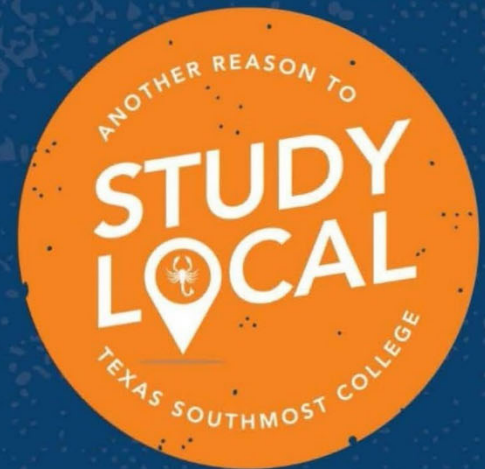


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you decided  
to make  
yourself at  
home.



**STUDENT  
HANDBOOK**  
**2022/23**

## Mission/Vision

### Vision Statement

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

### Mission Statement

Transforming our communities through innovative learning opportunities.

### Role and Scope

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

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

### Values

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

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

## Strategic Goals

In response to the region's challenges, and to achieve this vision and mission, Texas Southmost College has identified five goals for the 2018-2023 Strategic Plan:

- Foster Student Success
- Lead Regional Workforce Development
- Enrich the Student Experiences
- Enhance Community Connections
- Invest in Each Other

## Strategic Priorities

Texas Southmost College's five goals will focus on the following ten (10) priorities:

- Develop a tuition and fee structure to become the best value in the Rio Grande Valley.
- Holistically address the social issues faced by students.
- Strengthen and develop partnerships with business and industry.
- Pursue embedded industry certifications and third-party program accreditations.
- Enhance student engagement outside the classroom.
- Maximize the use of learning technologies (ex: Canvas).
- Hold camps for middle and high school students.
- Develop a focused professional development program for all employees.
- Develop an on boarding program for new faculty and staff.
- Undertake a process optimization effort across lines in the organization.

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## Admissions and Enrollment Information

Texas Southmost College is an open admission institution and welcomes all students to attend.

### Admissions Requirements

<https://www.tsc.edu/admissions-and-records/>

Applicants must complete the admissions application online at ApplyTexas. The application process must be completed by the published application deadline for the term they plan to attend Texas Southmost College for the first time, or after a break in enrollment. A new application is required for any returning/former TSC student who has stopped attending after two (2) long semesters (fall and spring). In addition, a new application is required for anyone who applied, but did not register. Applicants must be 16 years of age by the start of the academic year during which they enroll. Applicants with high school or university transcripts from a foreign institution must submit an official foreign credential evaluation. TSC recommends the following agencies.

Steps to complete admissions requirements include:

Applicants must complete an admissions application online at ApplyTexas.

- Applicants must comply with Texas Success Initiative (TSI) requirements. The Texas Success Initiative is a state-mandated program that promotes academic success by ensuring that all students are prepared for college-level coursework. TSI measures reading, writing, and mathematics skills to determine students' readiness to enroll and perform in freshman-level academic coursework. Students who are required to test will be advised based on the results of their TSI assessment scores. Students will not be denied admission to TSC based on TSI scores or college placement scores; however, all TSC students seeking an Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, Associate of Arts in Teaching, Associate of Applied Sciences, or a Level Two Certificate must take the TSI Assessment. Students enrolling in Level One Certificate programs do not need to take the TSI Assessment. If these students do choose to take the TSI Assessment, they will not be prohibited from enrolling in a program if identified as not college ready.
- Applicants must provide proof of Bacterial Meningitis vaccination. State law requires that entering students show evidence of receiving a bacterial meningitis vaccination or booster dose during the five (5) year period prior to enrollment. The law allows for some exceptions. Further information is available through the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB).
- Applicants must submit proof of Texas State Residency for tuition purposes.
- Applicants must meet with an Academic Advisor if attending college for the first time, transferring with fewer than nine (9) college-level semester hours, or enrolling in college preparatory (developmental education) courses.
- Applicants must meet additional requirements for some admission types.

### Guidelines for Completing the ApplyTexas Application

<https://www.tsc.edu/admissions-and-records/apply-now/>

Potential students must submit an admissions application to ApplyTexas. Completion of the application should take 15-30 minutes. If the application is not completed in a single session, the file may be saved. To complete the ApplyTexas application, students will need their social security number (if applicable) and a valid email address (admission status will be sent to this address). Applications are typically processed within 2-3 business days. Tuition may be determined by residency status based on the answers provided to the core "residency" questions on the ApplyTexas application and residency documentation provided by the student. Students without a social security number should contact the Office of Admissions and Records for assistance. An institutional number will be assigned in its place. Once students have submitted the ApplyTexas application to

## Admissions Check List

[https://www.tsc.edu/assets/documents/departments/admissions\\_and\\_records/enrollment\\_checklist.pdf](https://www.tsc.edu/assets/documents/departments/admissions_and_records/enrollment_checklist.pdf)

Students should have the following information available before beginning the online application:

- Social Security Number. Providing your social security number (SSN) is optional, but it is strongly recommended. Applications and documents without social security numbers are difficult to match, which may result in additional processing time for admissions and financial aid. For questions or concerns, contact the Office of Admissions and Records.
- Name of the county in which you live.
- Email address. Students without email accounts can create them at various free sites such as yahoo.com, gmail.com or hotmail.com.
- Visa/Permanent Resident information to include Permanent Residence Card, issue date, and number.
- Documentation of bacterial meningitis vaccination.
- TSI assessment scores.
- SAT, ACT, and/or TAKS (grade 11) scores and test dates.
- Names and dates of high school(s) and college(s)/university(ies) attended.
- Information about academic standing at previous college(s)/university(ies).

## Reverse Transfer Degree

Students who transfer from Texas Southmost College to another Texas college or university may qualify for an associate degree at TSC. According to Sec. 61.833 of the Texas Education Code, a reverse transfer student must meet the following: 1. Student must have transferred from a public college, state college, or technical institute. 2. Earned at least 30 credit hours for coursework successfully completed at the lower-division institution. 3. Earned a cumulative total of at least 66 credit hours. 4. Give signed authorization and have his/her current transcript sent to the designated lower division institution of higher education for the purpose of determining whether he/she is eligible to receive an associate degree from that institution.

## International Students

All persons seeking admission holding non-permanent visas will be processed as international students. Applicants for F-1 student visas, or F-1 visa students transferring from a high school, college, or university in the United States, must submit a completed International Student Application form. Contact the Office of Admissions and Records for additional information and forms.

All international students must follow the admissions steps outlined under the specific admissions category. International student applicants not completing college-level courses at a United States college or university are required to provide TSI Assessment scores or take the TSI Assessment before the start of the first semester of enrollment. A student who fails any one (1) of three (3) areas (reading, math, or writing) may enroll in some program courses, but may also be required to enroll in college preparatory (developmental education) courses as needed.

For admission, all foreign transcripts must be translated into English by a member of the American Translators Association. Students seeking transfer credit from foreign institutions must submit the official transcript evaluated by a member of the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES). Please note: Some evaluation services require translation from a specific translation service.

### **Admission Appeal Procedures**

Students who fail to meet the admission criteria stated in the TSC current catalog, students on suspension from any institution, and/or any students who wish to challenge an enrollment or registration decision may do so by submitting an appeal to the Enrollment Appeal Committee (EAC) through the Office of Admissions and Records.



## Financial Aid

The Financial Aid Office administers and manages financial assistance programs to benefit eligible students and families who are unable to afford the cost of a college education. The goal of the Financial Aid Office is to help students avail themselves of as many federal, state, private, and institutional financial aid program opportunities as possible. Financial aid comes in three basic types:

- Grants/Scholarships
- Work-study programs
- Loans

Any or all of these may be combined in a financial aid package to help students pay for educational expenses. Generally, scholarships and grants are not repaid. Loans must be repaid, and are therefore, not encouraged unless absolutely necessary as a last resort.

This section describes most available financial aid programs, their requirements, and other pertinent policies and procedures. Not all policies and procedures that the Financial Aid Office is required to follow are listed. Policies listed here are only those deemed most important to students. TSC complies with all state and federal regulations governing administration of student financial aid programs. It is important to note that these policies change unexpectedly as a result of legislative action or U.S. Department of Education interpretation. Therefore, in the event of changes after the editing of this catalog, TSC will comply with the most current regulations and interpretations thereof.

More information is available on the TSC Financial Aid web page, including information about student aid programs, scholarship searches, applying for financial aid, and links to other helpful web pages. In order to better serve you, a Financial Aid Student Handbook is available to assist students.

[https://www.tsc.edu/assets/documents/financialaidforms/fa\\_handbook\\_sop\\_fy20.pdf](https://www.tsc.edu/assets/documents/financialaidforms/fa_handbook_sop_fy20.pdf)

### Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

To determine financial aid eligibility for all federal financial aid programs, the U.S. Department of Education has developed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The state of Texas has also opted to accept the FAFSA and the financial aid methodology it represents to establish financial aid eligibility for state programs. The FAFSA is the first step in the financial aid process and assesses a student's or a family's financial ability to pay for college. Responses to questions on the FAFSA go into a formula established by the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, called the Federal Methodology. The result is a student's Expected Family Contribution (EFC). Colleges use the EFC to determine a student's financial need and their state, federal, or institutional aid eligibility.

### Applying for Financial Aid

<https://www.tsc.edu/financial-aid/federal-grants/>

Students who apply for financial aid at TSC are automatically considered for the following programs:

- Federal Pell Grant
- Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (SEOG)
- Texas Public Education Grant (TPEG)
- Texas Grant I (for renewal students)
- Texas Education Opportunity Grant
- College Work-Study

Students wishing to request a loan may complete a request form for the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program. The application procedures are described below and apply to need-based grants, loans, and work-study employment. TSC scholarship awards are considered a resource when determining eligibility for other financial aid.

Applications for aid will be considered complete when the following has taken place at TSC:

1. The student has been accepted for admission in a program of study leading to a degree or certificate and is making satisfactory academic progress.
2. The student has the following on file at the TSC Financial Aid Office:
  - a. A complete financial aid application. To ensure the application is electronically forwarded, the TSC federal school code (030646) must appear on the FAFSA. In addition, the student's name and social security number recorded at the college must match exactly the name and social security number recorded on the FAFSA.
  - b. If selected for verification, the student must promptly submit all required documents as requested by the TSC Financial Aid Office.

It is essential that the TSC Financial Aid Office always has the student's most current permanent address, phone number, and email address to avoid delays and ensure that important documents are promptly received and processed. Students are encouraged to update contact information as often as necessary by completing the appropriate forms at the Office of Admissions and Records.

## Deadlines for Filing the FAFSA

The U.S. Department of Education publishes general deadlines that apply to the processing of a FAFSA online. A processed FAFSA, however, does not guarantee that an eligible student will receive financial aid. In addition, since funding is limited, grants and scholarships are awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis to students who qualify. Priority deadlines are available on the Academic Calendar.

