

# SAVANNAH STATE UNIVERSITY

## CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEES HANDBOOK





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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The nature of the work at Savannah State University requires that the employees be selected on the basis of special training, ability, skills and individual qualities required to perform the duties of the positions to be filled. As an employee of Savannah State University, whatever your job may be, you can be proud to be a part of this value added institution of higher education. We hope you will find your job with SSU to be both challenging and rewarding. This handbook has been prepared to provide you with information about the classified employees personnel policies and procedures and the guidelines under which this university operates. The handbook is not a contract and no legal or contractual obligations are intended nor should they be inferred. We trust, however, you will find this handbook a useful guide to policies and procedures which may be amended at any time. In addition to the information contained in this handbook, other applicable policies are incorporated in publications of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia entitled, The Policy Manual and Business Procedures Manual, Volume 3A. This publication is available to employees and may be found on the University System's website, in the offices of all division heads, the Office of the Director of Human Resources at Savannah State University, and the Office of the President. The Executive Leadership of Savannah State University maintain exclusive discretion to exercise the customary functions of management including, but not limited to, the discretion to select, hire, promote, suspend, dismiss, assign, supervise, and discipline employees; to determine the size, organizational structure, and composition of the work force; to establish, change, and/or abolish policies, procedures, rules, and regulations; to determine and modify job descriptions and job classifications, salaries and titles; and to assign duties to employees in accordance with the needs and requirements of the University.

## **II. EMPLOYMENT**

### ***CLASSIFIED PERSONNEL***

All non-faculty members or staff are designated as classified employees. There are two categories of classified employees as follows:

#### **A. Professional, Managerial and Technical Staff**

Employees who are exempt from the Federal Wage & Hour provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) because of their professional or administrative responsibilities are referred to as "professional, managerial and technical staff." In the University System job



title listing they are designated as an exempt position. These employees are employed at a given salary per annum.

## **B. Support Staff**

Employees who are not exempt from the provisions of the FLSA because of their job duties and responsibilities are generally designated as “support staff.” These employees are paid on an hourly basis and must be compensated either, by receiving overtime pay or compensatory time for any hours over 40 worked during any workweek. In the University System job title listing they are designated as non-exempt.

## ***TYPES OF EMPLOYMENT***

All employees are classified at the time of employment as full-time regular, full-time temporary, part-time regular, part-time temporary, students, graduate assistants and/or work study students. The following describes the employment status categories:

### **A. Full-Time Regular Employees**

Full-time Regular Employees are employees who are required to regularly work 40 hours per week and have an indefinite appointment. Full-time regular employees are eligible for full benefits at the time of hire. All regular employees, with the exception of public safety officers, serve their first six months of employment on a provisional basis as outlined in section 1.6 below. Public safety officers serve their first twelve months on a provisional basis.

### **B. Limited Term Exempt Employees**

Full-time, limited term exempt employees are employed in a professional capacity and required to regularly work 40 hours per week and have a definite appointment. Full time, limited term exempt employees are eligible for full benefits at the time of hire and are employed for a period not to exceed 12 months.

### **C. Full-Time Temporary Employees**

Full-time Temporary Employees are employees who work 40 hours per week. A temporary position, as the term indicates, is one that is set up to last only a short and definite time period. (Example: seasonal summer employment.) Personnel who are hired as temporary employees may be employed for a period not to exceed six months; although, an additional six months of temporary employment may be arranged by the appropriate employing supervisor. After two successive six-month periods of temporary employment, any subsequent employment on a temporary basis may occur only after at least a 30 day separation from employment. Temporary employees serve at the pleasure of their supervisor and do not have a right to a hearing in the event of termination.



Employees in this category are not eligible for benefits, paid vacation, holidays, or sick time. Time away from the job should be approved by their supervisor. This time may be deducted from their pay during the pay period affected.

#### **D. Part-Time Regular Employees**

Part-time Regular Employees are employees who work less than 40 hours per week but at least 20 hours per week or who have a work commitment between .50 and .99 of a possible 1.0 FTE for an indefinite duration. Part-Time regular employees are eligible for employee benefits.

#### **E. Part-Time Temporary Employees**

Part-time Temporary Employees are employees who work less than 40 hours per week. A temporary position, as the term indicates, is one that is set up to last only a short and definite time period. (Example: seasonal summer employment.) Personnel who are hired as temporary employees may be employed for a period not to exceed six months although an additional six months of temporary employment may be arranged by the appropriate employing supervisor. After two successive six-month periods of temporary employment, any subsequent employment on a temporary basis may occur only after at least a 30 day separation from employment. Employees in this category are not eligible for paid vacation, holidays, or sick time. Time away from the job should be approved by their supervisor. This time may be deducted from their pay during the pay period affected.

#### **F. Student Assistants, Graduate Assistants, and Work-study Students**

SSU has student assistants, graduate assistants and work-study positions available. These positions fall under the “temporary position” definition. Student assistants and graduate assistants are hired on a part-time temporary basis without benefits. Work-study students are those students who have been awarded federal funds through Financial Aid and have to find a place of employment to earn these funds. Work-study funds are distributed as established by the U.S. Department of Education.

#### **G. Consultants and Temporary and Temporary Agency Workers**

SSU may occasionally contract with workers on a temporary basis. This type of work typically centers around a special project, a vacant position during the recruitment process, departmental temporary needs, etc. Consultants are also used and may be referred to as “independent contractors”, where a specified assignment and timeline is defined for the consultant’s services. A “temp agency” and temporary workers are engaged without benefits. Workers in these categories are not eligible for paid vacation, holidays, or sick time. Time away from the job should be arranged with their supervisor. This time may be deducted from their pay during the pay period affected. Consultants, Temporary and Temporary Agency contractors are not eligible for any University System benefits.



## **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY / STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION**

To insure that a strong program of nondiscrimination in employment practices and procedures will continue in the University System, the Board of Regents has adopted the following policy:

The Board of Regents has declared that no person within the University System of Georgia, shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, religion, creed, national origin, age or disability, be excluded from employment or participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity. In addition, SSU supports the veterans' preference provisions of the Georgia Constitution.

## **EMPLOYMENT OF RELATIVES**

No individual shall be employed in a department or unit that will result in the existence of a subordinate-superior relationship between such individual and any relative of such individual through any line of authority. A marital or familial relationship (i.e. 1<sup>st</sup> cousin, nephew, niece) shall constitute neither an advantage nor a disadvantage for any employee.

## **ORIENTATION**

All new regular employees are introduced to the University by a general orientation program conducted by the Office of Human Resources. The Office of Human Resources will notify new employees of the time and date to report for orientation. The new employee orientation is an essential introduction to the University. It consists of an overview of the University and a review of policy and benefits. Specific information such as work assignment, work hours, and departmental policies will be provided in each department by one's supervisor. Each new employee shall be responsible for reading and familiarizing himself/herself with all policies, rules and procedures with regard to the following:

- A. Personnel policies, procedures and benefits
- B. Statement of duties to be performed and the conditions of employment including compensation. The department head or supervisor is responsible for explaining the duties and responsibilities of the job.
- C. A welcome package/orientation is provided to new employees. A welcome letter indicating start date, time, and location of orientation; introduction to the University, Benefit enrollment paperwork, and all new hire paperwork for payroll



processing, is also provided to each new employee. Customized “departmental” welcome packages may be issued as well.

