



# Code of Student Conduct

## PREFACE

Consistent with its mission, Savannah State University takes seriously its commitment to fostering and maintaining an environment conducive to student learning and growth through curricular and co-curricular programs. At the same time, the University has high expectations that students govern their behavior, actions, and practices responsibly and with civility. Students are therefor, expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the objectives and standards of conduct established by the University. A violation of any section of the code will lead to disciplinary action regardless of class level, age, race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or physical ability level.

### Core Values of Student Conduct at Savannah State University

- ***Integrity***: Savannah State students exemplify honesty, honor and a respect for the truth in all of their dealings.
- ***Community***: Savannah State students build and enhance their community. Savannah State students will be active and engaged citizens.
- ***Social Justice***: Savannah State students are just and equitable in their treatment of all members of the community and act to discourage and/or intervene to prevent unjust and inequitable behaviors.
- ***Respect***: Savannah State students show positive regard for each other, for property and for the community.
- ***Responsibility***: Savannah State students are given and accept a high level of responsibility to self, to others and to the community.
- ***Tradition***: Savannah State students recognize the importance of our traditions and the legacy we leave for future generations of students.

Savannah State University students are responsible for knowing the information, policies and procedures outlined in this document. The University reserves the right to make changes to this code as necessary and once those changes are posted online, they are in effect. Students are encouraged to check online for the updated versions of all policies and procedures.

*The Savannah State University Code of Student Conduct is adapted from The NCHERM Group Model Developmental Code of Student Conduct and is used here with permission.*

*The NCHERM Group Model Code Project, 2013.*

## SECTION 1: OFFICE OF STUDENT CONDUCT PHILOSOPHY

The University community is committed to fostering a campus environment that is conducive to academic inquiry, a productive campus life and thoughtful study and discourse. The student conduct program within the Office of Student Conduct is committed to an educational and developmental process that balances the interests of individual students with the interests of the entire University community.

A community exists on the basis of shared values and principles. At Savannah State University, student members of the community are expected to uphold and abide by certain standards of conduct that form the basis of the Code of Student Conduct. These standards are embodied within a set of core values that include integrity, social justice, respect, community, responsibility, and tradition.

Each member of the University community bears responsibility for their conduct and to assume reasonable responsibility for the behavior of others. When members of the community fail to exemplify these seven values by engaging in violation of the rules below, campus conduct proceedings are used to assert and uphold the Code of Student Conduct.

The student conduct process at the University is not intended to punish students; rather, it exists to protect the interests of the community and to challenge those whose behavior is not in accordance with our policies. Sanctions are intended to challenge students' moral and ethical decision-making and to help them bring their behavior into accord with our community expectations. When a student is unable to conform their behavior to community expectations, the student conduct process may determine that the student should no longer share in the privilege of participating in this community.

Students should be aware that the student conduct process is quite different from criminal and civil court proceedings. Procedures and rights in student conduct procedures are conducted with fairness to all, but do not include the same level of due process protection afforded by the courts in criminal or civil cases. Due process, as defined within these procedures, assures notice and a hearing before an objective decision-maker(s). No student will be found in violation of University policy without information showing that it is more likely than not that a policy violation occurred and any sanctions will be proportionate to the severity of the violation and to the cumulative conduct history of the student.

## ZERO TOLERANCE STATEMENT

Savannah State University strives to create an education environment free from fear and intimidation. All students have the right to attend Savannah State University in a safe and secure environment.

Violations of the following policies may lead to Residential and/or University Suspension/ Expulsion on the first offense:

- Sexual Assault, Harassment, or Misconduct
- Assault, Harassment, Bullying/Cyber-bullying, or Fighting
- Hazing
- Felony Theft/ Identity Theft
- Drug Sales/Distribution
- Weapons/Firearms/ Explosives
- Acts or Threats of Imminent Danger to others or that are likely to Endanger Others

## SECTION 2: JURISDICTION

Students at Savannah State University are provided a copy of the Code of Student Conduct by visiting <https://www.savannahstate.edu/student-affairs/student-ethics.shtml>. Hard copies are available upon request from the Office of Student Conduct, located in Suite 247, King Frazier Student Center. Students are responsible for having read and abiding by the provisions of the Code of Student Conduct.