Completed applications received by the priority date will receive priority consideration of all available funds, subject to each student's eligibility. Students who submit a completed application (including all required documents) by the Processing Guarantee Date will receive information regarding an approved or denied aid award by the first-class day. Completed applications received after the guaranteed date will be processed according to date of completion, but will most likely not be processed by the payment deadline. Students in this situation should be prepared to make payment arrangements with the TSC Cashier's Office in regard to their tuition balance prior to the payment deadline.

## Eligibility Requirements for Student Financial Aid

In general, students are eligible for federal, state, and institutional aid if they meet the following requirements:

- Are enrolled for at least six (6) semester credit hours as a regular student in an eligible program (Less than half-time students may receive a Pell Grant if they are eligible);
- Are a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen. Undocumented students who meet the criteria for Texas residency under HB1403 may qualify for limited state financial aid;
- Show qualifications to obtain a college or career school education by: o Having a high school diploma or a recognized equivalent such as a General Educational Development (GED) certificate; o Completing a

- high school education in a homeschool setting approved under state law; or o Enrolling in an eligible career pathway program and meeting one of the "ability-to benefit" alternatives;
- Are not in default on any student loan or owe a refund to a federal financial aid program;
- Make Satisfactory Academic Progress in a declared course of study. All students must be familiar with the TSC Satisfactory Academic Progress policy;
- Have financial need as determined by the federal need analysis methodology and institutional guidelines; and
- Have not been convicted of a felony or crime involving a controlled substance.

### Notification of Financial Aid Awards

Financial aid award notifications can be found on the student's personal page via TSC Online. The Financial Aid Office does not mail written notifications. Instead, students are contacted via email at the personal email address provided on the FAFSA, and at the one assigned by TSC to check their financial aid status online. Students will be sent email notices whenever there are changes to their financial aid package due to changes regarding their eligibility, enrollment status, or award information. Students can view each source of aid and amount that they have been awarded via TSC Online. The Financial Aid Office can assist students in navigating the web page or provide written instructions.

Most awards are automatically accepted for students unless otherwise instructed. Any financial aid recipients who register for classes and then do not intend to stay enrolled must officially drop their classes to avoid future aid from being disbursed. To avoid possible repayment of financial aid funds, 56 students should drop courses at least ten (10) days prior to the first day of classes. For information regarding the dropping of classes, see the Adds, Drops, and Withdrawals section in this catalog.

### Financial Aid Suspension

Students in Financial Aid Warning status who fail to meet SAP requirements for the next semester will not be eligible to receive financial aid and will be placed in Financial Aid Suspension. These students are sent a financial aid suspension notice and can continue to enroll but at their own expense.

### Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

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

- Grade Point Average— The qualitative measure requires undergraduate students working towards a certificate or an associate degree to maintain a minimum cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.000. This includes grades earned for developmental, dual enrollment and/or transfer coursework.
- Completion Rate— The quantitative measure requires undergraduate students maintain a cumulative completion rate of 67% of the attempted coursework (including developmental, dual enrollment and/or transfer hours accepted by TSC). This percentage is determined by dividing the number of hours completed by the total number of hours attempted. Attempted hours are the total number of hours completed plus hours of "W", "I", "F" (as well as repeated coursework);
- Standard rounding rules will be applied for this calculation, (66.5=67% and 66.4=66%). The Effective date is August 1, 2020.
- Timeframe to Complete Academic Program— This measure limits the number of credit hours attempted in the pursuit of an undergraduate certificate or a degree. The maximum attempted hours are 150% of the credits required to complete the students' program of study. For the purposes of obtaining an associate degree at TSC requiring 60 credit hours, the maximum is typically 90 credit

hours, including developmental, dual enrollment and/or transfer coursework. Students contemplating degree plan changes should consider the ability to complete a new plan with the maximum allowable limits.

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

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

The information below describes each status in more detail:

#### GOOD STANDING

Students are considered to be in Good Standing with Financial Aid if they meet all three (3) standards of progress outlined above. These students may participate in any financial aid programs provided they meet all other eligibility criteria, subject to availability of funds.

#### WARNING STATUS

Students who fail to meet the grade point average requirement, the completion rate requirement, or attempt 85% or more of the 1.5 times the minimum number of credits required for a degree program, will be placed in Financial Aid Warning Status for the following semester. Students will be notified via e-mail of their warning status.

#### FINANCIAL AID SUSPENSION

Students in Financial Aid Warning status who fail to meet SAP requirements for the next semester will not be eligible to receive financial aid and will be placed in Financial Aid Suspension. These students are sent a financial aid suspension notice and can continue to enroll but at their own expense.

### **Financial Aid Appeal Process**

Students may appeal their suspension status. The appeal should include a personal statement (with appropriate documentation) detailing the circumstances that resulted in their failure to meet the required standards and a plan detailing actions the student will take to achieve and maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress. Those who have been suspended due to timeframe must submit a declared degree plan, signed by an academic advisor, clearly showing courses earned towards the program, courses still needed, and the anticipated graduation date. Appeal Packets, complete with forms and instructions, are available in the Financial Aid Office and online. Completed appeal packets must be submitted to the TSC Financial Aid Office.

If the appeal is approved, the student will be placed in Financial Aid Probation and eligibility is reinstated subject to program requirements. Progress is reviewed at the end of the semester to make sure that the student is meeting the standards and following the degree plan. Failure in either of these criteria will again result in financial aid suspension.

If the appeal is denied, no financial aid of any kind may be awarded. Students can continue to enroll but at their own expense. A re-appeal is acceptable after students have completed at least one (1) semester (preferably 2 semesters) and believe they can make a case for getting back on track academically.

#### Withdrawing from College and Returning Financial Aid Funds

It is important that students know the census date for each semester or session. Although students may be awarded aid based on the number of hours they register for at the start of the semester, financial aid will be recalculated on the basis of the number of hours in which they are still enrolled by the census date(s). For example, students who are initially awarded as full-time (12 credit hours) will have their financial aid award adjusted to half-time if they have dropped to 6 credit hours by the census date(s) that applies to the student. For some aid programs this means that the student has to pay back half of the aid received.

Financial aid awards will also be recalculated and adjusted if the student is reported by faculty as not attending a single class day (No Show) by the census date(s) of the class.

A drop in enrollment (but not 100% withdrawal) after the census date(s) will not impact the amount of aid received with two (2) exceptions:

- Loans cannot be disbursed at any time in the semester when a student is enrolled in less than six (6) hours. All enrollment adjustments (drops and adds) must be complete as of the end of business on the semester census date. Pell grant amounts may be adjusted after a census date depending on the student's program.
- When students withdraw 100% from TSC, federal regulations require all schools to pro-rate the amount of financial aid that they have earned based on the percentage of the semester that they have attended classes. The regulations require that such a percentage be calculated up until the 60% mark of the semester. Since in most cases students are disbursed 100% of their financial aid under the assumption that they will stay in school the entire semester, withdrawing before the 60% mark means they will have to pay back a portion of their financial aid. Failure to repay these funds results in Financial Aid holds that prevent future registration at any college or university.

Return of Title IV Fund Order:

- Federal Unsubsidized Loans/Direct Loans
- Federal Subsidized Loans/Direct Loans
- Federal PLUS Loans/Direct PLUS Loans or Grad PLUS Loans
- Federal Pell Grant
- Federal Supplemental Opportunity Grant (SEOG)
- Federal Iraqi and Afghanistan Service Grant

If a student withdraws before financial aid is disbursed, financial aid amounts will be pro-rated according to federal regulations.

State, local, and institutional grants, loans, and scholarships are also subject to evaluation to assess impact of changes in enrollment status.

## State and Federal Grants

Federal Pell Grant Awards to eligible students are determined through the use of a payment schedule published annually by the U.S. Department of Education. Award amounts vary according to the:

- Educational costs at the institution (the cost of attendance);
- Student's enrollment status;
- Annual appropriations and award maximums set by Congress; and
- Expected Family Contribution on the student's Student Aid Report.

Pell grant funds are awarded once per semester, and summer awards are made if the student's annual eligibility has not been exhausted during the fall and spring semesters.

Starting with the 2017-2018 academic year, the year-round Pell grant will be available. Students who come full time during fall and spring semesters might be eligible for an additional Pell grant during summer sessions as long as they enroll for at least half-time. Students must contact the Financial Aid Office for eligibility.

#### Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG)

This program provides grants from \$200 to \$1,000 to undergraduate students with a zero (0) Expected Family Contribution who are working toward a degree or certificate in an eligible program.

#### Texas Public Educational Grant (TPEG)

Texas Public Educational Grants (TPEG) assist undergraduate students who demonstrate financial need as determined by the Financial Aid Office. The amount of the award is based on need and availability of funds. Students must be undergraduates who are Texas residents, non-resident students, or foreign students.

#### Towards Excellence Access and Success Grant (TEXAS Grant)

TEXAS Grant awards are available only for renewal students, based upon criteria set by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. In addition, students must meet the following renewal criteria:

- Have not earned an Associate or Baccalaureate Degree;
- Meet the college's Satisfactory Academic Progress policy (See the Satisfactory Academic Progress policy in this catalog);
- Complete at least twenty-four (24) semester credit hours in the most recently completed academic year;
- Maintain a 2.5 GPA or higher; and
- Receive a TEXAS Grant for no more than ninety (90) attempted semester credit hours.

#### Texas Educational Opportunity Grant (TEOG)

The TEOG Program pays tuition for students who meet the following program criteria:

- Are registered with Selective Service, or are exempt;
- Have a nine-month EFC of no more than \$5,430;
- Are classified by the institution as a Texas Resident;
- Have not been convicted of a felony or crime involving a controlled substance;
- Are not concurrently receiving a renewal Texas Grant; and
- Are enrolled at least half-time and awarded in the first 30 hours (or its equivalent) of an associate degree or certificate program (excluding credits for dual enrollment or by examination).

Awards can be renewed based on criteria set by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. In addition to the above requirements, students must meet the following renewal criteria:

- Not have earned an Associate or Baccalaureate Degree;
- Maintained a 75% course completion rate in the most recent academic year;
- Maintained a 2.5 GPA or better; and
- Received a TEOG for no more than seventy-five (75) attempted semester credit hours.

## Student Loan Programs

William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program TSC provides loan funds directly from the Federal Government under the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program.

To receive a Direct Loan, all students must complete the following requirements available online:

- Review and accept loan offer via TSC Online;
- Complete loan entrance counseling; and
- Complete a new Electronic Master Promissory Note (eMPN). Direct Student Loan Programs (Subsidized and Unsubsidized) Direct Student Loans are low-interest student loans certified by TSC and guaranteed by the federal government.