D. Consultants, Temporary and Temporary-Agency Workers may receive an abbreviated orientation when appropriate.

### ***PROBATIONARY PERIOD***

An employee hired to fill a regular position shall serve the first six months of employment with the University on a provisional basis. During this period the employee has a chance to evaluate his/her new job, and the supervisor has an opportunity to evaluate how well the employee is adapting to the new position. If an employee is not to be continued beyond the provisional period, he/she will be notified prior to the completion of the provisional period. An employee may be terminated at any time during the provisional period without a right of appeal.

### ***SECURITY QUESTIONNAIRE LOYALTY OATH***

The State of Georgia requires that a Security Questionnaire/Loyalty Oath be executed and retained in the permanent files of the University’s Human Resources Office. This document must be completed by all persons employed for thirty or more days.

### ***DISQUALIFICATION OF EMPLOYMENT***

- A person shall be disqualified for employment for any of the following reasons:
- A. Conviction of a criminal drug offense. The first conviction shall disqualify a person for not less than two years. Any person who has been convicted of a second or subsequent criminal drug offense shall be ineligible for employment or reemployment for a period of five years from the most recent date of conviction.
  - B. Any false statement of material fact during the recruitment, application or hiring process;
  - C. Membership (past or present) in any organization advocating the violent overthrow of the Government of the United States.
  - D. Conviction of a felony or a crime involving moral turpitude, unless he/she has been pardoned, when the position for which the individual is being considered is a position of trust.



### ***IMMIGRATION FORM I-9***

All new employees are required by the provisions of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 to complete a government form I-9 before or within three (3) days of employment. This form attests to the individual's eligibility for employment in the United States. Certain specific documents, which will prove eligibility for employment in this country, must be presented during the processing of employment papers. This law applies to all individuals, regardless of employment status, who enter into an employee/employer relationship with the University.

### ***CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK/CREDIT CHECK***

Georgia law provides that persons previously convicted of certain crimes are not eligible to hold some positions with the Board of Regents. In order to fulfill this mandate, Human Resources will conduct criminal background checks and, if applicable a credit check, on all persons seeking employment. Certain convictions may disqualify an applicant for consideration in sensitive positions or positions of trust. Human Resources shall maintain a list of all positions that are considered positions of trust for the purposes of compliance with this policy.

### ***PERSONAL DATA SHEET***

All new employees are required to complete a Personal Data Sheet with the Department of Human Resources. This form, along with other personnel records on all employees are maintained in the Human Resources Office. Employees have the right to review their personnel records in the Office of Human Resources upon arrangement with the office.

### ***NOTIFICATION OF CHANGE OF NAME, DEPENDENTS, ADDRESS, ETC.***

Employees may make changes to personal information using the Employee Self-Service features of PeopleSoft. Certain changes, i.e. name changes and marital status, will require submission of the required supporting documentation to the Office of Human Resources. Completion of a Personnel Data Sheet may be requested. Change of name, telephone and address are important and should be reported promptly. Beneficiary changes and health insurance information should be handled directly with the Office of Human Resources.

### ***EMPLOYEE SERVICE DATE/HIRE DATE***

A SSU employee service date is the date of initial regular employment with the University System of Georgia unless there has been a break in service by termination of employment. For those who change from part-time to full-time and/or regular to



temporary status or vice versa, the following policies apply: A person who has a part-time regular appointment will retain his/her service date when changing to full-time regular. A person who is full-time regular who changes to part-time regular will retain his or her service date. The service date of an employee changing from a full-time temporary appointment to a regular appointment, whether full-time or part-time, will be the effective date of the change to regular status. The service date of an employee changing from a part-time temporary appointment to a regular appointment will be the effective date of the change to regular status.

## **WORKING HOURS**

The standard workweek for SSU begins on Saturday at 12:01 A.M. and runs for seven calendar days thereafter. Savannah State University operates on a 40 hour work-week basis with each regular, full-time employee expected to work eight hours per day with one hour off for lunch. Certain work situations may demand different hours of work, and a particular work schedule may be designated by the immediate supervisor; however, in all instances the employee's work schedule must be approved by the immediate supervisor. Employees are expected to report to work on time daily and to remain on the job throughout the regular work hours. Absences from work or an urgent reason for leaving must have prior permission from the supervisor or department/unit head.

Overtime/Compensatory Time (applies to non-exempt employees only): It is expected that most work will be completed within a normal 40-hour workweek. Non-exempt employees may occasionally be asked to work overtime because of unusual operational requirements. Non-exempt, hourly paid employees may not work more than 40 hours a week unless specifically requested to do so by the employee's supervisor. Non-exempt employees who are required to work overtime will receive compensatory time off at the rate of 1.5 times the number of hours worked over 40 in a workweek. An employee may not accrue more than 60 hours of compensatory time in one calendar quarter and such compensatory time must be taken before the end of the following calendar quarter. An employee who has accrued comp time must request use of the comp time of his/her manager. The manager will be expected to monitor an employee's comp time balance to ensure such time is taken. A manager may choose to pay an employee who works more than 40 hours in a workweek overtime at 1.5 times the employee's regular rate of pay if that manager has identified funding from his/her existing budget to cover the overtime expense prior to the overtime work being performed. The manager should notify the employee regarding whether the employee will receive compensatory time or overtime pay. Equivalent time off during the same workweek may be scheduled by a manager to preclude the requirement for providing compensatory time off or overtime pay. Holiday time, vacation time, or sick leave time is not computed as "time worked" in determining overtime/compensatory hours. Employees who are exempt from the overtime/compensatory time requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act are employed



on a job basis and are expected to perform their duties for whatever periods of time are required. Such employees are not eligible for overtime pay or compensatory time off.

### **REST PERIODS**

Work schedule permitting, rest periods may be allowed, i.e. coffee breaks, snack breaks, stretch breaks, etc. Taking a break for a short rest period depends upon the department involved and whether or not normal work can be continued while employees take breaks. Where rest periods are allowed, they are limited to two, 15-minute breaks per day. Breaks cannot be used to allow employees to leave work early.

### **WAGES AND SALARY**

Salaries usually will be commensurate with qualifications, experience, service date and budget.

New employees are usually hired at a comparable beginning base rate for their job classification. If you have previous experience in a particular field, you may be hired at a higher rate of pay. This action will be taken only upon the recommendation of the department/unit head with approval of the appropriate Vice President.

### **PERSONAL CONDUCT AND THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT**

Employees are expected to adhere to rules, regulations and accepted customs and standards of courtesy, conduct and cooperation. The University seeks to maintain an environment conducive to the conduct of business and one in which the rights of others are respected. The University expects of its employees behavior consistent with the expectations of a professional environment. Typical offenses or behavior patterns for which disciplinary actions are taken are listed below. Although this is not an all-inclusive list, the following are work rules covering deficiencies or offenses for which disciplinary actions may be appropriate and which may result in discharge:

1. Failure to perform duties required by the employee's job description or assignments directed by management, including the failure to abide by the particular rules of an employee's place of work.
2. Failure to maintain work quality and/or productivity.
3. Failure to adhere to established safety policies and procedures.
4. Rude or discourteous behavior toward employees at SSU or its customers, including threats, intimidation, coercion, the use of profanity and other harassing statements.
5. Tardiness, temporary unauthorized absence from the University's premises or