The Code of Student Conduct and the student conduct process apply to the conduct of individual students, both undergraduate and graduate, and all Savannah State-affiliated student organizations. For the purposes of student conduct, Savannah State considers an individual to be a student when an offer of admission has been extended and thereafter as long as the student has a continuing educational interest in Savannah State.

Savannah State University retains conduct jurisdiction over students who choose to take a leave of absence, withdraw or have graduated for any misconduct that occurred prior to the leave, withdrawal or graduation. If sanctioned, a hold may be placed on the student's ability to re-enroll and/or obtain official transcripts and/or graduate and all sanctions must be satisfied prior to re-enrollment eligibility. In the event of serious misconduct committed while still enrolled but reported after the accused student has graduated, Savannah State may invoke these procedures and should the former student be found responsible, Savannah State may revoke that student's degree and/or continue to prevent student access to the University and its facilities.

The Code of Student Conduct applies to behaviors that take place on the campus, at University/College-sponsored events and may also apply off-campus when the Vice-President of Student Affairs or designee determines that the off-campus conduct affects a substantial Savannah State University interest. A substantial SSU interest is defined to include:

- Any situation where it appears that the student's conduct may present a danger or threat to the health or safety of him/herself or others; and/or

- Any situation that significantly impinges upon the rights, property or achievements of self or others or significantly breaches the peace and/or causes social disorder; and/or
- Any situation that is detrimental to the educational mission and/or interests of SSU;

The Code of Student Conduct may be applied to behavior conducted online, via email or other electronic medium. Students should also be aware that online postings such as blogs, web postings, chats and social networking sites are in the public sphere and are not private. These postings can subject a student to allegations of conduct violations if evidence of policy violations is posted online. Most online speech by students not involving Savannah State University networks or technology will be protected as free expression and not subject to this Code, with two notable exceptions:

- A threat, defined as “a threat a reasonable person would interpret as a serious expression of intent to inflict bodily harm upon specific individuals”;
- Speech posted online about SSU or its community members that causes a significant on-campus disruption.

The Code of Student Conduct applies to guests of community members whose hosts may be held accountable for the misconduct of their guests. Visitors to and guests of Savannah State may seek resolution of violations of the Code of Student Conduct committed against them by members of SSU community.

There is no time limit on reporting violations of the Code of Student Conduct; however, the longer someone waits to report an offense, the harder it becomes for University officials to obtain information and witness statements and to make determinations regarding alleged violations.

Though anonymous complaints are permitted, doing so may limit the University’s ability to investigate and respond to a complaint. Those who are aware of misconduct are encouraged to report it as quickly as possible to the Office of Student Conduct and/or to Campus Police.

A responding student facing an alleged violation of the Code of Student Conduct is not permitted to withdraw from Savannah State University until all allegations are resolved.

## University E-Mail Communication Statement

University email is Savannah State’s primary means of communication with students. Students are responsible for all communication delivered to their University email address. Failure to check your University email will NOT BE an acceptable excuse for failing to respond to a hearing request and/or any sanctions that are imposed as the result of a hearing. The University is not responsible to send correspondence to personal email accounts- all communication will be delivered through a student’s official SSU email account.

## SECTION 3: VIOLATIONS OF THE LAW

Alleged violations of federal, state and local laws may be investigated and addressed under the Code of Student Conduct. When an offense occurs over which SSU has jurisdiction, the University conduct

process will usually go forward notwithstanding any criminal complaint that may arise from the same incident.

The University reserves the right to exercise its authority of interim suspension upon notification that a student is facing criminal investigation and/or complaint. Interim suspensions are imposed until a hearing can be held, typically within five (5) business days. This hearing may resolve the allegation, or may be held to determine if the interim suspension should be continued. The interim suspension may be continued if a danger to the community is posed and SSU may be delayed or prevented from conducting its own investigation and resolving the allegation by the pendency of the criminal process. In such cases, the University will only delay its hearing until such time as it can conduct an internal investigation or obtain sufficient information independently or from law enforcement upon which to proceed. This delay will be no longer than two weeks from notice of the incident unless a longer delay is requested in writing by the complaining victim to allow the criminal investigation to proceed before the University process.