For subsidized loans, the federal government pays the interest while the student is enrolled at least half-time. Unsubsidized loans, on the other hand, require students to make interest payments or to agree to capitalize the interest, which is deferred but becomes part of the principle. Dependent students may borrow subsidized loans up to \$3,500 during their grade level one (1) year and up to \$4,500 in grade level two in addition to \$2,000 of unsubsidized loans each year. Independent students can borrow up to the same level of subsidized amounts per grade level, and an additional \$6,000 in unsubsidized loans per year. Because subsidized loans are based on financial need, the Financial Aid Office establishes the amount students are eligible to borrow. Students must complete a counseling session concerning the loan, repayment of which begins six (6) months after the student leaves school or drops below half-time status.

There is a limit to the maximum period of time (measured in academic years) students, who are borrowing subsidized loan for the first-time starting July 2013, can receive Direct Subsidized Loans. In general, students may not receive Direct Subsidized Loans for more than 150% of the published length of the program of study. This is called the "maximum eligibility period." For example, if a student enrolls in a two-year associate degree program, the maximum period for which the student can receive Direct Subsidized Loans is three years (150% of 2 years = 3 years). If a student enrolls in a one-year certificate degree program, the maximum period for which the student can receive Direct Subsidized Loans is 1.5 years (150% of 1 year = 1.5 years).

The maximum eligibility period is based on the published length of the student's current program of study. This means that the maximum eligibility period can change if a student changes programs. In addition, if a student received Direct Subsidized Loans for one program and then changes to another program, the Direct Subsidized Loans received for the earlier program will generally count against the new maximum eligibility period.

#### Federal Direct PLUS Loans Program

The PLUS Program allows parents to borrow up to the cost of education for each dependent enrolled in college at least half time. Repayment for parent borrowers begins sixty (60) days after disbursement of the entire loan amount. The PLUS loan amount, together with all other financial aid, may not total more than the student's Cost of Attendance.

#### Consolidation Loan Program

Consolidation Loans may be arranged to combine loans made to a student under Title IV programs. These loans provide repayment periods appropriate for the total amount outstanding. For example, a student whose total loan debt exceeds \$7,500 may be given a repayment period longer than ten (10) years. Repayment of a Consolidation Loan must begin within sixty (60) days after the selected loans have been consolidated. Students must contact their lenders to find out if they qualify for a Consolidation Loan.

### **Federal and State Work-Study Program**

The Federal and State Work-Study Program provides a job for undergraduate students enrolled at least half-time who demonstrate financial need to help pay for their educational expenses. The hourly pay rate is typically above the current federal minimum wage. The amount of Work-Study awarded depends on a student's financial

need, availability of funding, and the amount of other aid the student receives. Students may not work more than nineteen (19) hours per week. Work-Study students are paid twice (2) per month.

The State Work-Study program requires applicants to be Texas residents attending a public or non-profit independent college in Texas. The state program further requires that students be enrolled at least half-time and not be on an athletic scholarship or enrolled in a seminary or other program leading to ordination or licensure to preach.



## Student Services

### Career and Employment

<https://www.tsc.edu/office-of-student-life/career-and-employment/>

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

#### Career Planning

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

#### Job Readiness

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

### Counseling Center

<https://www.tsc.edu/office-of-student-life/counseling-and-psychological-services/>

Many students face life challenges that can make accomplishing their academic goals difficult. The Counseling Center is available to assist with those challenges by encouraging personal and academic growth to help each student successfully meet life's challenges. Enrolled students are eligible for personal counseling services at no fee. The Counseling Center respects the confidential nature of discussions to the limits provided by law. No record of a student's visit is made on any academic file.

### Student Accessibility Resources

<https://www.tsc.edu/office-of-student-life/counseling-and-student-accessibility-resources/>

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

Support services include:

- Testing accommodations for placement testing and academic tests;
- Adaptive technology such as: screen magnification, speech synthesized software, voice activated software, hearing amplification systems (FM systems), and more;
- Adaptive furniture;
- Readers, scribes (writers), and sign language interpreters;
- Campus and community referrals; and
- Other appropriate academic modifications and disability-related information.

Individuals need to be eligible for accommodation services before the services will be approved and provided.

To become eligible, an individual will need to:

- Complete a Request for Services form.

- Provide current documentation for the disability for which services are requested. Documentation must be from a competent and qualified source capable of making that diagnosis within their profession.
- Arrange an intake appointment with Disability Support Services. Be prepared to spend at least one hour to meet with a counselor and complete the initial intake appointment.
- The counselor will determine if the student meets the criteria to receive accommodations, and if so, what accommodations are appropriate.

Approved accommodation services may be provided each semester if the eligible student informs Student Accessibility Resources that services are needed for the current term. Requests to continue approved services must be in writing. Hand-written notes or e-mail requests to Student Accessibility Resources are not acceptable.

## Student Activities

<https://www.tsc.edu/office-of-student-life/student-activities/>

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

### Student Organizations

<https://www.tsc.edu/office-of-student-life/student-activities/student-organizations/>

Student organizations assist students in developing a connection and commitment to Texas Southmost College while promoting leadership development, self-confidence and effective group participation. Student organizations provide students with the opportunity to supplement classroom work with activities that meet personal needs for recognition, growth, companionship, civic involvement and creative effort.

### Student Government Association

<https://www.tsc.edu/office-of-student-life/student-government-association/>

The Student Government Association provides a forum for free and open discussion of matters affecting students at Texas Southmost College. The Student Government Association promotes the general welfare of the student body by serving as an advocate for student issues and presenting the student perspective to campus administration, faculty, and college committees

### Campus Activity Board

<https://www.tsc.edu/office-of-student-life/student-activities/campus-activities-board/>

The Campus Activity Board fosters development of students by encouraging active participation in college-sponsored events. CAB students assist the Office of Student Life in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of programs and activities for the Texas Southmost College campus community.

#### Student Leadership Academy

<https://www.tsc.edu/office-of-student-life/student-activities/student-leadership-academy/>

The Student Leadership Academy assists students in developing leadership and interpersonal skills through a series of workshops that emphasize team effectiveness, time management and conflict resolution. Students have the opportunity to facilitate and participate in a variety of community service projects, while networking with local leaders. Through this experience, students will strengthen their resume and become leaders on campus and within the community.

#### Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society

Phi Theta Kappa is an honor society that was founded in 1918. The society serves colleges across the globe with over 1,300 chapters. Phi Theta Kappa cites its mission is to “recognize academic achievement of college students and to provide opportunities for them to grow as scholars and leaders”. Members of the society are exposed to various leadership opportunities and development opportunities. The local chapter is currently overseen by Dr. Celia Flores – Feist. For more information, contact chapter advisor Dr. Celia Flores-Feist at [celia.flores@tsc.edu](mailto:celia.flores@tsc.edu) or (956)295-3544.

### **Veteran Success Center**

<https://www.tsc.edu/financial-aid/veterans-success-center/>

Texas Southmost College welcomes all veterans and their families. TSC is committed to maintaining an environment of academic success and professional development for all of its students. TSC thanks our Veteran students for their service to our country and we hope to provide a level of service and atmosphere that conveys our appreciation. The mission of the Veteran's Office is to: (a) support veterans and family members by providing resources to facilitate the transition from military to academic life and (b) provide an environment where veterans can gather to share experiences and support one another through the educational process.

TSC is approved to educate and train service members, veterans, and their eligible dependents through U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) Education Benefit Programs as well as the Texas Hazlewood Act Exemption regulated by the Texas Veterans Commission. Students providing a certificate of eligibility for entitlement to educational assistance under Chapter 31 (Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment) or Chapter 33 (Post 9/11) will NOT be imposed any penalty, be denied access to TSC facilities, or be required to pay tuition and fee charges (based on entitlement percentage) as long as the student:

- Provides the certificate of eligibility for entitlement to educational assistance no later than the first day of class, and
- Submits a Request for Certification form available in the office located in Oliveira Building or on the website at: <https://www.tsc.edu/financial-aid/veterans-success-center/forms/>

### **Intramural and Recreational Sports**

<https://www.tsc.edu/recreation-center/intramurals-and-club-sports/>

Intramural and Recreational Sports provides opportunities for individuals to engage in recreational sports and activities in a supportive and safe environment that enhances personal development, increases physical and mental health and encourages social interaction. Programs and services are designed to be responsive to the needs of students, and to educate participants on practices associated with physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being and the development of lifetime patterns for healthful living and positive use of leisure time. Intramural and Recreational Sports offers opportunities for students to participate in basketball, volleyball, flag football, chess, table tennis, softball, racquetball, weightlifting, aerobic and fitness classes, and soccer.

## Recreation Center

<https://www.tsc.edu/recreation-center/>

The Recreation Center provides quality programs, facilities and services in a safe environment, that promote a sense of community and encourage the pursuit of a healthy lifestyle to a diverse student population. The Recreation Center is equipped with state-of-the-art fitness equipment on two floors and features an indoor track, a large free-weight area, martial arts room, three full-sized basketball courts, locker rooms, and an outdoor swimming pool. The Recreation Center is located at 2000 W. University Blvd.

## Childcare and Children on Campus

The TSC Raul J. Guerra Early Childhood Center is an educational lab facility for the Division of Health Care, Career and Technical Education (HCCTE) at Texas Southmost College. It provides quality care to 232 children, infants and preschool. The lab school was established in the early 1970's as a campus lab school for the Child Development program. The facility has been in continuous operation for over 30 years and has been licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services since 1982. The TSC Raul J. Guerra Early Childhood Center is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and meets the criteria set by the Workforce Solution Cameron, Child Care Management, Texas Rising Star (TRS) Program to be rated as a four-star facility. The Texas School Ready Certification System (TSRCS) has recognized the centers' preschool classrooms as Texas School Ready!

The center serves as a teaching and training laboratory for students in the Child Care and Development (CDEC) Program as well other programs within the division. Students are able to utilize the laboratories to observe and participate in developmentally age-appropriate activities. The lab school operates year-round and provides settings for co-ops, internships, and clinical opportunities. The lab serves as a resource and training site for Early Childhood programs in our region.

Texas Southmost College Child Development Academic Program requires that all child development students enrolling in a child development laboratory course obtain a criminal background check, affidavit, and TB test at their own expense. Students must fill out and submit a Background Student Information Form along with Background Check Consent Form to the Raul J. Guerra Child Development Center or call 956- 95-3701 or 956-295-3702 for more information.

## The Office of Civility

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

The Office of Civility staff will explain and clarify College policies and procedures while encouraging complainants to follow the approved policies and procedures. The Office of Civility staff may conduct informal fact-finding interviews when appropriate.

The Office of Civility is located within the Office of the Vice President of Student Services.