- work area during work hours, and leaving the work area early.
6. Presence in an unauthorized area.
  7. Failure to report an injury occurring on premises operated by the University concerning an employee, staff member, student or any other person.
  8. Behavior, which interferes with the work performance of other employees and/or disrupts any teaching, administrative or other activities of the University.
  9. Failure to adhere to established Information Technology policies and procedures.
  10. Absenteeism and misuse of sick leave.
  11. Unauthorized absence from work for an entire shift or workday without notification to the supervisor. Note: If an employee is absent from work for three consecutive days without authorization, they are considered to have quit without notice.
  12. Insubordination or willful disobedience.
    13. Consumption, possession or being under the influence of alcohol or other impairing substance on University property or during working hours.
    14. Carrying a weapon, whether licensed or unlicensed, on University property.
  15. Wasting time, loitering, or loafing at work, including sleeping while on duty.
  16. Fighting in the work place.
  17. Sexual harassment. (See also separate policy.)
  18. Acceptance of additional compensation in any form for work performed in the scope of employment at the University for which compensation has been or will be made through the payroll.
  19. Commission of a criminal act.
  20. Violation of confidential information pertaining to students, employees or research/intellectual property, to include gaining unauthorized access to records or information, with or without harmful intent.
  21. Drug offenses.
  22. Dishonesty.
  23. Refusal to cooperate in University administrative actions (i.e. refusal to appear as a witness at an official grievance or other hearing, refusal to cooperate in an official investigation or inquiry, etc.)
  24. Illegal use of the computer and/or network that would include, but not be limited to, copyright and software license violation, failure to adhere to all federal and state laws including those prohibiting slander, libel, harassment and obscenity. Personal use of computer during work hours and willfully accessing pornographic on-line materials are prohibited and terminable offenses.
  25. Private use of state property including computing/IT resources for personal gain or benefit, or for the gain or benefit of others.
  26. Disclosing information that is confidential by law, including educational records; unauthorized release of confidential or official information.
  27. Willful damage or theft of University property or property belonging to another person.



28. Falsification of institutional documents or records including applications for employment.
29. Violation of University procurement card or purchasing policies.
30. Violation of University System of Georgia or SSU policies or procedures.
31. Theft, misappropriation of funds, and/or unauthorized access, use or removal of State property.
32. Unauthorized release of confidential or official information.

Please note: Since a complete list of specific offenses is impossible, discharge is not limited to the situations described above.

### ***PERSONAL APPEARANCE AND DRESS CODE***

Employees are expected to use good judgment at all times regarding their personal appearance. Employees are expected to dress appropriately, to be neat, to wear clean clothing, and to be careful of their personal hygiene. Flagrant violations of commonly accepted standards of cleanliness or dress may be cause for disciplinary action. Questions concerning the standard of dress should be directed to immediate supervisor.

### ***PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS***

The University subscribes to the concept of performance management. Therefore, an annual Performance Appraisal should be prepared on each employee by the immediate supervisor for purposes of advising the employee of his/her strengths and weaknesses of job performances as well as providing a basis for the determination of pay increases, promotion, demotion, retention, or transfer. It also provides an opportunity for a discussion of job description changes, of plans for employee development and of goals for the year. This process should include a personal interview with the immediate supervisor. The process may also include a mid-year review at the discretion of the supervisor. Performance appraisals are not grievable. However, the employee has the right to include a written response to the performance management assessment to be included or attached thereto and made a part of the personnel file.

### ***TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT***

Human Resources provide workplace-training opportunities to University employees. These opportunities may include conferences, specialized training, and conventions. The University System of Georgia has established an educational assistance program, the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) available to full time benefits-eligible employees who have successfully completed at least six (6) months of employment in a benefits-eligible



position. Employee supervisor, department manager, and/or Vice Presidential approval may be required.

### ***SALARY AND BASIS FOR INCREASES***

The rate of salary for a particular position is dependent upon the budget and responsibilities of that position. Other factors to be considered are an employee's knowledge, training, special skills and experience.

Salary increases are normally granted on the basis of merit at the beginning of each fiscal year July 1, with an effective date of January 1, provided funds are available. A decision on a salary increase is made after considering the performance of the employee during the previous year. If one's performance evaluation indicates that one's overall job performance is satisfactory, one may be recommended for a salary increase in accordance with the salary administration guidelines for the new fiscal year. Since these guidelines are based on the availability of funds and Board guidelines regarding salary adjustments for any given fiscal year, there should be inferred no entitlement to a yearly salary increase based on a positive evaluation.

### ***PROMOTIONS AND TRANSFERS***

An employee may be eligible for promotion and transfer opportunities during his/her tenure at SSU. Whether employee initiated, department reorganization, or a vacant position opportunity, employees are urged to follow the procedures described below to ensure a smooth transition. An employee who wishes to apply for a vacant position opportunity within the University may confer with his/her supervisor before making application for the new position, if desired. Employees are normally not eligible to apply for a transfer during the probationary period. Sometimes it may be desirable in the interest of the employee and/or the University for an employee to be transferred from one position to another requiring comparable skill sets.

### ***PERSONNEL RECORDS***

The official, permanent personnel file of each employee is maintained in the Office of Human Resources. Employees may review their official, permanent personnel file with the appropriate Human Resources staff member by agreed appointment.



## **RESIGNATION**

Employees who resign for any reason should give as much notice as possible. The normal and expected minimum notice for support staff (nonexempt) employees is two weeks. A shorter period of time may be agreed upon in writing between the supervisor and the employee. A minimum notice for administrative staff (exempt) employees is one month, although in certain positions less time may be appropriate. Upon resignation, employees should contact their immediate supervisors for specific exiting procedures and information. Prior to leaving the University, an employee must schedule an exit interview with the Office of Human Resources. At this time employees will also have an opportunity to arrange for the conversion or transfer of certain benefits. All University property must be returned or paid prior to the last working day.

## **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT, DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS, AND DISMISSALS**

### **A. Performance Management, Counseling and Discipline**

Supervisors are responsible for achieving the highest performance possible from the activities under their control. Therefore, it is incumbent upon all supervisors to address unacceptable performance or conduct by their employees. Supervisors are given the discretion to choose the best available method to address unacceptable performance or conduct in light of overall circumstances. Such action may range from a simple verbal warning to discharge. Supervisors are encouraged to consult with the Director of Human Resources for assistance. Supervisors may use the performance appraisal process when applicable but should also address problems as they occur using other methods, including progressive discipline, as appropriate, but not limited to, verbal coaching, review of expectations, additional training, to documented conferences and warnings.

### **B. Dismissal, Demotion Or Suspension**

Dismissal, demotion or suspension of employees may be effected by the immediate supervisor. Supervisors should consult with Human Resources prior to a decision to demote, suspend or dismiss an employee. The following procedures do not apply to employees serving their provisional period. Prior to the decision, the supervisor should gather relevant facts; including allowing the employee an opportunity to provide an explanation regarding the performance or conduct that is prompting the decision. If discipline in the form of demotion, suspension or discharge is appropriate, the employee shall be informed in writing of the reasons for the action taken and granted a reasonable opportunity (not less than five working days) to appeal to the next highest authority. However, any such employee shall also be entitled to the procedural protection of a



hearing before a Board of Review convened by the President or his designee pursuant to Section II-K (Appeals) of the Business Procedures Manual, Volume 3A upon request made within 10 working days following the adverse personnel decision of the immediate supervisor, provided that the Board of Review hearing may take place either before or after the effective date of the personnel decision in question. An employee who has been dismissed or suspended without pay and is later reinstated shall be entitled to recover back pay unless the President or his designee determines otherwise. Any employee who is convicted of the unlawful manufacture, distribution, sale, use, or possession of marijuana, any controlled substance or other illegal or dangerous drug, or who admits guilt of any such offense in a court proceeding, shall be suspended for not less than two months or dismissed after compliance with procedural requirements set forth below. Such employee shall be required as a condition of re-employment following suspension to complete a drug abuse treatment and education program approved by the President or his/her designee.