Students accused of crimes may request to take a leave from the University until the criminal charges are resolved. In such situations, the University procedure for voluntary leaves of absence is subject to the following conditions:

- The responding student must comply with all campus investigative efforts that will not prejudice their defense in the criminal trial; and
- The responding student must comply with all interim actions and/or restrictions imposed during the leave of absence; and
- The responding student must agree that, in order to be reinstated to active student status, they must first be subject to, and fully cooperate with, the campus conduct process and must comply with all sanctions that are imposed.

## SECTION 4: CODE OF CONDUCT POLICIES

### Core Values and Behavioral Expectations

Savannah State University considers the behavior described in the following sub-sections as inappropriate for the SSU community and in opposition to the core values set forth in this document. These expectations and policies apply to all students, whether undergraduate or graduate. The University encourages community members to report to University officials all incidents that involve the following actions. Any student found to have committed or to have attempted to commit the following misconduct is subject to the sanctions outlined in Section 7: Formal Conduct Procedures.

***Integrity:* Savannah State University students exemplify honesty, honor and a respect for the truth in all of their dealings. Behavior that violates this value includes, but is not limited to:**

1. ***Academic Dishonesty.*** Students are subject to disciplinary action for engaging in academic misconduct and academic dishonesty, which includes, but is not limited to, the following:
  - a. Submitting another's work as one's own or allowing another to submit one's work as though it were his or hers.
  - b. Several people completing an assignment and turning in multiple copies, all represented either implicitly or explicitly as individual work.

- c. Failure to properly acknowledge authorities quoted, cited or consulted in the preparation of written work (plagiarism). Specific examples of plagiarism are:
        - i. Copying and/or presenting the words of others as one's own writing, including from Internet sources.
        - ii. Copying words, even if you cite the sources, unless appropriate quotation is noted.
        - iii. Copying words and then changing them a little, even if you give the source.
        - iv. Expressing in your own words someone else's ideas as your own.
      - d. The use of any materials, textbook, notes, cellular phones, MP3 players, or other electronic devices during an examination without the expressed permission of the instructor.
      - e. The receiving or giving of unauthorized help on assignments.
      - f. Stealing a problem solution from an instructor.
      - g. Tampering with experimental data to obtain 'desired' results or creating results for experiments not done ("dry labbing").
      - h. Tampering with or destroying the work of others.
      - i. Submitting substantial portions of the same academic work for credit of honors more than once without permission of the present instructor.
      - j. Lying about these or other academic matters.
      - k. Falsifying college records, forms or other documents.
2. **Falsification.** Knowingly furnishing or possessing false, falsified or forged materials, documents, accounts, records, identification or financial instruments;
3. **Unauthorized Entry/Use of University Facilities and Vehicles.** Students are subject to disciplinary action for:
- a. Unauthorized entry into any University building, vehicle, residence hall, office, or other facilities. Students are further prohibited from remaining without authorization in any building after normal closing hours;
  - b. Unauthorized use of any University facility;
  - c. Unauthorized use of any University vehicle; and
  - d. Possess keys or duplicate keys without proper authorization.
  - e. Trespassing, propping or unauthorized use of alarmed doors for entry into or exit from a University building;
  - f. Permitting use or using others Student IDs/Staff IDs/ keys to access buildings or campus entry points .
4. **Collusion.** Action or inaction with another or others to violate the Code of Student Conduct; Examples of Collusion (formerly Joint Responsibility) include but are not limited to:
- a. Students are subject to disciplinary action for knowingly acting in concert with others to violate University regulations.
  - b. Students are subject to disciplinary action for being aware of the existence of a violation of University regulations and failing to take reasonable action to report the violations in a timely manner.
  - c. Students are responsible for violations of University regulations that occur in on campus residential facility rooms and are to report such violations in a timely manner.
  - d. Students are responsible at all times for the actions of guests or family members that have been brought to campus or a visiting a member of the campus community.
5. **Trust.** Violations of positions of trust within the community; deliberately misleading University officials or agents attempting to gain information for University business.

6. ***Election Tampering.*** Tampering with the election of any SSU-recognized student organization (minor election code violations are addressed by the SGA).
7. ***Taking of Property.*** Intentional and unauthorized taking of University property or the personal property of another, including goods, services and other valuables; attempting to take, sell or keep in one's possession, including but not exclusively, items of University property, or items belonging to students, faculty, staff, student groups, visitors or to others within the larger community whether on or off campus; knowingly taking or maintaining possession of stolen property.

