision of educational materials and training for the campus community; and coordinating and/or conducting investigations of grievances and complaints pertaining to Title IX. The Title IX coordinator is primarily responsible for monitoring and overseeing the implementation of Title IX programs and activities. The deputy Title IX coordinators assist the Title IX coordinator in fulfilling these duties:

Title IX Coordinator

Christianna Bobo
863-784-7039, Building B, Room 160, First Floor
600 West College Drive, Avon Park, FL 33825
Christianna.Bobo@southflorida.edu

Deputy Title IX Coordinator

Dr. Mark Bukowski, Vice President of Student Services
863-784-7107, Building B, Room 167, First Floor
600 West College Drive, Avon Park, FL 33825
Mark.Bukowski@southflorida.edu

Deputy Title IX Coordinator

Donald L. Kesterson Jr., Director of Human Resources
863-784-7336, Building I, Room 100, First Floor
600 West College Drive, Avon Park, FL 33825
Donald.Kesterson@southflorida.edu

PROHIBITION OF HAZING

To define actions or situations that recklessly or intentionally endanger the mental or physical health or safety of a student and are considered to be hazing activities.

The term “hazing” will include any action or situation that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for purposes including, but not limited to, initiation or admission into or affiliation with any organization operating under the sanction of a postsecondary institution; or the perpetuation or furtherance of a tradition or ritual of any organization operating under the sanction of a postsecondary institution. ‘Hazing’ includes but is not limited to pressuring or coercing the student into violating state or federal law; any brutality of a physical nature, such as whipping, beating, branding, exposure to the elements, forced consumption of any food, liquor, drug, or other substance; or other forced physical activity that could adversely affect the physical health or safety of the student, and also includes any activity that would subject the student to extreme mental stress, such as sleep deprivation, forced exclusion from social contact, coerced conduct that could result in extreme embarrassment, or other forced activity that could adversely affect the mental health or dignity of the student. Hazing does not include customary athletic events or other similar contests or competitions or any activity or conduct that furthers a legal and legitimate objective (Section 1006.63(1), Florida Statutes (F.S.)).

This rule shall apply to acts conducted on or off College sites whenever such acts are deemed to constitute hazing by College or non-College sponsored organizations.



Any organization suspected of blatant disregard for the above hazing rules will be investigated by the vice president of student services and if found to be in violation of the procedure, the organization's charter will be revoked and the organization will cease to operate on or off campus under the sanction of the College. Furthermore, any hazing violation will result in the suspension of the club or organization by the vice president of student services. Suspension will result in the following:

1. A loss of the rights to induct new members for one term and preclusion from participating in College-sponsored activities as a recognized organization.
2. Denial of the use of the name of the College when engaged in activities off campus.
3. Denial of access to facilities and all other College resources that are normally provided to officially recognized clubs and organizations.

Any individual(s) suspected of violating the above hazing rule shall be investigated by the Office of Student Services and, if warranted, charged with the appropriate violation of the Student Code of Conduct. Students charged with a violation of hazing will be referred to the Student Judicial Committee (SJC) as well as law enforcement for appropriate action.



Important Contacts

Student Services at all locations are able to meet with students remotely by phone or email. Please use the list below to contact our staff. For those students who come to any of the campuses, accommodations will be made.

We encourage you to both call and email the office you wish to contact.

Admissions/Records/Registration

863-784-7405

Admissions@southflorida.edu

RecordsTranscripts@southflorida.edu

Registration@southflorida.edu

SFSCPantherCentralSupport@southflorida.edu –

Panther Central login issues

Advising and Counseling – Highlands Campus

863-784-7131

Advising@southflorida.edu

Advising and Counseling – DeSoto Campus

863-784-7040

AdvisingDeSoto@southflorida.edu

Advising and Counseling – Hardee Campus

863-784-7061

AdvisingHardee@southflorida.edu

Advising and Counseling – Lake Placid Center

863-784-7083

AdvisingLakePlacidCenter@southflorida.edu

Applied Sciences Division

863-784-7256

863-784-7424

Zory.Figueroa@southflorida.edu

Michelle.Leidel@southflorida.edu

Arts and Sciences Division

863-784-7329

James.Hawker@southflorida.edu

D2L Brightspace® Support

863-784-7017

D2LBrightspaceSupport@southflorida.edu

Campus Store (Bookstore)

863-784-7112

1383mgr@follett.com

Career Development Center

863-784-7410

SFSCCareerCenter@southflorida.edu

Cashier Services

863-784-7258

CashierServices@southflorida.edu

College Recruiter

863-784-7447

Recruiter@southflorida.edu

Dual Enrollment

863-784-7167

DE@southflorida.edu

Financial Aid

863-784-7134

FinAid@southflorida.edu

GPS New Student Orientation

863-784-7412

SFSCGPSOrientation@southflorida.edu

Health Sciences Division

863-784-7027

863-784-7118

863-784-7225

863-784-7227

HealthSciences@southflorida.edu

Honors Program

863-784-7247

863-784-7331

Jason.Fitzgerald@southflorida.edu

Diana.Fernandez@southflorida.edu

Panther Care Specialist

863-784-7402

Hirell.Bell@southflorida.edu

**Panther Central – Password Reset**

863-784-7405

SFSCPantherCentralSupport@southflorida.edu**Panther PATHways**

863-784-7131

Advising@southflorida.edu**Pete's Pantry (Highlands Campus)**

863-784-7107

SFSCStudentServices@southflorida.edu**Residence Life**

863-784-7127

Housing@southflorida.edu**Security**

863-453-0806

Keith.Loweke@southflorida.edu**Services for Students with Disabilities**

863-784-7176

Disabilities.Specialist@southflorida.edu**Student Assistance/Confidential Counseling**

800-878-5470

BayCareSAP@BayCare.org

Online Student Assistance Program Portal

Student Life

863-784-7435

SFSCStudentLife@southflorida.edu**Student Services, Vice President**

863-784-7107

SFSCStudentServices@southflorida.edu**Testing and Assessment Center**

863-784-7214

Testing@southflorida.edu**Title IX Coordinator**

863-784-7039

TitleIXCoordinator@southflorida.edu**Transcripts**

863-784-7405

RecordsTranscripts@southflorida.edu**Tutoring – Math, Science, and Writing**

863-784-7204 (Math/Science)

863-784-7519 (Writing)

Joshua.Saenz@southflorida.edu (Math/Science)Samia.Mehbub@southflorida.edu (Writing)**Undergraduate Research**

863-784-7329

James.Hawker@southflorida.edu**Veteran School Certifying Official**

863-784-7128

SFSCVeterans@southflorida.edu**Welcome Center Desk**

863-784-7405

Admissions@southflorida.edu