### ***RE-EMPLOYMENT***

Former employees whose separations were under satisfactory circumstances are eligible to reapply for vacant positions and may be re-employed in the same type of work or in another job for which they are qualified. Special conditions relate to the re-employment of University System of Georgia retirees. The supervisor should coordinate the hire of a retiree through Human Resources. Upon re-employment, an individual will serve an initial six months provisional period and will receive benefits and privileges of employment on the same basis as a new employee. Sick leave, vacation, personal holiday, eligibility for merit increases, and all other benefits or privileges of employment based on length of service will accrue from the most recent service date only.

### ***SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY***

Federal law provides that it shall be an unlawful discriminatory practice for any employer, because of the sex of any person, to discharge without cause, to refuse to hire, or otherwise discriminate against any person with respect to any matter directly or indirectly related to employment or academic standing. Harassment of an employee on the basis of sex violates federal law. Sexual harassment of employees or students in the University System is prohibited and shall subject the offender to dismissal or other sanctions after compliance with procedural due process requirements. Unwelcome sexual advancements, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or academic standing.



2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment or academic decisions affecting an individual.
3. Such conduct unreasonably interferes with an individual's work or academic performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or academic environment.

### ***REPORTING, INVESTIGATION AND RESOLUTION***

All charges of sexual harassment within the University shall be made in writing to the EEO Officer and will be investigated. The EEO Officer shall either investigate the complaint of sexual harassment, or at his or her discretion, refer the complaint for investigation to the Office of the University Counsel or an employee of the Board of Regents who is not employed with the University and who possesses the requisite training and experience to investigate charges of sexual harassment. The investigator, after completing the investigation of the complaint shall within fourteen days submit findings and recommendations to the President, who shall, within a reasonable time after the submission of the investigation report, make a determination in the matter and, if appropriate, determine any disciplinary measures to be imposed. A final decision of the President may be appealed to the Board of Regents within twenty (20) days of the President's determination. The Board of Regents shall issue a determination on the appeal within a reasonable time.

### ***DISCRIMINATION POLICY***

The University System of Georgia is an affirmative action/equal opportunity/equal access employer that prohibits discrimination on the basis of age, disability, gender, national origin, race, religion, or status as a covered veteran. Allegations of discrimination will be handled in accordance with the complaint and investigation procedures outlined in this handbook.

### ***WORKPLACE CONFLICTS AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION***

In the day-to-day operation of any office or department, problems and misunderstanding sometimes occur. If left unresolved, serious personnel problems might result. While consideration, cooperation, and common sense can resolve most of these situations, a few require special attention. It is the policy of Savannah State University to resolve disputes fairly, and at the lowest possible level. When conflicts or disagreements occur, employees should first attempt to resolve them through discussion with their supervisor. However, an employee must follow their supervisor's orders, even if they disagree with them, unless the orders are clearly illegal or unsafe, in which case the matter should be



brought immediately to the next higher authority. When discussion with their supervisor fails to resolve a dispute, an employee has several other options. They may take the issue up with the next higher authority, or they may consult the Office of Human Resources. An Informal Mediation Program is also available to help resolve disputes and the use of this process is encouraged.

## ***GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES***

An employee may file a grievance under the following circumstances:

1. The employee has been suspended;
2. The employee has been discharged; or
3. The employee has been demoted or had his/her salary reduced.

An employee may not file a grievance, even in the above circumstances, if:

1. Discharge occurred during the six-month provisional period.
2. It concerns only a performance review completed by supervisor.
3. The reason for the demotion/salary reduction is a reorganization, program modification or financial exigency (such employees may apply directly to the Board of Regents for review).
4. The issue underlying the grievance is a charge of discrimination on the basis of race, sex, age, disability or religion. Such charges should be handled in accordance with University System of Georgia Business Procedures Manual.
5. The issues being grieved have been previously adjudicated.

## ***INTERNAL INVESTIGATIONS***

All employees of Savannah State University shall cooperate to the fullest extent possible in any internal investigation when directed to do so by their immediate supervisor or other persons given investigative authority by the President, unless the request would require the employee to engage in unlawful or unethical behavior. Failure to cooperate fully shall be grounds for adverse personnel action, including possible termination.

## **III. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

### ***IDENTIFICATION CARD***

All University employees must have a valid SSU issued I.D. card. Contact the Office of Human Resources for further information. Replacement ID's are subject to a replacement fee.



## **PARKING**

Employees may purchase parking permits at a nominal annual rate, which can be paid through payroll deduction. Contact the Office of Human Resources for further information.

## **KEY ISSUANCE/BUILDING ACCESS**

In order to maintain maximum security, employees receiving access keys to University offices/areas must follow the following procedures. "Key Request" forms are available from Physical Plant Operations. The appropriate department/unit head or administrative officer may authorize the key request. Under normal circumstances, keys will be issued within three days from the receipt of the request. Keys are not transferable and must not be passed from one employee to another. Replacement keys are subject to a replacement fee.

## **PAY SCHEDULE**

Payroll checks are issued to bi-weekly/non-exempt employees who are paid on an hourly basis will be paid every other Friday over 26 pay periods per year. Salary/exempt employees are paid over 12 pay periods per year. Pay checks may be automatically deposited to the employee's bank account(s). If necessary, checks may be picked up from the Office of Fiscal Affairs. Non-exempt employees who are paid on an hourly basis should complete time cards/sheets and/or must report any deviations from their normal work schedule.

## **PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS**

*Mandatory payroll deductions may include:*

1. Federal Income Tax
2. Social Security (FICA)
3. State Teachers' Retirement Program (if required, based on employment status)
4. State income tax
6. Court-ordered garnishments and child support orders
7. Federal and state income tax levies
8. Georgia Defined Contribution Plan (if required, based on employment status)
9. Other mandatory or court ordered deductions

*Voluntary deductions include:*

1. Health insurance



2. State Charitable Contributions Program
3. U.S. Savings Bonds
4. Georgia 529 Higher Education Savings Plan
5. 403B Plan Savings Plan
6. Certain approved commercial insurance premiums
7. BOR-sponsored voluntary life and accident insurance premiums
8. Credit Union Deductions

For a more complete list of current payroll deductions, contact the Department of Human Resources.

### ***SERVICE AWARDS***

SSU recognizes full-time and part time regular employees who complete five years of continuous service and every five years thereafter at an annual service awards program. These awards generally are given in 5 year increments on an annual basis to those who completed the required years of service by December 31 of the preceding year. Other types of employee awards may be given throughout the year by SSU and various SSU units. If such awards include a monetary gift, the award must be paid through payroll services, and appropriate taxes will be withheld.

### ***OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES***

Any outside occupation, pursuit or endeavor that interferes with the regular and punctual performance of an employee's duties is prohibited. In such cases, the University employment may be terminated. Before engaging in self-employment or salaried work or accepting positions of responsibility outside the University, the employee should discuss his/her plans with the immediate supervisor if there are any questions as to whether such activities might interfere with or be in conflict with University employment.

Professional employees are encouraged to participate in professional activity that does not interfere with the regular and punctual discharge of official duties provided the activity meets one of the following criteria: (1) is a means of personal professional development; (2) serves the community, state or nation; or (3) is consistent with the objectives of the University.

No employee of the University System of Georgia (whether paid or unpaid) may hold or be a candidate for public or political elective office at the state or federal level while employed by the University System or take an active part in a political campaign. Employees may seek and hold elective office at other than the state or federal level or appointive office when such candidacy does not conflict or interfere with the employee's duties and responsibilities to the University.



## ***SOLICITATION***

Employees should not engage in commercial solicitation or vending. This includes selling, delivering, or collecting for products, insurance, etc. Neither should University telephones, computers or other equipment be used for those activities.