### Student Appeal of Course Grades

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

The following guidelines may apply:

1. The burden of proof lies with the Student and it is the student's responsibility to provide evidence the grade should be changed. Unless the student demonstrates compelling evidence supporting a change of grade, the final grade issued by the faculty member responsible for the course will remain on the student's transcript.
2. No appeals will be accepted with the desired resolution being anything other than a change of grade. Complaints must follow Texas Southmost College complaint procedures.
3. Students who file frivolous appeals or who deviate from the approved process may have their appeal summarily dismissed.
4. Students must submit appeals individually; group appeals will not be considered.
5. If the student fails to comply with the designated time frame, the appeal may be summarily dismissed.
  - a. Only under conditions warranting exception will the time constraint for initiating the grade appeal process be extended. Exceptions might include unexpected call to military service, extreme health issues and severe life disruption.
  - b. Requests for an exception to the time constraint require verifiable documentation and must be submitted in writing to the appropriate individual, as designated by the step in the process for which the student failed to meet the required deadline. This individual will grant or deny the exception.

Grade appeal procedures are as follows:

#### STEP 1

It is the responsibility of the student to initiate the grade appeal process by contacting the faculty member responsible for the course, no later than 30 calendar days after the end of the semester (final class day or last day of final exams, whichever is later) in which the grade was issued. If the student fails to comply with the designated time frame, the appeal may be summarily dismissed.

1. The student is required to provide notice to the faculty member that they are appealing their grade, using the approved Texas Southmost College "Student Appeal of Course Grade" form. Grade appeals submitted without using the approved form will not be considered.
2. The faculty member is required to meet with the appealing student. The faculty member may approve the appeal, deny the appeal, or work with the student to reach a solution that is agreeable to both parties.

- a. If the faculty member is no longer employed at Texas Southmost College, the student will advance to Step 2 of the grade appeal process.
- b. If the faculty member is still employed at Texas Southmost College, but not currently teaching, the grade appeal will be delayed until the faculty member returns to teach, as long as the faculty member returns no later than the next full (fall or spring) semester.
- c. Once a decision is reached by the faculty member, the faculty member will note the decision on the "Student Appeal of Course Grade" form and sign the form. The faculty member will retain a copy, and the original will be returned to the student.

#### STEP 2

It is the responsibility of the student to advance their appeal to Step 2 of the grade appeal process by contacting the appropriate Program Director, no later than 10 calendar days following their meeting with the faculty member, as documented on the "Student Appeal of Course Grade" form. If the academic program does not have a Program Director, the student will advance to Step 3 of the appeal process.

1. The student is required to provide notice to the Program Director that they are appealing their grade, using the approved Texas Southmost College "Student Appeal of Course Grade" form, signed by the faculty member.
2. The student must also submit a written appeal, along with all supporting documentation, to the Program Director. The appeal must be in English and typed using size 12 Times New Roman or Arial font.
3. The Program Director will consult with the faculty member responsible for the course, and then meet with the student to review the response from the faculty member with the student.
  - a. The Program Director cannot initiate a change of grade or offer a solution to the student without consent from the faculty member, unless the faculty member is no longer employed at Texas Southmost College.
  - b. The Program Director will note the decision on the "Student Appeal of Course Grade" form and sign the form. The Program Director will retain a copy, and the original will be returned to the student.
4. If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of their meeting with the Program Director, the student will have 10 calendar days from the date of the meeting with the Program Director, as documented on the "Student Appeal of Course Grade" form, to proceed to Step 3 of the appeal process. If the student fails to comply with the designated time frame, the appeal may be summarily dismissed.

#### STEP 3

It is the responsibility of the student to advance their appeal to Step 3 of the grade appeal process by submitting a written appeal to the appropriate academic Dean, no later than 10 calendar days following their meeting with the Program Director (or faculty member, if the program does not have a Program Director), as documented on the "Student Appeal of Course Grade" form.

1. The student is required to provide notice to the academic Dean that they are appealing their grade, using the approved Texas Southmost College "Student Appeal of Course Grade" form, signed by the faculty member and Program Director (if applicable).
2. The student must also submit a written appeal, along with all supporting documentation, to the academic Dean. The appeal must be in English and typed using size 12 Times New Roman or Arial font.
3. The academic Dean will consult with the faculty member and Program Director (if applicable), and then meet with the student.
  - a. The academic Dean cannot initiate a change of grade or offer a solution to the student without consent from the faculty member, unless the faculty member is no longer employed at Texas Southmost College.

- b. The academic Dean will note the decision on the "Student Appeal of Course Grade" form and sign the form. The academic dean will retain a copy, and the original will be returned to the student.
- 4. The Grade Appeal Committee's responsibility will be:
  - a. To review the student's written appeal and evidence.
  - b. To hear testimony from the student and faculty member to corroborate documentary evidence.
  - c. To inform the student, faculty member, academic Dean, and Program Director of their decision. The Grade Appeal Committee may initiate a grade change or offer a solution to the student without consent from the academic Dean, faculty member, or Program Director.

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

### Student Appeal of Course Grade Form

For assistance, please contact The Office of Civility.  
[armando.ponce@tsc.edu](mailto:armando.ponce@tsc.edu) or 956-295-3409

STUDENT to complete this section:

Student Name: _____	ID Number: _____
Course: _____	Semester: _____
I have read and agree to abide by the Texas Southmost College grade appeal procedures:	
Student _____	Date: _____
Signature: _____	

FACULTY member to complete this section:

The student has met with me regarding their grade appeal and:  The student and I have reached an agreed solution:
The student, faculty member, and I were unable to agree on a solution:
Faculty Signature: _____
Date: _____

PROGRAM DIRECTOR (if applicable) to complete this section:

The student has met with me regarding their grade appeal and: The student, faculty member and I have reached an agreed solution:
The student, faculty member, and I were unable to agree on a solution.
Program Director Signature: _____
Date: _____

ACADEMIC DEAN to complete this section:

The student has met with me regarding their grade appeal and: The student, Program Director, faculty member and I have reached an agreed solution:
The student, Program Director, faculty member, and I were unable to agree on a solution.
Academic Dean Signature: _____
Date: _____



## Student Complaints

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The College District encourages students to discuss their concerns with the appropriate instructor or other campus administrator who has the authority to address the concerns.

### INFORMAL PROCESS

Concerns should be expressed as soon as possible to allow early resolution at the lowest possible administrative level.

### FORMAL PROCESS

If an informal conference regarding a complaint fails to reach the outcome requested by the student, the student may initiate the formal process described below by timely filing a written complaint form.

Even after initiating the formal complaint process, students are encouraged to seek informal resolution of their concerns. A student whose concerns are resolved may withdraw a formal complaint at any time.

The process described in this policy shall not be construed to create new or additional rights beyond those granted by law or Board policy, nor to require a full evidentiary hearing or “mini-trial” at any level.

### FREEDOM FROM RETALIATION

Neither the Board nor any College District employee shall unlawfully retaliate against any student for bringing a concern or complaint.

### NOTICE TO STUDENTS

The College District shall inform students of this policy.

### COMPLAINTS

In this policy, the terms “complaint” and “grievance” shall have the same meaning. This policy shall apply to all student complaints, except as provided below.

### EXCEPTIONS

This policy shall not apply to:

- Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment based on race, color, gender, national origin, disability, or religion. [See Board Policy FFDA and FFD]
- Complaints concerning retaliation relating to discrimination and harassment. [See Board Policy FFDA and FFD]
- Complaints concerning disciplinary decisions. [See Board Policy FMA]
- Complaints concerning a commissioned peace officer who is an employee of the College District. [See Board Policy CHA]

### GENERAL PROVISIONS:

#### FILING

Complaint forms and appeal notices may be filed by hand-delivery, electronic communication, including e-mail and fax, or U.S. Mail. Hand-delivered filings shall be timely filed if received by the appropriate administrator or designee by the close of business on the deadline. Filings submitted by electronic communication shall be timely filed if they are received by the close of business on the deadline, as indicated by the date/time shown on the electronic communication. Mail filings shall be timely filed if they are post-marked by U.S. Mail on or before the

deadline and received by the appropriate administrator or designated representative no more than three days after the deadline.

#### RESPONSE

At Levels One, Two, and Three, "response" shall mean a written communication to the student from the appropriate administrator. Responses may be hand-delivered or sent by U.S. Mail to the student's mailing address of record. Mailed responses shall be timely if they are postmarked by U.S. Mail on or before the deadline.

#### DAYS

"Days" shall mean College District business days. In calculating time lines under this policy, the day a document is filed is "day zero." The following day is "day one."

#### REPRESENTATIVE

"Representative" shall mean any person who or organization that is designated by the student to represent the student in the complaint process.

The student may designate a representative through written notice to the College District at any level of this process. If the student designates a representative with fewer than three days' notice to the College District before a scheduled conference or hearing, the College District may reschedule the conference or hearing to a later date, if desired, in order to include the College District's counsel. The College District may be represented by counsel at any level of the process.

#### CONSOLIDATING COMPLAINTS

Complaints arising out of an event, or a series of related events shall be addressed in one complaint. A student shall not bring separate or serial complaints arising from any event or series of events that have been or could have been addressed in a previous complaint.

#### UNTIMELY FILINGS

All time limits shall be strictly followed unless modified by mutual written consent.

If a complaint form or appeal notice is not timely filed, the complaint may be dismissed, on written notice to the student, at any point during the complaint process. The student may appeal the dismissal by seeking review in writing within ten days from the date of the written dismissal notice, starting at the level at which the complaint was dismissed. Such appeal shall be limited to the issue of timeliness.

#### COSTS INCURRED

Each party shall pay its own costs incurred in the course of the complaint.

#### COMPLAINT FORM

Complaints under this policy shall be submitted in writing on a form provided by the College District.

Copies of any documents that support the complaint should be attached to the complaint form. If the student does not have copies of these documents, copies may be presented at the Level One conference. After the Level One conference, no new documents may be submitted by the student unless the student did not know the documents existed before the Level One conference.

A complaint form that is incomplete in any material aspect may be dismissed but may be refiled with all the required information if the refiled is within the designated time for filing a complaint.

#### LEVEL ONE

Complaint forms must be filed:

- Within 15 days of the date the student first knew, or with reasonable diligence should have known, of the decision or action giving rise to the complaint or grievance; and
- With the lowest level administrator who has the authority to remedy the alleged problem.

In most circumstances, students shall file Level One complaints with the Department Chairman or Student Services Counselor. The complaint, however, may begin at the first level at which the administrator has the authority to remedy the complaint.

If the complaint is not filed with the appropriate administrator, the receiving administrator must note the date and time the complaint form was received and immediately forward the complaint form to the College District's The Office of Civility so that it may forward the form to the appropriate administrator.

The appropriate administrator shall investigate as necessary and hold a conference with the student within ten days after receipt of the written complaint. The administrator may set reasonable time limits for the conference.

The administrator shall provide the student a written response within ten days following the conference. The written response shall set forth the basis of the decision. In reaching a decision, the administrator may consider information provided at the Level One conference and any relevant documents or information the administrator believes will help resolve the complaint.