**Community: Savannah State University students build and enhance their community. Behavior that violates this value includes, but is not limited to:**

8. ***Disruptive Behavior.*** Substantial disruption of University operations including obstruction of teaching, research, administration, other University activities, and/or other authorized non-University activities which occur on campus; Students are subject to disciplinary action for engaging in conduct that is disorderly, rowdy, lewd, or indecent. Furthermore, students may be subject to disciplinary action for engaging in breach of peace or aiding, abetting, or procuring another to do the same on University property or University sponsored events.
9. ***Disorderly Assembly.*** Students are subject to disciplinary action for the following acts of misconduct:
  - a. Assembling on-campus for the purpose of disrupting classes, seminars, meetings, research projects, or activities of the University;
  - b. Assembling on-campus for the purpose of creating a riot, attempting to create a riot, destroying property, or creating a disorderly diversion that interferes with the normal operation of the University (i.e. water balloon fights, water gun fights, egging incidents, etc.);
  - c. Obstructing the freedom of movement of other persons to and from University facilities or materially interfering with the normal operation of the University; and
  - d. Engaging in abuse of or unauthorized use of sound amplification equipment in-doors or outdoors during classroom hours (any use of sound amplification equipment must be cleared through the Office of Student Life);
  - e. Violating University policies concerning the registration, scheduling and recognition of student organizations and activities.
10. ***Trademark/Misrepresentation.*** Unauthorized use (including misuse) of University or organizational names and images. ***(Please contact the Office of University Advancement if unsure of appropriate use of University logos and trademarks.)***
11. ***Damage and Destruction.*** Intentional, reckless and/or unauthorized damage to or destruction of University property or the personal property of another.
12. ***IT and Acceptable Use.*** Violating the University Acceptable Use and Computing Policy, this would include:
  - a. Unauthorized entry into a file to use, read, or change the contents, or for any other purpose;
  - b. Unauthorized transfer of a file;
  - c. Unauthorized use of another individual's identification and password;
  - d. Use of computing facilities to send obscene, threatening or abusive messages;

- e. Use of computer facilities that violate copyright laws including the unauthorized distribution of copyrighted material via file sharing;
  - f. Inappropriate use of social media (Facebook, Instagram, Blogs, etc.)
  - g. Use of computing facilities to interfere with the normal operation of Computer Services and Information Technology.
13. **Gambling.** Gambling as prohibited by the laws of the State of Georgia; Students are subject to disciplinary action for playing video games, cards, dice or any other game of skill or chance for money or other items of value.
14. **Weapons.** Students are subject to disciplinary action for possessing handguns or any lethal or potentially destructive weapons including, but not limited to, the following:
- a. Guns, bow and arrows, Taser guns, BB guns, air guns, ammunition, hunting slingshots, martial arts weapons, chemical weapons, medieval weapons, darts, box-cutters, and knives.
  - b. Carrying a weapon onto or within 1,000 feet of property owned, controlled, or leased by the University is strictly prohibited. Georgia Law allows LICENSED carriers of weapons to possess such a licensed weapon under the specifically limited exceptions of: carrying or picking-up a student or in a vehicle when in transit through or parked on campus.
  - c. Mace and/or Pepper Spray: A chemical compound, prepared for use in aerosol containers that has the combined effect of a tear gas and nerve gas, temporary stunning its victims; in full.
    - i. Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, it shall be unlawful for any person to carry, possess or have under such persons' control mace or pepper spray while on the premises of Savannah State University, or at University sponsored activities and events.
    - ii. The provisions of this subsection shall not apply to:
      - 1.) Persons using mace as a defensive weapon only.
      - 2.) Professionals or Training Instructors who are using mace for instructional purposes.
      - 3.) A state certified peace officer employed with an agency authorized to carry mace/pepper spray in accordance with its policy.
15. **Smoking/Tobacco.** Smoking on campus is strictly prohibited as mandated by the Georgia Board of Regents and Georgia State Law. This includes but is not limited to cigarettes, e-cigarettes, and smokeless chewing tobacco. Individuals found smoking may face not only University sanction, but may also be referred to local law enforcement.
16. **Fire Safety.** Violation of local, state, federal or campus fire policies including, but not limited to:
- a. Intentionally or recklessly causing a fire which damages University or personal property or which causes injury.
  - b. Failure to evacuate a University -controlled building during a fire alarm;
  - c. Improper use of University fire safety equipment; or
  - d. Tampering with or improperly engaging a fire alarm or fire detection/control equipment while on University property. Such action may result in a local fine in addition to University sanctions;
17. **Animals.** Animals, with the exception of animals that provide assistance or comfort (e.g. seeing-eye dogs) are not permitted on campus except as permitted by law. Such animals are allowed only as registered with and approved by the Disability Office and Director of Housing. (*Please visit <http://www.savannahstate.edu/student-affairs/office-of-disability-services-intro.shtml> for more information on the Office of Disability Services.*)