## ***GARNISHMENTS***

The University considers the acceptance and settlement of just and honest debts to be a mark of personal responsibility. Failure to meet personal financial obligations causes discredit to the University. By law, the University is required to accept and process garnishments served by court officials. Continuing instances of default in payment of debts resulting in repeated garnishment of wages shall be sufficient grounds to terminate for cause, in accordance with state law and Board policy.

## ***EMPLOYEES AFFECTED BY REORGANIZATION, PROGRAM MODIFICATION, OR FINANCIAL EXIGENCY***

Employees who are terminated, demoted or otherwise adversely affected by reorganization, program modification, or financial exigency, as approved and determined by the President, shall not be governed by the Dismissal, Demotion, or Suspension, or Grievance Procedures as described in this handbook. Such employees shall, however, have the right to appeal to the Board of Regents.

## ***CONFIDENTIAL RECORDS AND INFORMATION***

Many employees will have access to confidential records and information in their regular work assignments. Privileged and confidential information must not be shared with unauthorized personnel or individuals. Employees who violate confidentiality will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action and where appropriate, civil action for recovery of damages.

## ***USE OF STATE PROPERTY***

Employees of the University have a responsibility to help minimize the costs of daily operations. State property should be given the same care as one's personal property. Employees are not permitted to use University supplies or equipment for private/personal purposes. The conduct of any activity on SSU property shall be in such a



manner as not to obstruct, or unreasonably interfere with, legitimate business or the free flow of traffic by persons rightfully using the grounds or facilities. Employees are responsible for the conduct of any visitors brought to the office as their guest. Violations of these guidelines by a visitor can subject the employee to disciplinary action.

## ***TELEPHONE SERVICE, FAX MACHINES, AND COMPUTERS***

Telephones, fax machines and computers are to be utilized for business purposes, not personal calls, faxes, emails or projects. Prompt calls and courteous manners are expected by all users. Employees should consult their supervisor to become familiar with the procedure to place calls.

### ***Telephone procedures:***

1. Prompt, courteous answers to telephone calls should be a self-imposed rule. It is a good practice to identify oneself and one's department/unit when answering or making a call.
2. Personal long distance calls must not be charged to SSU telephone numbers.
3. Personal telephone calls should be kept to a minimum. Supervisors are required to observe the frequency of such calls and to warn employees who use the phone excessively for personal calls.

***Computer procedures:*** There is an extensive and lengthy policy covering the use of Savannah State University computer equipment. For additional information or for a copy of the policy, contact the Computer Systems and Information Technology Office or visit the SSU policy website at: <http://www.savannahstate.edu/it/security.htm>

## ***SSU MAIL SYSTEM***

SSU mail system exists for the delivery of official interoffice/interdepartmental mail. Correspondence from non-SSU entities such as corporations, companies, and nonprofit organizations must be processed through the United States Postal Service. Once processed, it will be delivered by the campus post office. Under no circumstances may the postage for personal mail be charged to a SSU account. Use of the SSU mail system for personal purposes is unauthorized use of SSU property and may lead to discharge. Use of the SSU mail system for sending chain letters is a misuse of SSU and state property; therefore, use of the SSU mail system for sending personal chain letters is strictly prohibited.



## **PUBLICATIONS**

Several publications are designed specifically for employees of Savannah State University:

1. SSU Intranet website: <http://www.savannahstate.edu>
2. USG Internet website: <http://www.usg.edu/>

## **PERSONAL USE OF STATE VEHICLES**

State vehicles may not be used for personal purposes except as stipulated by the state. Non state employees should not be permitted to drive state vehicles.

## **SAFEGUARDING SSU EQUIPMENT**

If you handle SSU equipment, you are responsible for the care and security of that equipment while it is under your control. You are not permitted to use SSU equipment for personal reasons. Unauthorized use or removal of SSU equipment or property may be cause for immediate discharge. If you are found guilty of carelessness or mischievous, malicious, or willful destruction of SSU equipment or loss of property, you may be required to pay for the repair, recovery, or replacement of such equipment or property. In addition, this may be a cause for immediate discharge.

## **OWNERSHIP OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS**

Savannah State University recognizes that research and scholarship should be encouraged and carried out without regard to financial gain from licensing fees, royalties, or other such income. However, SSU also recognizes that patentable inventions, discoveries, software programs, and other intellectual property often arise from SSU related staff or faculty efforts. The policies governing the administration of inventions are included in the Board of Regents, University System of Georgia Policy Manual. Other policies govern other forms of intellectual property including computer software. Those policies also provide recognition and incentive to inventors and at the same time ensure that SSU shares in the rights pertaining to inventions in which it has an investment. Any income accruing to the SSU is used in the furtherance of its academic mission.



## **GRATUITIES**

### **A. Prohibited Receipt of Gifts by Savannah State University Employees**

An employee of Savannah State University shall not directly or indirectly solicit, receive, accept, or agree to receive a thing of value by inducing the reasonable belief that the giving of a gift will influence his/her performance or failure to perform any official action. The acceptance of a benefit, reward or consideration where the purpose of the gift is to influence an employee in the performance of his/her official functions is a felony under O.C.G.A. § 16-10-2. An employee of the University System of Georgia or any other person on his/her behalf, is prohibited from knowingly accepting, directly or indirectly, a gift from any vendor or lobbyist as those terms are defined in Georgia statutes (O.C.G.A. 21-5-70(6) and 45-1-6(a)(5)b. If a gift has been accepted, it must be either returned to the donor or transferred to a charitable organization. A gift may be accepted by the employee on behalf of the institution subject to reporting requirements of the Board of Regents. If the gift is accepted, the person receiving the gift shall not maintain custody of the gift for any period of time beyond that reasonably necessary to arrange for the transfer of custody and ownership of the gift. For purposes of this policy a gift is defined as lodging, transportation, personal services, a gratuity, subscription, membership, trip, loan, extension of credit, forgiveness of debt, advance or deposit of money, or anything of value. A gift shall not include:

1. Food or beverage consumed at an occasional meal or event provided the value is reasonable under the circumstances but in no event exceeds \$100 per person.
2. Food, beverages, and registration at group events to which substantial numbers of employees of an institution and/or the University is invited.
3. Food, beverage, or expenses afforded employees, relatives or others that are associated with normal and customary business or social functions or activities.
4. Actual and reasonable expenses for food, beverages, travel, lodging and registration provided to permit participation in a meeting, demonstration, or training related to official or professional duties if participation has been approved in writing by the President, or his/her designee.
5. Promotional items generally distributed to the general public.
6. Textbooks, software, and instructional materials to be reviewed.
7. An award, plaque, certificate, memento, or similar item given in recognition of the recipient's civic, charitable, political, professional, private or public service or achievement.
8. Legitimate salary, honoraria, benefit, fees, commissions, or expenses associated with the recipient's non-public business, employment, trade, or profession.
9. Gifts from a person or entity who is neither a lobbyist nor a vendor as those terms are defined in State Statutes, nor a student or patient at an institution.



10. Consulting fees, honoraria, or financial benefits from sponsors or foundations, received as part of a negotiated contractual agreement and in conformance with the University.
11. Gifts to or from the University Foundation or other separately incorporated, charitable entities.

## **B. Appearance of Conflicts of Interest**

An employee shall make every reasonable effort to avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest. An appearance of conflict exists when a reasonable person will conclude from the circumstances that the employee's ability to protect the public interest, or perform public duties, is compromised by personal interest. An appearance of conflict can exist even in the absence of a legal conflict of interest. Employees are referred to State Conflict of Interest Statutes O.C.G.A. §45-10-20 through §45-10-70 and The Board of Regents Policies 802.16 through 802.1603, <http://www.usg.edu/admin/humex/policy/sec800/html> and institutional policies governing professional and outside activities.