#### LEVEL TWO

If the student did not receive the relief requested at Level One or if the time for a response has expired, the student may request a conference with the appropriate Vice President to appeal the Level One decision.

The appeal notice must be filed in writing, on a form provided by the College District, within ten days of the date of the written Level One response or, if no response was received, within ten days of the Level One response deadline.

After receiving notice of the appeal, the Level One administrator shall prepare and forward a record of the Level One complaint to the Level Two administrator. The student may request a copy of the Level One record which shall include:

- The original complaint form and any attachments;
- All other documents submitted by the student at Level One; and
- The written response issued at Level One and any attachments.

#### LEVEL THREE

- If the student did not receive the relief requested at Level Two, the student may request a conference with the College President within five days after the written response by the appropriate Vice President. The College President shall review the grievance for matters of policy and procedure only.
- For more information regarding complaints, please contact The Office of Civility at [conflictresolution@tsc.edu](mailto:conflictresolution@tsc.edu), or by phone at 956-295-3409.

## Student Rights and Responsibilities

Texas Southmost College encourages the intellectual, personal, social and ethical development of members of the College community in an open and supportive environment that promotes honesty, integrity and respect for the rights of all individuals. Students at Texas Southmost College are encouraged to exercise personal responsibility and self-discipline as they engage in the rigors of discovery and scholarship. Texas Southmost College assumes that each student has an earnest educational purpose and possesses a level of maturity necessary to assume obligations of performance and behavior reasonably imposed by the College relevant to its lawful missions, processes, and functions.

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

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

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

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

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

### Classroom Expectations

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

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

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

- Course name and meeting times
- Name of instructor and their contact information
- Expectations for behavior
- Attendance policies

- Required texts and topics and chapters covered
- Test dates and other relevant dates
- Grading policy

## Student Discipline in the Classroom

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

### Step 1

Upon the first occurrence, the course instructor will:

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

### Step 2

Upon the second occurrence, the course instructor may:

- Withdraw the student from class and assign a grade of "W" or "F."
- Document the situation and the conversation with the student.
- Notify The Office of Civility. The Office of Civility may impose additional sanctions, up to and including suspension or expulsion from the College.

### Appeal Process

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

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

## Student Code of Conduct

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

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

The Office of the Vice President of Student Services or designee has primary authority and responsibility for the administration of student discipline.

### PREAMBLE

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

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

### ARTICLE I: DEFINITIONS

1. The term "College" means Texas Southmost College.
2. The term "student" shall mean one who is currently enrolled in the College District. These policies and regulations shall also apply to any prospective or former student who has been accepted for admission or readmission to any component institution while he or she is on the premises of any component institution. This Student Code of Conduct applies at all locations of the College.
3. The term "faculty" or "faculty member" means any person hired by the College to conduct classroom or teaching activities or who is otherwise considered by the College to be a member of its faculty.
4. The term "College official" includes any person employed by the College, performing assigned administrative or professional responsibilities.
5. The term "member of the College community" includes any person who is a student, faculty member, College official or any other person employed by the College. A person's status in a particular situation shall be determined by the Vice President of Student Services.
6. The term "premises" of the College District is defined as all real property over which the College District has possession and control (including adjacent streets and sidewalks).

7. The term “organization” means any number of persons who have complied with the formal requirements for College recognition.
8. The term “Student Conduct Board” means any person or persons authorized by the Vice President of Student Services to determine whether a student has violated the Student Code of Conduct and to recommend sanctions that may be imposed when a rules violation has been committed.
9. The term “Executive Director of Student Life and Civility” means a College official authorized on a case-by-case basis by the Vice President of Student Services to impose sanctions upon any student(s) found to have violated the Student Code of Conduct. The Vice President of Student Services may authorize the Executive Director of Student Life and Civility to serve simultaneously as an Executive Director of Student Life and Civility and the sole member or one of the members of the Student Conduct Board. The Vice President of Student Services may authorize the same Executive Director of Student Life and Civility to impose sanctions in all cases.
10. The term “Appellate Board” means any person or persons authorized by the Vice President of Student Services to consider an appeal from a Student Conduct Board’s determination as to whether a student has violated the Student Code of Conduct or from the sanctions imposed by the Executive Director of Student Life and Civility.
11. The term “shall” is used in the imperative sense.
12. The term “may” is used in the permissive sense.
13. The Vice President of Student Services is that person designated by the College President to be responsible for the administration of the Student Code of Conduct.
14. The term “policy” means the written regulations of the College as found in, but not limited to, the College Policy Manual, Student Code of Conduct, Student Handbook, the College web page, the College computer use policy, and the College Catalog.
15. Cheating shall include, but shall not be limited to:
  - a. Copying from another student’s test or class work;
  - b. Using test materials not authorized by the person administering the test;
  - c. Collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test without permission from the test administrator;
  - d. Knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, or soliciting, in whole or in part, the contents of an unadministered test, paper, or another assignment;
  - e. The unauthorized transporting or removal, in whole or in part, of the contents of the unadministered test;
  - f. Substituting for another student, or permitting another student to substitute for one’s self, to take a test;
  - g. Bribing another person to obtain an unadministered test or information about an unadministered test; or
  - h. Manipulating a test, assignment, or final course grades.
16. The term “plagiarism” shall be defined as the appropriating, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another’s work and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of it in one’s own written work.

17. The term “Accused Student” means any student accused of violating this Student Code of Conduct.
18. The term “Complainant” means any person who submits a charge alleging that a student violated this Student Code of Conduct. When a student believes that he/she has been a victim of another student’s misconduct, the student who believes he/she has been a victim will have the same rights under this Student Code of Conduct as are provided to the Accused Student, even if another member of the College community submitted the charge itself.
19. The term “Collusion” shall be defined as the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work for fulfillment of course requirements.
20. Disorderly conduct” shall include any of the following activities occurring on premises owned or controlled by the College District:
  - a. Behavior of a boisterous and tumultuous character such that there is a clear and present danger of alarming persons where no legitimate reason for alarm exists.
  - b. Interference with the peaceful and lawful conduct of persons under circumstances in which there is reason to believe that such conduct will cause or provoke a disturbance.
  - c. Violent and forceful behavior at any time such that there is a clear and present danger that free movement of other persons will be impaired.
  - d. Behavior involving personal abuse or assault when such behavior creates a clear and present danger of causing assaults or fights.
  - e. Violent, abusive, indecent, profane, boisterous, unreasonably loud, or otherwise disorderly conduct under circumstances in which there is reason to believe that such conduct will cause or provoke a disturbance.
  - f. Willful and malicious behavior that interrupts the speaker of any lawful assembly or impairs the lawful right of others to participate effectively in such assembly or meeting when there is reason to believe that such conduct will cause or provoke a disturbance.
  - g. Willful and malicious behavior that obstructs or causes the obstruction of any doorway, hall, or any other passageway in a College District building to such an extent that the employees, officers, and other persons, including visitors, having business with the College District are denied entrance into, exit from, or free passage in such building.



ARTICLE II: STUDENT CONDUCT CODE OF CONDUCT AUTHORITY

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

ARTICLE III: UNACCEPTABLE CONDUCT

1. Jurisdiction of the College Student Code of Conduct.

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

2. Conduct Rules and Regulations.
  - a. Any student found to have committed or to have attempted to commit the following misconduct is subject to the disciplinary sanctions outlined in Article IV: Student Code of Conduct Procedures.
    - i. Cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty.
    - ii. Furnishing false information to any College official, faculty member, or office.
    - iii. Forgery, alteration, or misuse of any College document, record, or instrument of identification.
  - b. Disruption or obstruction of teaching, research, administration, disciplinary proceedings, other College activities, including its public service functions on or off campus, or of other authorized non-College activities when the conduct occurs on College premises.
  - c. Physical abuse, verbal abuse, threats, intimidation, harassment, coercion, and/or other conduct which threatens or endangers the health or safety of any person.
  - d. Sexual Misconduct:  
In accordance with FFDA Legal and FFDA Local policy, the College District prohibits all forms of sexual and gender-based misconduct, including sexual harassment, sexual violence (non-consensual sexual contact and nonconsensual sexual inter-course), sexual assault, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and aiding or facilitating the commission of a violation of this policy. This can be located in the TSC Board Policy Manual at:  
<https://www.tsc.edu/human-resources/policies-and-procedures/>

The College District also prohibits hostile environment harassment, which includes acts of verbal, nonverbal, or physical aggression, intimidation, or hostility based on sex or gender. Sexual and gender-based misconduct can occur between people of different sex or gender or of the same sex or gender. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of College District policy FFDA Local and is prohibited.

Discrimination against a student is defined as conduct directed at a student on the basis of sex or gender that adversely affects the student.

Violation of FFDA Local policy will prompt an investigation by the Title IX Coordinator. If warranted, an investigation and hearing following the guidelines set forth in FFDA legal will be conducted. For more detailed information, visit the TSC Title IX page at:

<https://www.tsc.edu/about/title-ix/>

e. False Claims:

A student who intentionally makes a false claim, offers false statements, or refuses to cooperate with a College District investigation regarding discrimination or harassment shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

f. Attempted or actual theft of and/or damage to property of the College or property of a member of the College community or other personal or public property, on or off campus.

g. Hazing. "Hazing" means any intentional knowing, or reckless act, occurring on or off the campus of an educational institution, by one person alone or acting with others, directed against a student that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization whose members are students at an educational institution. The express or implied consent of the victim will not be a defense. Apathy or acquiescence in the presence of hazing are not neutral acts; they are violations of this rule. The term includes but is not limited to:

i. Any type of physical brutality, such as whipping, beating, striking, branding, electronic shocking, placing of a harmful substance on the body, or similar activity.

ii. Any type of physical activity, such as sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement in a small space, calisthenics, or other activity that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk or harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student.

iii. Any activity involving consumption of a food, liquid, alcoholic beverage, liquor, drug, or other substance which subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm, or which adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student.

iv. Any activity that intimidates or threatens the student with ostracism that subjects the student to extreme mental stress, shame, or humiliation, or that adversely affects the student from entering or remaining registered in an educational institution, or that may reasonably be expected to cause a student to leave the organization or the institution rather than submit to acts described in this subsection.

v. Any activity that induces, causes, or requires the student to perform a duty or task which involves a violation of the Texas Penal Code Sec. 4.52.

vi. Personal Hazing Offense: A person commits an offense if the person:

- Engages in hazing;
- Solicits, encourages, directs, aids, or attempts to aid another in engaging in hazing;
- Intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly permits hazing to occur; or
- Has firsthand knowledge of the planning of a specific hazing incident involving a student in an educational institution, or firsthand knowledge that a specific hazing incident has