18. ***Wheeled Devices.*** Skateboards, roller blades, roller skates, bicycles and similar wheeled devices are not permitted inside University buildings, residence halls or on tennis courts. Additionally, skateboards and other wheeled items may not be ridden on railings, curbs, benches, or any such fixtures that may be damaged by these activities; and individuals will be liable for damage to University property caused by these activities.
19. ***Solicitation.*** Unauthorized solicitation for goods and services on Savannah State University property is strictly prohibited. Solicitation may include door to door sales, canvassing parking lots with fliers, or any other activities that represent the sales of outside goods or services to the University community.

**Social Justice: Students recognize that respecting the dignity of every person is essential for creating and sustaining a flourishing University community. They understand and appreciate how their decisions and actions impact others and are just and equitable in their treatment of all members of the community. They act to discourage and challenge those whose actions may be harmful to and/or diminish the worth of others. Conduct that violates this value includes, but is not limited to:**

20. ***Discrimination.*** Any act or failure to act that is based upon an individual or group's actual or perceived status (sex, gender, race, color, age, creed, national or ethnic origin, physical or mental disability, veteran status, pregnancy status, religion, or sexual orientation, or other protected status) that is sufficiently severe that it limits or denies the ability to participate in or benefit from the University's educational program or activities. Students are further prohibited from violating the provisions and intent of applicable University policies on Sexual Harassment (Sexual Assault & Misconduct), Affirmative Action, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.
21. ***Harassment.*** Any unwelcome conduct based on actual or perceived status including: sex, gender, race, color, age, creed, national or ethnic origin, physical or mental disability, veteran status, pregnancy status, religion, sexual orientation or other protected status. Any unwelcome conduct should be reported to campus officials, who will act to remedy and resolve reported incidents on behalf of the victim and community.
  - a. **Hostile Environment.** Sanctions can and will be imposed for the creation of a hostile environment only when harassment is sufficiently severe, pervasive (or persistent) and objectively offensive that it unreasonably interferes with, limits or denies the ability to participate in or benefit from the University's educational or employment program or activities.
  - b. **Retaliatory Discrimination or Harassment.** Any intentional, adverse action taken by an responding individual or allied third party, absent legitimate nondiscriminatory purposes, against a participant or supporter of a participant in a civil rights grievance proceeding or other protected activity under this Code.
22. ***Bystanding.*** Students are expected to reasonably respond to assist other students in need.
  - a. Complicity with or failure of any student to appropriately address known or obvious violations of the Code of Student Conduct or law;
  - b. Complicity with or failure of any organized group to appropriately address known or obvious violations of the Code of Student Conduct or law by its members.
23. ***Abuse of Conduct Process.*** Abuse or interference with, or failure to comply in, University processes including conduct and academic integrity hearings including, but not limited to:
  - a. Falsification, distortion, or misrepresentation of information;

- b. Failure to provide, destroying or concealing information during an investigation of an alleged policy violation;
- c. Attempting to discourage or improperly influence an individual's proper participation in, or use of, the campus conduct system;
- d. Harassment (verbal or physical) and/or intimidation of a member of a campus conduct body prior to, during, and/or following a campus conduct proceeding;
- e. Failure to comply with the sanction(s) imposed by the campus conduct system;
- f. Influencing, or attempting to influence, another person to commit an abuse of the campus conduct system.
- g. Knowingly initiating a conduct review proceeding without cause.