## **C. Other Rules of Conduct**

1. Every employee shall make a due and diligent effort to determine whether he/she has a conflict of interest or appearance of conflict before taking any action.
2. Every employee shall continually monitor, evaluate, and manage his/her personal financial and professional affairs to ensure the absence of conflicts of interest and appearance of conflicts.

## **D. Violations**

A violation of this policy may subject an employee to disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

## ***SAFETY***

All employees are expected to perform their duties in a safe manner. On-the-job safety is the employee's responsibility and every effort should be made to avoid careless work habits. Any unsafe working conditions encountered by an employee should be reported to his/her supervisor. If injured while on duty, an employee should immediately report the incident to his/her immediate supervisor.



## **BULLETIN BOARDS**

Bulletin boards are placed throughout campus and in SSU Offices and display information of interest to employees. They are intended for official information. Contact the Office of Student Programs and Organizations at <http://www.savstate.edu/adm/sa/index.htm> to obtain prior stamped approval for any postings.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

Articles found on the premises should be turned in to your supervisor or department head. Usually such items are turned over to Campus Police.

## **EMPLOYEE TRAVEL**

Travel by employees on official University business is covered by regulations relating to reimbursement for reasonable and necessary expenses. Employees required to make official University System Office trips out of state must complete an Authorization to travel form and have the form approved by the appropriate personnel before travel will be allowed. After completing travel, a travel expense statement should be completed, signed and approved by the appropriate personnel and submitted to the Office of Fiscal Affairs for reimbursement. Any questions concerning travel regulations also should be directed to Fiscal Affairs.

## **TIME LOST DUE TO BAD WEATHER OR OTHER EMERGENCIES**

In the event of inclement weather or any emergency making attendance difficult for SSU employees, the President may declare leave with or without pay as he/she shall decide. If inclement weather or other emergency conditions affecting all agencies statewide or within a geographic region develop during the workday, agencies will be notified by telephone and/or fax of any authorized changes to normal work hours. If such conditions develop during the night and warrant delayed opening or official closing, official announcements will be made via the media. Employees also may call Campus Police (912-356-2186). Announcements will be made as soon as possible following any decision to close operations. Employees should listen to one of the local radio and television stations for information about alternate work hours or office closing, and should be reminded that announcements may not be accurate. In the absence of official notification of delayed opening or office closure, employees are expected to report to work on time or contact their supervisor or Campus Police. It is the employee's responsibility to contact their supervisor during such emergencies and to report the conditions that are peculiar to their own situation. When an employee is prevented from reporting to work or remaining at work because of the closure of the campus, such absence is considered to be with pay



and not charged to any accrued leave or compensatory time. Otherwise, unless declared by the Governor, Board of Regents or the University President, such absences due to an employee's personal circumstances shall be charged to available leave or compensatory time or shall be unpaid. The employee or department manager must complete a leave request form.

## ***FIRE AND OTHER EMERGENCY EVACUATIONS***

Smoking is limited to designated areas. The importance of fire prevention in all areas cannot be overemphasized. Carelessness and thoughtlessness are two primary reasons for fires. Fire hazards such as smoking in nonsmoking areas, defective wiring, fire doors propped open, blocked corridors/exits, and the accumulation of combustible items should be reported to campus police as soon as possible.

### **A. Building Evacuation**

Should it become necessary to evacuate the building, all building occupants should proceed to the nearest exit, move away from the building, and assemble in a location predetermined by each department or building coordinator. This will provide a quick and easy way to account for all personnel. It also is important for the Fire Department to have clear and unobstructed access to the building. Do not return to the building unless told to do so by the Fire Department, Police, or the Building Coordinator.

## **IV. BENEFITS**

### ***ANNUAL LEAVE***

The University provides paid vacations for all regular classified employees working at least one-half time under a policy of annual leave accrual. The annual leave policy for SSU employees is as follows: Employees with 0 to 5 years of service accrue vacation leave at the rate of one and one-fourth days a month (10 hours) for a total of 15 days annually. After 5 years of service, the accrual increases to one and one-half days a month (12 hours) or 18 days annually. After 10 years of service, the accrual increases to one and three-fourth days a month (14 hours) or 21 days annually. Senior Administrators shall accrue annual leave at the rate of one and three-fourth working days per month (14 hours) or 21 days annually. A regular employee working one-half time or more but less than full time will earn and accrue annual leave in an equivalent ratio to the percentage of time employed. Annual leave is accrued on the last working day of each month and employees who begin work prior to the 16<sup>th</sup> of the month will earn annual leave for that month.



Earned annual leave may be accrued up to a maximum of 45 working days although, during the year, the annual leave balance may be greater than 45 days. At the end of each calendar year all annual leave account balances in excess of 45 days will be reduced to 45 days. Earned annual leave shall be taken at times mutually acceptable to the employee and his/her immediate supervisor; however, the supervisor should make an effort to accommodate the employee, if at all possible. Employees shall be compensated for all accrued annual leave time up to 45 working days upon termination of employment for any reason. A terminating employee shall not accrue any annual leave after his/her last working day. Temporary employees and regular employees working less than one-half time do not earn or accrue vacation time.

**HOLIDAYS**

Regular employees working one-half time or greater are entitled to twelve paid holidays each year. Twelve days are designated as “official holidays.” One day may be designated as a floating holiday at the discretion of the President .

**A. Official Holidays**

On the holidays that are identified as official holidays, the University is closed. These holidays are the following: (adjustments are made when a holiday falls on Saturday or Sunday):

New Year’s Day	January 1st and the day before
Martin Luther King, Jr.’s Birthday	3rd Monday in January
Memorial Day	4 <sup>th</sup> Monday in May
Independence Day	July 4th
Labor Day	1 <sup>st</sup> Monday in September
Thanksgiving Day	4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday in November and the day following
Winter Break	December 25 <sup>th</sup> and the day before and following
One floating holiday	Determined by the calendar and approved by the President



Regular employees working one-half time or more but less than full-time are entitled to receive holiday pay equivalent to the hours they were scheduled to work on the holiday. Terminating employees shall not be paid for any official holidays occurring after their last working day of employment.

### ***SICK LEAVE WITH PAY***

All regular employees shall accumulate sick leave at the rate of one working day per calendar month of service with no maximum accrual limit. All regular, part-time employees working one-half time or more will accumulate sick leave in an equivalent ratio to the percentage of time employed. If sick leave is claimed for a continuous period in excess of five workdays, a physician's statement is required for the employee to claim further sick leave.

In the event of illness, injury or death in one's immediate family, an employee may, upon approval by his/her immediate supervisor, be allowed necessary time off with pay chargeable to sick leave. The amount of time allowed shall be determined by the immediate supervisor based on individual circumstances. In the event of death in the immediate family, sick leave with pay may not exceed five working days. For purposes of leave granted in the event of death, immediate family is defined to include husband or wife, children, mother, father, sister, brother, grandparent, the in-laws of the afore mentioned, and certain other relatives when, in the judgment of the employee's immediate supervisor, the employee's presence is justified.

### ***LEAVE FOR MARROW AND ORGAN DONATION***

1. Employees who serve as an **organ donor** for the purpose of transplantation shall receive a leave of absence, with pay, of thirty days.
2. Employees who serve as a **bone marrow donor** for the purpose of transplantation shall receive a leave of absence, with pay of seven days.