- occurred, and knowingly fails to report said knowledge in writing to the Executive Director of Student Life and Civility or other appropriate officials of the institution.
- vii. Organization Hazing Offense: "Organization" means a fraternity, sorority, association, corporation, order, society, corps, cooperative, club, or service, social, or a similar group, whose members are primarily students at an educational institution. An organization commits an offense if the organization:
    - Condones or encourages hazing; or
    - If an officer or any combination of members, pledges, or alumni of the organization commits or assists in the commission of hazing.
  - h. Failure to comply with directions of College officials or law enforcement officers acting in performance of their duties and/or failure to identify oneself to these persons when requested to do so.
  - i. Unauthorized possession, duplication or use of keys to any College premises or unauthorized entry to or use of College premises.
  - j. Violation of any College policy, rule, or regulation published in hard copy or available electronically on the College website.
  - k. Violation of any federal, state or local law.
  - l. The use, possession, control, manufacture, transmission, or sale, or being under the influence, of a drug or narcotic, as those terms are defined by the Texas Controlled Substances Act, or other prohibited substances described in FLBE, unless under the direction of a physician.
  - m. The use, possession, control, manufacture, transmission, or sale of paraphernalia related to any prohibited substance.
  - n. Possession or use of tobacco products or e-cigarettes on College District property without authorization shall be prohibited. "E-cigarette" means an electronic cigarette or any other device that simulates smoking by using a mechanical heating element, battery, or electronic circuit to deliver nicotine or other substances to the individual inhaling from the device. The term does not include a prescription medical device unrelated to the cessation of smoking. The term includes:
    - i. A device described by this definition regardless of whether the device is manufactured, distributed, or sold as an e-cigarette, e-cigar, or e-pipe or under another product name or description; and
    - ii. A component, part, or accessory for the device, regardless of whether the component, part, or accessory is sold separately from the device.
  - o. Illegal or unauthorized possession of firearms, explosives, other weapons, or dangerous chemicals on College premises or use of any such item, even if legally possessed, in a manner that harms, threatens or causes fear to others.
  - p. Participating in an on-campus or off-campus demonstration, riot or activity that disrupts the normal operations of the College and/or infringes on the rights of other members of the College community; leading or inciting others to disrupt scheduled and/or normal activities within any campus building or area.
  - q. Obstruction of the free flow of pedestrian or vehicular traffic on College premises or at College-sponsored or supervised functions.
  - r. Conduct that is disorderly, lewd, or indecent; breach of peace; or aiding, abetting, or procuring another person to breach the peace on College premises or at functions sponsored by, or participated in by, the College or members of the academic community. Disorderly conduct includes but is not limited to any unauthorized use of electronic or other devices to make an audio or video record of any person while on College premises:
    - i. Without his/her prior knowledge;

- ii. Without his/her effective consent when such a recording is likely to cause injury or distress. This includes, but is not limited to, surreptitiously taking pictures of another person in a gym, locker room, or restroom.
  - s. Theft or other abuse of computers, facilities, and resources, including but not limited to:
    - i. Violating policies, rules, or agreements signed by the student regarding the use of technology resources;
    - ii. Attempting to access or circumvent passwords or other security-related information of the College District, students, or employees or uploading or creating computer viruses;
    - iii. Attempting to alter, destroy, disable, or restrict access to College District technology resources including but not limited to computers and related equipment, College District data, the data of others, or other networks connected to the College District's system without permission;
    - iv. Using the Internet or other electronic communications to threaten College District students, employees, or volunteers;
    - v. Sending, posting, or possessing electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal;
    - vi. Using e-mail or websites to engage in or encourage illegal behavior or threaten the safety of the College District, students, employees, or visitors; and
    - vii. Possessing published or electronic material that is designed to promote or encourage illegal behavior or that could threaten the safety of the College District, students, employees, or visitors.
  - t. Abuse of the Student Conduct System, including but not limited to:
    - i. Failure to obey the notice from a Student Conduct Board or College official to appear for a meeting or hearing as part of the Student Conduct System.
    - ii. Falsification, distortion, or misrepresentation of information before a Student Conduct Board.
    - iii. Disruption or interference with the orderly conduct of a Student Conduct Board proceeding.
    - iv. Institution of a Student Code of Conduct proceeding in bad faith.
    - v. Attempting to discourage an individual's proper participation in, or use of, the student conduct system.
    - vi. Attempting to influence the impartiality of a member of a Student Conduct Board prior to, and/or during the course of, the Student Conduct Board proceeding.
    - vii. Harassment (verbal or physical) and/or intimidation of a member of a Student Conduct Board prior to, during, and/or after a Student Code of Conduct proceeding.
    - viii. Failure to comply with the sanction(s) imposed under the Student Code of Conduct.
    - ix. Influencing or attempting to influence another person to commit an abuse of the Student Conduct system.
  - u. Students are required to engage in responsible social conduct that reflects credit upon the College community and to model good citizenship in any community.
  - v. Failure to comply with directives given by College District personnel, and failure to provide identification when requested to do so by College District personnel shall be prohibited.
3. Violation of Law and College Discipline
- a. College disciplinary proceedings may be instituted against a student charged with conduct that potentially violates both the criminal law and this Student Code of Conduct (that is, if both possible violations result from the same factual situation) without regard to the pendency of civil or criminal litigation in court or criminal arrest and prosecution. Proceedings under this Student Code of Conduct

- may be carried out prior to, simultaneously with, or following civil or criminal proceedings off campus at the discretion of the Vice President of Student Services.
- b. Determinations made or sanctions imposed under this Student Code of Conduct shall not be subject to change because criminal charges arising out of the same facts giving rise to violation of College rules were dismissed, reduced, or resolved in favor of or against the criminal law defendant.
  - c. When a student is charged by federal, state, or local authorities with a violation of law, the College will not request or agree to special consideration for that individual because of his or her status as a student. If the alleged offense is also being processed under the Student Code of Conduct, the College may advise off-campus authorities of the existence of the Student Code of Conduct and of how such matters are typically handled within the College community. The College will attempt to cooperate with law enforcement and other agencies in the enforcement of criminal law on campus and in the conditions imposed by criminal courts for the rehabilitation of student violators (provided that the conditions do not conflict with campus rules or sanctions). Individual students and other members of the College community, acting in their personal capacities, remain free to interact with governmental representatives as they deem appropriate.

#### ARTICLE IV: STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT PROCEDURES

1. Charges and Student Conduct Board Hearings
  - a. Any member of the College community may file charges against a student for violations of the Student Code of Conduct. A charge shall be prepared in writing and directed to the Executive Director of Student Life and Civility. Any charge should be submitted as soon as possible after the event takes place, preferably within 30 days.
  - b. The Executive Director of Student Life and Civility may conduct an investigation to determine if the charges have merit and/or if they can be disposed of administratively by mutual consent of the parties involved on a basis acceptable to the Executive Director of Student Life and Civility. Such disposition shall be final and there shall be no subsequent proceedings. If the charges are not admitted and/or cannot be disposed of by mutual consent, the Executive Director of Student Life and Civility may later serve in the same matter as the Student Conduct Board or a member thereof. If the student admits violating institutional rules, but sanctions are not agreed to, subsequent process, including a hearing if necessary, shall be limited to determining the appropriate sanction(s).
  - c. All charges shall be presented to the Accused Student in written form. A time shall be set for a Student Conduct Board Hearing, not less than five nor more than fifteen calendar days after the student has been notified. Maximum time limits for scheduling of Student Conduct Board Hearings may be extended at the discretion of the Executive Director of Student Life and Civility.
  - d. Student Conduct Board Hearings shall be conducted by a Student Conduct Board according to the following guidelines except as provided by Article IV(1)(a) below:
    - i. Student Conduct Board Hearings normally shall be conducted in private.
    - ii. The Complainant, Accused Student, and their advisors, if any, shall be allowed to attend the entire portion of the Student Conduct Board Hearing at which information is received (excluding deliberations). Admission of any other person to the Student Conduct Board Hearing shall be at the discretion of the Student Conduct Board and/or the Executive Director of Student Life and Civility.
    - iii. In Student Conduct Board Hearings involving more than one Accused Student, the Executive Director of Student Life and Civility, in his or her discretion, may permit the Student Conduct Board Hearings concerning each student to be conducted either separately or jointly.
    - iv. The Complainant and the Accused Student have the right to be assisted by an advisor they choose, at their own expense. The advisor must be a member of the College community and may not be an

- attorney. The Complainant and/or the Accused Student is responsible for presenting his or her own information, and therefore, advisors are not permitted to speak or to participate directly in any Student Conduct Board Hearing before a Student Conduct Board. A student should select as an advisor a person whose schedule allows attendance at the scheduled date and time for the Student Conduct Board Hearing because delays will not normally be allowed due to the scheduling conflicts of an advisor.
- v. The Complainant, the Accused Student, and the Student Conduct Board may arrange for witnesses to present pertinent information to the Student Conduct Board. The College will try to arrange the attendance of possible witnesses who are members of the College community, if reasonably possible, and who are identified by the Complainant and/or Accused Student at least two weekdays prior to the Student Conduct Board Hearing. Witnesses will provide information to and answer questions from the Student Conduct Board. Questions may be suggested by the Accused Student and/or Complainant to be answered by each other or by other witnesses. This will be conducted by the Student Conduct Board with such questions directed to the chairperson, rather than to the witness directly. This method is used to preserve the educational tone of the hearing and to avoid creation of an adversarial environment. Questions of whether potential information will be received shall be resolved in the discretion of the chairperson of the Student Conduct Board.
  - vi. Pertinent records, exhibits, and written statements (including Student Impact Statements) may be accepted as information for consideration by a Student Conduct Board at the discretion of the chairperson.
  - vii. All procedural questions are subject to the final decision of the chairperson of the Student Conduct Board.
  - viii. After the portion of the Student Conduct Board Hearing concludes in which all pertinent information has been received, the Student Conduct Board shall determine (by majority vote if the Student Conduct Board consists of more than one person) whether the Accused Student has violated each section of the Student Code of Conduct which the student is charged with violating.
  - ix. The Student Conduct Board's determination shall be made on the basis of whether it is more likely than not that the Accused Student violated the Student Code of Conduct.
  - x. Formal rules of process, procedure, and/or technical rules of evidence, such as are applied in criminal or civil court, are not used in Student Code of Conduct proceedings.
  - e. There shall be a single verbatim record, such as a tape recording, of all Student Conduct Board Hearings before a Student Conduct Board (not including deliberations). Deliberations shall not be recorded. The record shall be the property of the College.
  - f. If an Accused Student, with notice, does not appear before a Student Conduct Board Hearing, the information in support of the charges shall be presented and considered even if the Accused Student is not present.
  - g. The Student Conduct Board may accommodate concerns for the personal safety, well-being, and/or fears of confrontation of the Complainant, Accused Student, and/or other witness during the hearing by providing separate facilities, by using a visual screen, and/or by permitting participation by telephone, videophone, closed circuit television, video conferencing, videotape, audio tape, written statement, or other means, where and as determined in the sole judgment of the Vice President of Student Services to be appropriate.
2. Sanctions
- a. A student shall be subject to discipline for violations of College District policies and procedures, including the rules outlining expectations for student conduct [see FLB]. If a student commits an

infraction or engages in misconduct, the College District may impose one or more of the following penalties:

- i. Reprimand - A verbal or written warning to the student following a rule violation. Repetition of such misconduct may result in more severe disciplinary action.
  - ii. Restitution - Reimbursement for damage to or misappropriation of property. Reimbursement may take the form of appropriate service to repair or otherwise compensate for damage.
  - iii. Behavior Contract - A written agreement that details clear expectations of the student in carrying out an intervention plan. Behavior Contracts may include referral to a counselor, participation in a monitored supervision plan, signing a "no contact" order prohibiting contact with an individual or individuals, submission to random drug testing for a specific period, restriction from a certain campus location, loss of parking privileges, or other stipulations appropriate to the Student Code of Conduct violation.
  - iv. Loss of Privileges - Denial of specified privileges for a designated period.
  - v. Discretionary Sanctions - Discretionary Sanctions include, but are not limited to, work assignments, essays, service to the College, or other related discretionary assignments.
  - vi. Scholastic Penalties - The assignment of a failing grade on an assignment or examination or in a course by an instructor based on scholastic dishonesty; including cheating, collusion, and plagiarism; committed by a student. The instructor shall submit a written report of the incident and of the planned action to the instructor's Dean.
  - vii. Conditional Probation - The placing of a student on notice that continued infraction of regulations may result in suspension or expulsion from the College District. Conditional probation may include restrictions on a student's rights and privileges or specified community service. The probation may be for a specified length of time or for an indefinite period according to the relative severity of the infraction or misconduct. Failure to fulfill the terms of the probation may lead to suspension or expulsion.
  - viii. Community Service-Students may be asked to complete community service hours as approved by the Executive Director of Student Life and Civility. The number of hours required to complete will be relative to the severity of the infraction or misconduct.
  - ix. Workshops- Students may be asked to complete mandatory workshops as approved by the Executive Director of Student Life and Civility. The number of workshops required to complete will be relative to the severity of the infraction or misconduct.
  - x. Suspension - Forced withdrawal from the College District for either a definite period of time or until stated conditions have been met. Normally, suspension shall extend through a minimum of one regular long semester (with summer sessions not counting in the one semester minimum time lapse). However, suspension may exceed the one semester minimum.
  - xi. Expulsion - Permanent forced withdrawal from the College District. A student receiving disciplinary expulsion shall have the action noted in the student's permanent record and transcript.
- b. More than one of the sanctions listed above may be imposed for any single violation.
- c. Other than College expulsion or revocation or withholding of a degree, disciplinary sanctions shall not be made part of the student's permanent academic record but shall become part of the student's disciplinary record. Upon graduation, the student's disciplinary record may be expunged of disciplinary actions other than College suspension, College expulsion, or revocation or withholding of a degree, upon application to the Executive Director of Student Life and Civility. Cases involving the imposition of sanctions other than College suspension, College expulsion or revocation or withholding of a degree shall be expunged from the student's confidential record eight (8) years after final disposition of the case.

(b) In situations involving both an Accused Student(s) (or group or organization) and a student(s) claiming to be the victim of another student's conduct, the records of the process and of the sanctions imposed, if any, shall be considered to be the education records of both the Accused Student(s) and the student(s) claiming to be the victim because the educational career and chances of success in the academic community of each may be impacted.

- d. The following sanctions may be imposed upon groups or organizations:
- Those sanctions listed above in Article IV (2) (a) (i.), (ii.), (iv.), (v.), and (vi.).
  - Loss of selected rights and privileges for a specified period of time.
  - Deactivation. Loss of all privileges, including College recognition, for a specified period.
- e. In each case in which a Student Conduct Board determines that a student and/or group or organization has violated the Student Code of Conduct, the sanction(s) shall be determined and imposed by the Executive Director of Student Life and Civility. In cases in which persons other than, or in addition to, the Executive Director of Student Life and Civility have been authorized to serve as the Student Conduct Board, the recommendation of the Student Conduct Board shall be considered by the Executive Director of Student Life and Civility in determining and imposing sanctions. The Executive Director of Student Life and Civility is not limited to sanctions recommended by members of the Student Conduct Board. Following the Student Conduct Board Hearing, the Student Conduct Board and the Executive Director of Student Life and Civility shall advise the Accused Student, group and/or organization (and a complaining student who believes s/he was the victim of another student's conduct) in writing of its determination and of the sanction(s) imposed, if any.

3. Interim Suspension

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

- a. Interim suspension may be imposed only: 1) to ensure the safety and well-being of members of the College community or preservation of college property; b) to ensure the student's own physical or emotional safety and well-being; or c) if the student poses an ongoing threat of disruption of, or interference with, the normal operations of the College.
- b. During the interim suspension, a student shall be denied access to the campus (including classes) and/or all other College activities or privileges for which the student might otherwise be eligible, as the Vice President of Student Services or the Executive Director of Student Life and Civility may determine to be appropriate.
- c. The interim suspension does not replace the regular process, which shall proceed on the normal schedule, up to and through a Student Conduct Board Hearing, if required.
- d. The student shall be notified in writing of this action and the reasons for the suspension. The notice will include the time, date, and place of a subsequent hearing at which the student may show cause why his or her continued presence on the campus does not constitute a threat, and at which they may contest whether a campus rule was violated.
4. Appeals
- a. A decision reached by the Student Conduct Board or a sanction imposed by the Executive Director of Student Life and Civility may be appealed by the Accused Student(s) or Complainant(s) to an Appellate Board within five (5) school days of the decision. Such appeals shall be in writing and shall be delivered to the Executive Director of Student Life and Civility or his or her designee.



- b. Except as required to explain the basis of new information, an appeal shall be limited to a review of the verbatim record of the Student Conduct Board Hearing and supporting documents for one or more of the following purposes:
  - i. To determine whether the Student Conduct Board Hearing was conducted fairly in light of the charges and information presented, and in conformity with prescribed procedures giving the complaining party a reasonable opportunity to prepare and to present information that the Student Code of Conduct was violated, and giving the Accused Student a reasonable opportunity to prepare and to present a response to those allegations. Deviations from designated procedures will not be a basis for sustaining an appeal unless significant prejudice results.
  - ii. To determine whether the decision reached regarding the Accused Student was based on substantial information, that is, whether there were facts in the case that, if believed by the fact finder, were sufficient to establish that a violation of the Student Code of Conduct occurred.
  - iii. To determine whether the sanction(s) imposed were appropriate for the violation of the Student Code of Conduct which the student was found to have committed.
  - iv. To consider new information, sufficient to alter a decision or other relevant facts not brought out in the original hearing, because such information and/or facts were not known to the person appealing at the time of the original Student Conduct Board Hearing.
- c. If an appeal is upheld by the Appellate Board, the matter shall be returned to the original Student Conduct Board and Executive Director of Student Life and Civility for re-opening of Student Conduct Board Hearing to allow reconsideration of the original determination and/or sanction(s). If an appeal is not upheld, the matter shall be considered final and binding upon all involved.

**ARTICLE V: INTERPRETATION AND REVISION**

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

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

## Title IX and Sexual Assault Information

At Texas Southmost College, we are committed to the prevention of all forms of sexual assault and abuse. Coercive sexual contact and unwanted comments of a sexual nature are offensive and undermine the safety security and dignity of all members of the College community. All students are required to complete on-line Campus Safe Act for students-sexual violence awareness training at

For more information, visit the TSC Sexual Assault page at: <https://www.tsc.edu/campus-security/sexual-assault-information/>

## TSC Board Policy FFE (Local): Student Welfare Freedom from Bullying and Dating Violence; TSC Board Policy FFDA (Local)

### BULLYING AND DATING VIOLENCE PROHIBITED

The College District prohibits bullying and dating violence as defined by this policy. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of College District policy FFE (Local) and is prohibited.

### DEFINITIONS

#### BULLYING

Bullying occurs when a student or group of students engages in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that occurs on College District property, at a College District-sponsored or College District-related activity, or in a vehicle operated by the College District and that:

Has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property; or

Is so sufficiently severe, persistent, and pervasive that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.

#### EXAMPLES

Bullying of a student may include hazing, threats, taunting, teasing, confinement, assault, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, name-calling, rumor spreading, or ostracism.

#### DATING VIOLENCE (FFDA Local)

Dating violence means violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim. The existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on the reporting party's statement and with consideration of the length of the relationship, the type of relationship, and the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship. For the purposes of this definition, dating violence includes, but is not limited to, sexual or physical abuse or the threat of such abuse. Dating violence does not include acts covered under the Clery Act definition of domestic violence.

#### EXAMPLES

Examples of dating violence against a student may include physical or sexual assaults, name-calling, put-downs, threats to hurt the student or the student's family members or members of the student's household, destroying property belonging to the student, threats to commit suicide or homicide if the student ends the relationship, attempts to isolate the student from friends and family, stalking, or encouraging others to engage in these behaviors.

#### GENDER-BASED HARASSMENT

Gender-based harassment includes physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct based on the student's gender, the student's expression of characteristics perceived as stereotypical for the student's gender, or the student's failure to conform to

stereotypical notions of masculinity or femininity. For purposes of this policy, gender-based harassment is considered prohibited harassment if the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that the conduct limits or denies a student's ability to participate in or benefit from the College District's educational program.

RETALIATION

The College District prohibits retaliation by a student, College District employee or third party against a student alleged to have experienced discrimination or harassment or another student who, in good faith, makes a report of harassment or discrimination, serves as a witness, or otherwise participates in an investigation. This prohibition does not apply to discipline of a person who perpetrated or assists in the perpetration of the prohibited conduct.

EXAMPLES

Examples of retaliation may include threats, rumor spreading, ostracism, assault, destruction of property, unjustified punishments, or unwarranted grade reductions. Unlawful retaliation does not include petty slights or annoyances.

FALSE CLAIM

A student who intentionally makes a false claim, offers false statements, or refuses to cooperate with a College District investigation regarding bullying, dating violence, or retaliation as defined by this policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

PROHIBITED CONDUCT

In this policy, the term "prohibited conduct" includes discrimination, harassment, and retaliation as defined by this policy, even if the behavior does not rise to the level of unlawful conduct.

TIMELY REPORTING

Reports of prohibited conduct shall be made as soon as possible after the alleged act or knowledge of the alleged act. A failure to immediately report may impair the College District's ability to investigate and address the prohibited conduct.