**Respect: Savannah State University students show positive regard for each other and for the community. Behavior that violates this value includes, but is not limited to:**

24. ***Sexual Misconduct.*** Includes, but is not limited to, sexual harassment, non-consensual sexual contact, non-consensual sexual intercourse, and/or sexual exploitation, including non-consensual filming or recording of a consensual or non-consensual sexual or intimate act.

***Actions violating the University's Sexual Misconduct Policy are also governed by Federal law as dictated by Title IX. A concurrent investigation will occur for these offenses, managed by the University's Title IX Coordinator or designee. Please review Addendum for more information on these issues.***

25. ***Public Exposure.*** Includes deliberately and publicly exposing one's intimate body parts, public urination, defecation, and public sex acts.
26. ***Acts of Physical Violence.*** Any act of physical violence against another person is strictly prohibited. Acts of physical violence include but are not limited to: fighting, assault, damage to persons or property, or acts that adversely impact another person's health or wellness.
27. ***Intimate Partner/Relationship Violence.*** Violence or abuse by a person in an intimate relationship with another.
28. ***Threatening Behaviors.*** Students should not be engaged in any behavior that seeks to threaten or intimidate others.
  - a. Threat. Written or verbal conduct that causes a reasonable expectation of injury to the physical health, mental health, or safety of any person or damage to any property.
  - b. Intimidation. Intimidation defined as implied threats or acts that cause a reasonable fear of harm from another.
29. ***Bullying and Cyber-bullying.*** Bullying and cyber-bullying are repeated and/or severe aggressive behaviors that intimidate or intentionally harm or control another person physically or emotionally, and are not protected by freedom of expression.
30. ***Hazing.*** Defined as an act that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student, or that destroys or removes public or private property, for the purpose of initiation, admission into, affiliation with, or as a condition for continued membership in a group or organization. Participation or cooperation by the person(s) being hazed does not excuse the violation. Failing to intervene to prevent and/or failing to discourage and/or failing to report those acts may also violate this policy.

31. **Stalking.** Stalking is a course of conduct directed at a specific person that is unwelcome and would cause a reasonable person to feel fear, this would include contact via electronic mediums (Facebook, Instagram, Text Message, etc.)
32. **Failure to Comply.** Students are subject to disciplinary action for:
  - a. Failing to respond to a lawful request by properly identified University officials (including Community Assistants or Community Directors) or law enforcement officials in the performance of their duties;
  - b. Failing to report for a conference, meeting, or appointment with any University official or faculty member;
  - c. Failing to appear as a witness in a conduct case when properly notified;
  - d. Failing to comply with any sanction or condition imposed on a person by any conduct body or administrator.

**Responsibility: Savannah State University students are given and accept a high level of responsibility to self, to others and to the community. Behavior that violates this value includes, but is not limited to:**

33. **Alcohol.** Students are subject to disciplinary action for possessing, manufacturing, dispensing using, or selling alcoholic beverages on University property or at events sponsored by the University. Students are further prohibited from possessing any alcoholic paraphernalia (e.g., beer funnels, shot glasses, etc.), being demonstrably intoxicated from alcohol, and having empty alcoholic beverage containers on University property or at events sponsored by the University. Savannah State University is a “dry” campus and alcohol is prohibited on campus regardless of age, except as allowed by the Office of the University President.
34. **Drugs.** Students are subject to disciplinary action for manufacturing, distributing, intending to distribute, selling, offering for sale, delivering, attempting to deliver, or possessing any drug controlled by federal or state laws on University property or at events sponsored by the University unless as authorized by medical prescription. Students may not be under the influence of any drug (other than prescription medications, as prescribed by a medical professional). Further, students are subject to disciplinary action for possessing or using drug paraphernalia on University property or at events sponsored by the University.
35. **Prescription Medications.** Abuse, misuse, sale, or distribution of prescription or over-the-counter medications.
36. **Explosives.** Students are subject to conduct review for:
  - a. Storing, possessing, furnishing, selling, or using or threatening to use explosives of any kind on University property or at University sponsored or recognized activities.
  - b. Possessing or using fireworks or any substance prepared for the purpose of producing a visible or audible effect by combustion, explosion, or detonation on University property or at events sponsored or supervised by the University.
37. **Financial Responsibilities.** Failure to promptly meet financial responsibilities to the institution, including, but not limited to; knowingly passing a worthless check or money order in payment to the institution or to an official of the institution acting in an official capacity.
38. **Acts which Endanger Self or Others.** Creation of health and/or safety hazards (dangerous pranks,

hanging out of or climbing from/on/in windows, balconies, roofs, etc.) or any actions that intentionally or unintentionally jeopardize the health and safety of oneself or others is strictly prohibited.