### ***SICK LEAVE WITHOUT PAY***

A regular employee unable to return to work after using up all accumulated sick leave may be granted sick leave without pay for a period not to exceed one year. Such approval of sick leave without pay does not guarantee the absent employee a position upon return from the leave of absence; however, it does allow the absent employee to continue his/her insurance benefits with System participation in the premium cost. All other benefits are prohibited which would otherwise accrue to the employee.



## **PERSONAL LEAVE**

At the approval of the University President, personal leave of absence without pay for periods not to exceed one year may be approved. Such approved personal leave shall allow the employee the right to elect to continue group insurance benefits.

## **FAMILY/MEDICAL LEAVE**

In accordance with the Family & Medical Leave Act, employees who have worked for SSU for a total of at least twelve months (total, not necessarily continuous), and at least 1,250 hours during the 12 months preceding the commencement of the leave, are eligible for twelve (12) work weeks of family medical leave during any consecutive 12-month period. Family leave shall be granted in the event of: (a) the birth and care of a newborn child of the employee; (b) the legal placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care; (c) the care of an immediate family member (defined as the employee's spouse, child, or parent) with a serious health condition; or (d) a serious health condition of the employee himself/herself, which renders the employee unable to perform the duties of his/her job. Child is defined as a biological, adopted or foster child, a stepchild, or legal ward. The child must be under 18 years of age, or 18 and older if incapable of self-care due to physical or mental disability. Entitlement to family leave due to birth or adoption of a child expires twelve months after the birth date or date of adoption. Family leave for birth or adoption may not be taken intermittently. Leave because of a health condition of the employee or the employee's child, spouse, or parent may be taken intermittently. Spouses who both work for SSU may not take family leave at the same time when the leave is due to birth or adoption of a child and are limited to a combined twelve (12) weeks of leave.

The Family & Medical Leave Act defines a serious health condition as an illness, injury, or impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves:

1. Inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility, or
2. Continuing treatment by a healthcare provider.

A claim for leave because of a serious health condition of the employee or the employee's child, spouse, or parent must be supported by certification issued by the health care provider. In the case of a serious health condition of the employee, the certification shall be sufficient if it states (1) the date on which the serious health condition commenced; (2) the probable duration of the condition; and (3) a statement that the employee is unable to perform the functions of the position. In the case of a serious health condition of the employee's child, spouse or parent, the certification shall be sufficient if it states (1) the date on which the condition commenced; (2) the probable duration of the condition; and (3) a statement that the employee is needed to care for the child, spouse, or parent. The employee's immediate supervisor has the option to require



recertification at times deemed appropriate. Requests for family leave should be submitted in writing to the immediate supervisor with supporting medical certification. Employees are expected to provide as much notice as possible in requesting family leave in order that appropriate adjustments may be made to handle workload commitments. Family leave may be unpaid (SSU is not required to grant FMLA as paid time off.). Employees may elect to utilize, or SSU may require, that employees utilize their accrued paid sick leave and/or annual leave, as appropriate, for such absences. The employee will be informed in writing that the leave time is being counted toward the 12-week family and medical leave entitlement. If the requested leave period is less than 12 weeks and the employee desire a continuance of the leave, the employee will be required to furnish a physician's statement documenting the need for continued leave and estimating a date of return. If a request for family leave is denied for any reason, notice of the denial will be provided to the requesting employee by the supervisor denying the request in a timely manner. The notification will be provided in writing and will include the reason for denial. In order for insurance benefits to continue (as in the case with other types of sick leave without pay) the employee must make the normal premium payment and must contact the Benefits section to arrange for premium payments during the period of the leave without pay.

### ***MILITARY LEAVE***

Leave with pay will be granted to regular/full-time and regular/part-time employees who are members of the Georgia National Guard or a reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States for periods specified by official orders. This type of leave does not cover drill periods and/or reserve training periods on "week-ends" or other scheduled days off. The amount of Military leave with pay is limited to eighteen (18) workdays in any one federal fiscal year (October 1 - September 30), and may not exceed eighteen (18) workdays in any one continuous period of such absence.

In the event the Governor declares an emergency and orders an employee to State active duty as a member of the National Guard, such employee, while performing such duty, shall be paid his/her salary or other compensation as an employee for a period not exceeding thirty (30) days in any one federal fiscal year (October 1 - September 30) and not exceeding thirty (30) days in any one continuous period of such State active duty service.

### ***INCLEMENT WEATHER/EMERGENCY LEAVE***

In the event of inclement weather or any emergency, making attendance difficult for employees, the University President may declare leave with or without pay, as he/she shall decide. (For additional information please see University Emergency Preparedness Manual).



## **LEAVE PROCEDURE**

If an absence from work is for leave purposes, the employee must complete an annual/sick leave form. If no leave is available, the earnings for the pay period affected will be reduced.

## **COURT DUTY**

Employees called for jury duty or witness duty will be paid at the normal rate of pay for any regularly scheduled time lost.

## **VOTING**

Employees are encouraged to vote in all federal, state and local elections. An employee whose work schedule would otherwise prevent him/her from voting may, at the discretion of his/her immediate supervisor, be permitted sufficient time off with pay, not to exceed two hours, in order to vote. Such supervisory discretion should not be unreasonably withheld.

## **RETIREMENT PLANS**

Retirement benefits for most regular, half-time or greater employees of Savannah State University, as a condition of employment, are provided through the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia. However, certain employees of the University whose positions are eligible for participation in the Optional Retirement Plan pursuant to the authority granted to the Board of Regents under O.C.G.A Section 47-21-7 and whose positions have specifically been identified as meeting the criteria under this law have an option to become a member of the either the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia or the Optional Retirement Plan (ORP). As a condition of employment, all employees eligible for the Optional Retirement Plan must elect to become a member of that program within 60 days or they will automatically become members of the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia. **The retirement plan election is irrevocable.** An established contribution by employees of his/her gross salary is required under either the Teachers Retirement System or the Optional Retirement Plan. There is also an employer contribution made to the employee's chosen plan by the University.



## **HEALTH BENEFITS**

Savannah State University offers group health benefit plans to all regular employees working one halftime or more. There are currently several plans available to SSU employees, all of which are administered by a third party. Plan materials providing detailed information on the options available are distributed to employees at the time of hire and during the Annual Open Enrollment period. For each plan, application for coverage must be made within 31 days of employment; otherwise an application would have to be made during the annual open enrollment period. Eligible dependents included under family coverage are the spouse and unmarried children up to age 19. In addition, unmarried dependent children between the ages of 19 and 26 may retain their coverage if enrolled full-time in an accredited school or college. Also included as an eligible dependent is an unmarried child of the employee, regardless of age, who, prior to age 19 becomes incapable of self-support because of mental or physical incapacity, and who is totally dependent upon the employee. Any change in the eligibility of an insured dependent should be immediately reported to the Department of Human Resources. Families in which both husband and wife are employees of the University System may not insure each other or cross-cover the same dependents under this plan. If application is made for family coverage it may be either in the husband's name or the wife's name, but not both. Please refer to the health benefit booklets for further information on these plans.

## **DENTAL PLAN**

Savannah State University offers to all its regular employees working one-half time or greater a self-insured group dental benefit plan. In order to acquire this coverage, application must be made within 31 days of employment. Because there is no scheduled open enrollment period for the System's dental plan, employees should give serious consideration to this option upon employment. If application is not made within 31 days of employment the employee will not be able to enroll at a later date. Coverage will begin on either the date of employment or the first of the following month. All eligible employees and their dependents should be added upon enrollment because there will not be another opportunity to add existing dependents. Please refer to the Dental Benefits Plan booklet for further information. Families in which both husband and wife are employees of the University System may not insure each other or cross-cover the same dependents under this plan. If application is made for family coverage it may be either in the husband's coverage or the wife's name, but not both. In order to enroll newly acquired dependents, employees should contact the Department of Human Resources.