## Reporting Procedures

### STUDENT REPORT

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced prohibited conduct or believes that another student has experienced prohibited conduct should immediately report the alleged acts to the Title IX coordinator or another employee or submit the report electronically through the College District's website. Although you may submit an anonymous electronic report, the submission of an anonymous electronic report may impair the College District's ability to investigate and address the prohibited conduct. The form to file a complaint can be found on the Title IX page on the TSC website.

A victim of a crime has the right to choose whether to report the crime to law enforcement, to be assisted by the College District in reporting the crime to law enforcement, or to decline to report the crime to law enforcement. It is important that a victim of prohibited conduct go to a hospital for treatment and preservation of evidence, if applicable, as soon as practicable after the incident.

### REPORT FORMAT

A report may be made orally, electronically, or in writing. The Vice President of Student Services or designee shall reduce any oral reports to written form.

### PROHIBITED CONTACT

The Vice-President of Student Services or designee shall determine whether the allegations in the report, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by policy FDE, including harassment or discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, or disability. If so, the College District shall proceed under policy FFDA instead.

### DEFINITION OF COLLEGE DISTRICT OFFICIALS

For the purposes of this policy, College District officials are the Title IX Coordinator and the College President.

Reports of discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment or gender-based harassment, may be directed to the Title IX Coordinator. The College District designates the following person to coordinate its efforts to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended:

Name:	Alicia Magallanes
Position:	Title IX Coordinator
Address:	80 Fort Brown, Brownsville, TX 78520
Telephone:	956-295-3770
E-mail:	felix.recio@tsc.edu

The College President or designee shall serve as coordinator for purposes of College District compliance with all other antidiscrimination laws.

### INVESTIGATION OF THE REPORT

The Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Coordinator shall conduct an appropriate investigation based on the allegations in the report. The Title IX Coordinator shall promptly take interim action calculated to prevent bullying, dating violence, or retaliation, as defined by this policy, during the course of an investigation, if appropriate.

The College District may request, but shall not require, a written report. If a report is made orally, the College District official shall reduce the report to written form.

### CONCLUDING THE INVESTIGATION

Absent extenuating circumstances, the investigation should be completed within ten College District business days from the date of the initial report alleging bullying, dating violence, or retaliation, as defined by this policy; however, the Vice President of Student Services or designee shall take additional time if necessary, to complete a thorough investigation.

The investigator shall prepare a written report of the investigation. The report shall be filed with the College District official overseeing the investigation.

The College District shall provide written notice of the outcome, within the extent permitted by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) or other law, to the victim and the person against whom the complaint is filed. The parties shall be given the opportunity to respond to the report.

#### COLLEGE DISTRICT ACTION

The College District shall determine, based on the results of the investigation, whether each individual allegation of misconduct occurred using a preponderance of the evidence standard. If the results of an investigation indicate that prohibited conduct occurred, the College District shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary or corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct, in accordance with College District policy and procedures. [See FM and FMA]

#### CORRECTIVE ACTION

Examples of corrective action may include:

- Providing counseling for the victim and the student who engaged in prohibited conduct;
- Permitting the victim or student engaged in the prohibited;
- conduct to drop a course in which they both are enrolled without penalty;
- Conducting follow-up inquiries to determine if any new incidents or any instances of retaliation have occurred;
- Involving students in efforts to identify problems and improve;
- the College District climate;
- Increasing staff monitoring of areas where prohibited conduct has occurred;
- Reaffirming the College District's policy against discrimination and harassment;
- Providing a training program for those involved in the complaint; and
- Providing a comprehensive education program for the College District community.

#### EXCEPTION

The College District shall minimize attempts to require a student who complains of sexual harassment to resolve the problem directly with the person who engaged in the harassment; however, if that is the most appropriate resolution method, the College District shall be involved in an appropriate manner.

#### IMPROPER CONDUCT

If the investigation reveals improper conduct that did not rise to the level of prohibited conduct, the College District may take disciplinary action in accordance with College District policy and procedures or other corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct.

#### CONFIDENTIALITY

To the greatest extent possible, consistent with law, the College District shall respect the privacy of the complainant, persons against whom a report is filed, and witnesses. Limited disclosures may be necessary in order to conduct a thorough investigation and comply with applicable law.

#### APPEAL

A party who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through the applicable grievance policy beginning at the appropriate level. [See FLD(LOCAL) for students, and GB(LOCAL) for community members] A party shall be informed of his or her right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights.

#### RECORDS RETENTION

Retention of records shall be in accordance with the College District's records retention procedures. [See CIA]

#### ACCESS TO POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Information regarding this policy and accompanying procedures shall annually be made available to Texas Southmost College students and shall be published on the College District's website. Copies of the policy and procedures shall be readily available at the TSC Office of Human Resources.

### **Statement of Equal Opportunity**

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

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

Texas Southmost College complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and does not discriminate on the basis of a disability in the operation of its educational programs or in its admission and employment practices. Special emphasis will continue to be placed on correcting conditions, which may inadvertently discriminate against any individual with a disability.

### **Statement on Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco and other Substances**

Texas Southmost College forbids the manufacture, possession, sale, use, or distribution of illegal drugs and alcoholic beverages on campus and at College sponsored events, whether they occur on or off campus. Students who are found in violation will face disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the College. Alcohol may be permitted at certain College-sponsored events with appropriate approval from College administration.

### **Statement on Firearms/Campus Carry**

<http://www.tsc.edu/index.php/campus-carry.html>

During the 84th Texas Legislature, lawmakers passed a law we know as the "Campus Carry" Bill (Senate Bill 11). It allows licensed individuals to carry concealed handguns on academic campuses. The College District prohibits the use, possession, or display of a firearm on College District property or at a College District-sponsored or -related activity in violation of law and College District regulations.

### **Sexual Harassment Policy**

Sexual harassment in the workplace and schools is an illegal practice under Section 703 of Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act as amended, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Sexual harassment of employees or students at Texas Southmost College will not be tolerated and individuals engaging in such conduct shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the College. This policy shall be applied without regard to the gender of the employee involved.

## Smoke and Tobacco Free Environment

Texas Southmost College, including all its facilities and grounds, is a smoke and tobacco free environment. Smoking and/or using tobacco products is prohibited in all classrooms, laboratories, offices, conference rooms, hallways, parking lots, and all other rooms in all buildings of Texas Southmost College and on all property that is owned, leased, rented, or otherwise under the control of Texas Southmost College. Law enforcement officers will issue a citation to those in violation of the policy and repeated violations may result in appropriate disciplinary action by Texas Southmost College.

## Religious Holy Days

In compliance with Texas Education Code, Section 51.911, Texas Southmost College allows a student who is absent from class for the observance of a religious holy day to make up the class work for that day within a reasonable time after the absence. Students who intend to be absent for religious holy days must notify each instructor in writing by the 15th calendar day of the semester.

## Students Subject to Additional Tuition and Fees

Texas Southmost College is required by law to inform students that charges may be instituted by TSC and/or may be incurred when attending other Texas colleges and universities.

### ADDITIONAL CHARGES FOR STUDENTS WHO EXCEED 27 DEVELOPMENTAL SEMESTER CREDIT HOURS

Texas Southmost College will charge a higher tuition rate to students registering for college preparatory (developmental education) courses who have accumulated at least 27 hours of credit in developmental education courses.

### THREE-PEAT (THIRD-ATTEMPT) ENROLLMENT RULING

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

## Student Right to Know-Graduation Statistics

Federal law requires that all institutions of higher education disclose graduation rates to students, applicants and potential students. Graduation rates for TSC can be provided upon request to the Office of the Vice President of Student Services.

### Student Right to Know-Crime Statistics

The TSC Security Annual Report can be provided upon request to the Office of the Vice President of Finance & Administration.

## The American Opportunity Tax Credit

Students may be eligible to claim an American Opportunity Tax Credit (AOC) against their federal income taxes. The AOC may be claimed for the qualified tuition and related expenses of students enrolled at least half time in one of the first two years of postsecondary education when enrolled in a program leading to a degree, certificate or other recognized educational credential. Eligible tuition and fees are determined by the IRS and will be offset by any grants, scholarships or refunds received. More information is available at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

## Lifetime Learning Credit

Students may be eligible to claim a Lifetime Learning Credit against their federal income taxes. The Lifetime Learning Credit may be claimed for the qualified tuition and related expenses of students enrolled in eligible

educational institutions. If a student is claiming a Hope Credit, none of that student's expenses for that year may be applied toward the Lifetime Learning Credit. More information is available at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

### **Selective Service**

Most males 18 through 25 years of age and are living in the United States must register with the Selective Service. Most non-citizens in that age group are also required to register, including illegal aliens, legal permanent residents, and refugees. If a male non-citizen takes up residence in the United States prior to his 26th birthday, he must register||

### **Solomon Amendment**

The Solomon Amendment allows military recruiters to request certain recruiting information from institutions about students. Such information is considered directory information under FERPA or data that would normally be collected by the institution. The 1995/1996 National Defense Authorization Act and the 1997 Omnibus Consolidated Appropriations Act gave branches of the military access to student information including student's name, address, telephone number, age or date of birth, class, and major. The Solomon Amendment requires institutions to cooperate and comply with requests from military recruiters for student information.

### **Administrative Withdrawal**

The College reserves the right to withdraw a student from class if, in the judgment of the College officials, such withdrawal is in the best interest of the student or the student body at large.

### **Change of Address**

Students who change their home address or mailing address are expected to notify the College of this change immediately using TSC Online, or by contacting the Office of Admissions and Records. Documentation may be required.

### **Official Communications**

A request that a student report to an administrative or faculty office may be made by letter, e-mail or telephone. Failure to comply with such a request may result in disciplinary action. Each student is responsible for monitoring his/her TSC e-mail account for official communications.

Communications to the entire student body are considered properly delivered when they are placed on official campus social media pages and/or on the TSC website. Each student is responsible for regularly checking the TSC social media pages and websites.

### **Use of Legal Name**

Students are required to provide their full legal name to the College. Students' permanent records, including official transcripts, are required to identify students by their full legal name.

### **Discrimination Complaints**

Any student who believes that he or she has been discriminated against on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability by the institution or its personnel may informally discuss the complaint with the Vice President of Student Services with the objective of reaching a reasonable solution. The Vice President of Student Services shall advise the student of his or her options in the situation and notify the Executive Director of Human Resources or designee.



If the aggrieved student believes the complaint has not been resolved at the informal discussion, he or she may submit a written complaint stating his or her name, the nature and date of the alleged violation, names of persons responsible (where known), names of any witnesses, and requested action within 30 working days of the date of the informal discussion, to the Vice President of Student Services. The Vice President of Student Services shall ensure that the aggrieved student's rights to appropriate due process procedures are honored. If a hearing is held, the Vice President of Student Services shall conduct the hearing. If the final decision is not to the student's satisfaction, he or she may appeal the decision to the Vice President of Student Services within ten working days of the receipt of the written decision.