## **COBRA**

If an employee or his/her dependent loses medical or dental coverage, he/she may be able to extend coverage under the provisions of a federal law known as the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1986 (COBRA). This law provides for the continuation of insurance benefits to employees and/or dependents if certain qualifying events take place such as termination of employment, a reduction in work hours, divorce or attainment of the maximum age by a dependent. Benefits may be extended for a maximum of 18, 29, or 36 consecutive months, depending upon the qualifying event. The covered individual must also make full and prompt premium payment. Under COBRA the entire premium plus a 2% administrative fee must be paid by the employee.

Employees should consult the Medical and Dental plan booklets for more information on COBRA continuation rights. Requests to elect COBRA continuation should be made to the Department of Human Resources. Employees also should notify that office if one of the qualifying events occurs.

## **LIFE INSURANCE**

Savannah State University offers a group life insurance program to its regular employees working one-half time or more. A basic amount of life insurance (\$25,000) is provided at no charge to all eligible employees upon application for this coverage by the employee. An employee may also purchase additional supplemental insurance coverage. The dollar amount of supplemental life insurance coverage available is dependent upon the employee's annual salary and is a multiple of one, two or three times that salary amount. Dependent life insurance is also available on each eligible dependent. No evidence of insurability is required for supplemental and/or dependent coverage if application for such coverage is made within 31 days of employment. Both the basic and supplemental life insurance plans contain accidental death and dismemberment benefits. Dependent coverage does not contain accidental death and dismemberment benefits. Children of parents who are both employed by the University System may be insured under the dependent coverage of either parent but not under the coverage of both parents. Insurance premiums due for life insurance coverage are deducted from the employee's payroll checks. An employee who terminates employment with SSU may convert all or part of the group insurance to an individual policy (except term insurance) at a premium rate based upon the age of the applicant at the time of conversion. Such conversions are permitted without evidence of insurability. Please refer to the benefits booklet for more information.



## **ACCIDENTAL DEATH & DISMEMBERMENT INSURANCE**

When an employee purchases supplemental life insurance, the employee automatically receives the equivalent amount of insurance for accidental death and dismemberment (AD&D). Application for eligibility is required after 31 days of employment.

## **FLEXIBLE SPENDING ACCOUNTS**

Employees are eligible to participate in flexible spending accounts for either medical expenses or dependent care expenses. These accounts allow the employee to set aside a portion of his/her salary on a pre-tax basis. The account is used to reimburse the employee for incurred qualified medical or dependent care expenses. By setting aside the monies on a pre-tax basis, the employee can increase the amount of his/her net take-home pay. Each plan has a limit to the amount that may be set aside. This limit is set annually by the Internal Revenue Service. Annual election of participation is required.

## **PRE-TAXED ACCOUNTS (CAFETERIA PLAN)**

The Board of Regents has established a pre-tax premium account plan, which allows employees to pay their health, life and dental insurance premiums with payroll deductions, made before taxes are applied. Because an employee's pay is reduced by the amount of health, life and/or dental insurance premiums, that amount will not be shown on the pay-stub or on the W-2 statement received at the end of the year. By using pre-tax dollars as opposed to after-tax dollars, an employee can increase take-home pay. Please refer to the benefits booklet for additional information.

## **SOCIAL SECURITY**

University employees participate in the Social Security Program. Contributions under this program are jointly made by the individual and the University. The rates of contribution and the retirement benefits are established periodically by Congress.

## **WORKERS' COMPENSATION**

All employees of the University are covered under the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act. This Act provides protection for the employee in the event of injury or death while performing services for the University. If an employee incurs an on-the-job accident, he/she should immediately notify the immediate supervisor in order that the necessary paperwork may be completed within the ten days required by law.



### **TAX DEFERRED ANNUITIES**

The U.S. Internal Revenue Service Code provides that SSU may purchase tax deferred annuities on behalf of employees and that the portion of the employee's salary put into an annuity will not be taxed to the employee currently but when received in a refund or in retirement income. Employees interested in this voluntary program should contact the Department of Human Resources.

### **CREDIT UNION**

Savannah State University operates a credit union available to its employees. All University employees are eligible to apply for membership to the SavState Employees Credit Union. Additional information about the plan is available upon request from Human Resources.

### **TUITION REMISSION**

The University System of Georgia is committed to helping full-time employees pursue growth and development. Tuition remission is available to all full-time (100% work commitment) employees who have been employed for at least six (6) months prior to the application period and are working towards a degree at one of the thirty-five (35) participating University System of Georgia (USG) institutions. Tuition and most fees are waived for up to eight (8) hours per semester. Employees are responsible for obtaining admission to the University System institution of their choice. Once an employee has been accepted, he/she must obtain a tuition remission form and submit completed form to the supervisor for approval. (See Human Resources for additional information). The employee should send the form to Human Resources for processing. The tuition remission program is offered subject to the availability of space in class or classes.

### **LIBRARY PRIVILEGES**

All regular employees are entitled to use the Library. A SSU ID card must be presented to check out materials from the library. Contact the Library directly for further information.

### **CORPORATE CREDIT CARD**

Savannah State University makes available to eligible employees and/or departments the opportunity to obtain a Corporate Credit Card at no cost to the employee. The Corporate Card is provided to be of benefit of department to make legitimate office supply



purchases or for eligible employees who must travel at state expense. The agreement entered into between the State of Georgia Department of Administrative Services and the corporate card service provider stipulates that an employee must have a certain income level to be eligible for the corporate card. The requestor must submit to a credit check and/or background check prior to submitting an application for a corporate card or a P-Card. (For additional information, see SSU Background Check and Credit Card Policies).

## **UPDATES, CHANGES AND/OR REVISIONS TO PERSONNEL HANDBOOK**

The policies and procedures in this handbook are designed to serve as guidelines for management action. **All policies and procedures outlined in this handbook are subject to change. All updates, changes and/or revisions will be noted in the on-line version of the Personnel Handbook.** All references noted within should be reviewed against the most up-to-date version of the University System of Georgia's Business Procedures Manual located at: <http://www.bor.usg.edu>.

## **V. GENERAL CONTACT INFORMATION:**

### **For benefits related questions or concerns, contact:**

Ms. Carolyn Smith-Fletcher, Benefits Manager, [fletcher@savannahstate.edu](mailto:fletcher@savannahstate.edu)

### **For policy administration, classification, and employment questions, contact:**

Dr. Sandra McCord Best, Director of Human Resources, [bestsm@savannahstate.edu](mailto:bestsm@savannahstate.edu)

Ms. Dana Ellis, Human Resources Specialist, [ellisd@savannahstate.edu](mailto:ellisd@savannahstate.edu)

### **For payroll related questions, contact:**

Ms. Carmela Hall, Payroll Specialist, [hallc@savannahstate.edu](mailto:hallc@savannahstate.edu)

### **For training and development questions, contact:**

Mrs. Pauline Harris, Training and Development Coordinator,

[harrispa@savannahstate.edu](mailto:harrispa@savannahstate.edu)

Ms. Kiona Singleton, Professional Development Administrative Assistant,

[singletonk@savannahstate.edu](mailto:singletonk@savannahstate.edu)

Dr. Sandra McCord Best, Director of Human Resources, [bestsm@savannahstate.edu](mailto:bestsm@savannahstate.edu)



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