39. ***Violations of Law.*** Evidence of violation of local, state or federal laws, when substantiated through the University's conduct process. Students are subject to disciplinary action for:
  - a. Violating local, state, or federal law, on-campus, at events sponsored by the University, or at other locations whereby the misconduct clearly contravenes the University's interests and purposes. The University does not condone the violation or attempted violation of criminal laws. Alleged violations that constitute serious misdemeanor or felonies will be referred to appropriate authorities.
  - b. Failure of any student to accurately report an off-campus arrest by any law enforcement agency for any crime (including non-custodial or field arrests) to the Office of Student Conduct within seventy-two (72) hours of release.
40. ***Traffic Laws.*** Repeated violations of traffic laws on campus may result in the removal of on campus car privileges. Specific violations include but are not limited to:
  - a. Violation of Campus and state traffic/driving regulations.
  - b. Flagrant and/or frequent parking ticket offenses.
41. ***Student ID Cards/Keys.*** Students should be in possession of their ID cards/ University issued  
  - a. keys at all times while on campus. Students may also face a conduct review for: Possession, alteration, use, or attempted use of an identification card for the purpose of identification or to receive services by anyone other than the person whose name, identification card number, and photo appears on the card is considered unauthorized use and the offender will be subject to penalties and confiscation of the identification card by University officials.
  - b. Failing to present University identification upon request by an authorized University official who offered proper identification as to his or her status.
  - c. Using or attempting to use keys that were not issued to you by the University.

**Tradition: Savannah State students recognize the importance of our traditions and the legacy we leave for future generations of students:**

42. ***Dress Code.*** Students are responsible to represent Savannah State appropriately and are subject to conduct review for:
  - a. Failure to adhere to University's "Dress Code Policy" which states: "A student's attire while on campus and in public should never be lewd, indecent, or distracting to the educational environment nor (Examples: Inappropriate dress may include, but is not limited to, halter tops, shorts or skirts revealing any portion of the buttocks or genitals, shirts with obscene language or "fighting" words (including gestures or slogans), undergarments and clothing which allows undergarments to be visually observed such as pants for men and women intended to reveal those undergarments including, sagging pants and extreme low riders". This would also include the promotion of drugs or other substances contrary to the mission of Savannah State University.
  - b. Failure to respond to request of faculty and/or properly identified University official to bring themselves in compliance of the Dress Code Policy.
43. ***Ineligible Intake or Association.*** Intake or associating with a student organization without having met eligibility requirements established by the University.

44. **Organization/Club Offenses.** Organizations, societies, clubs, and similarly organized groups are responsible for compliance with University regulations. Upon satisfactory proof that a group encouraged or did not take satisfactory steps to prevent violations of University regulations, that group may be subject to permanent or temporary suspension, loss of recognition or charter, social probation or other action. In addition, individual members may be subject to disciplinary action for violation of imposed sanctions.

45. **Other Policies.** Violating other published University policies or rules, including all Residence Hall policies, Residence Hall Contracts, posted rules in Dining Halls, Recreation Areas, Alexis Circle, etc.

## HOUSING POLICIES

While all of the policies contained within the Code of Student Conduct apply to our student residing on campus, there are additional policies that residential students are specifically responsible to comply with. These policies are as follows:

1. **Advertising.** Residence Hall space is reserved for University Programs and Activities. All postings must be approved through the office of Student Life or University Staff members. All advertising must remain on designated bulletin boards. Residents are prohibited from placing advertisements on windows, walls, etc.
2. **Baby-Sitting/Child Care in the Halls.** Children are not permitted on campus for any reason. Students may not utilize University property for child-care or babysitting services.
3. **Businesses/Services.** Residence Hall/Apartment rooms may not be used for any commercial purpose by residents. This would include selling or distributing any goods or services, including but not limited to: child-care, hair or make-up salons, or any other sales. Advertising or manufacturing goods or services is strictly prohibited.
4. **Balcony/Patios.** Balconies/Patios must be kept free to debris and obstructions (Please refer to *Loitering* policy). Students are prohibited from suspending anything from a balcony or using them for drying clothes or other items. Cooking grills or unauthorized furniture are prohibited on University balconies and patios.
5. **Bathrooms.** Students may only use common area bathrooms designated for their specific sex. Students found utilizing the opposite sexes bathroom will face disciplinary action and may be removed from the Residence Halls.
6. **BBQ Grills.** Students may only grill on University provided grilling surfaces. Grills are available between 10am-10pm and must be reserved in advance by contacting a Community Director. Personal grills or George Foreman Grills are strictly prohibited in the Residence Halls, but are permitted in The Village and University Commons.
7. **Bikes/Motorcycles.** All bicycles must be properly locked up at designated bike racks and may not be attached to railings or other unauthorized locations. Bikes that are improperly secured may be

removed and confiscated. All Motorcycles must be parked in traditional parking spaces and are subject to being towed if parked elsewhere.

8. **Cable/Internet.** Students are strictly prohibited from tampering or altering University provided cable or internet services hardware. Students may not attach a satellite dish or otherwise alter any Residence Hall/Apartment.

9. **Candles/Incense.** Candles/Incense are strictly prohibited in all University Residence Halls/Apartments.

10. **Cooking/Food Prep.** Only University provided microwaves are permitted in University Apartments, students may not have microwaves in individual bedrooms, even in the University Apartments. In Traditional Residence Halls, microwaves are provided in the common areas and are prohibited in Residence Hall rooms. Students are expected to practice appropriate sanitation and cleanliness when cooking in authorized University areas.

11. **Decorations/Attachments.** Room decorations may not be affixed to walls or windows permanently and students are responsible for any damages that occur when affixing room decorations/posters, etc. Students are prohibited from displaying signs and other decorations in windows that may be perceived as offensive or inappropriate.

12. **Driving/Parking on Grass.** Driving/Parking on the any grass areas is strictly prohibited and are subject to being towed/ticketed for such offenses.

13. **Elevators.** Tampering, misuse, or vandalism of the University elevators is strictly prohibited. This includes forcing doors open, unnecessary use of alarms/phones, horseplay, accessing control rooms or entering the shaft of an elevator. Students found to be tampering with elevators may be removed from Residence Halls/Apartments.

14. **Emergency Exits/Doors.** Students may only use Emergency Exits during an emergency. Sounding the alarm by using an emergency exit unnecessarily will lead to disciplinary sanction. Propping doors at any time is also strictly prohibited.

15. **Entrances/Hallways/Walkways/Grounds Obstructions.** Students are prohibited from impeding any walkway, hallway, or entrance for any reason.

16. **Failure to Comply with Hall Staff.** Students must comply with any reasonable request of any Hall Staff Member in the performance of their duties. Community Assistants and Community Directors are official representatives of Savannah State University. Failing to follow reasonable directives of Hall Staff may result in removal from Residence Halls/Apartments.

17. **Fixtures.** Students may not display any signs, exterior lights, or markings. No awning or projection shall be attached to any building. No satellite dish or other receiving equipment may be attached to any balcony or exterior of any Residence Hall/Apartment.

18. **Fountains.** Tampering with University fountains constitutes vandalism and will be treated as such. Placing soap, dyes, or other contaminants may result in severe damage and financial and/or criminal liability for destruction of property.

19. **University Furniture.** University furniture may not be removed or relocated from Residence Hall Rooms/Apartments or common areas (lobbies, study lounges, etc.) for any reason. Students are

responsible for all University furniture assigned to their living spaces. Residents are not permitted to bring their own furniture, nor are residents permitted to store any University furniture in order to make room to bring their own furniture. All University furniture must remain in the assigned location in which it was found. Students are also prohibited from blocking utility doors or closets in rooms or apartments.

20. **Housing Contract Violations.** Students are bound by the terms and conditions of their Housing Contract. Failure to follow the terms of the Housing Contract may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including forfeiture of University Housing.

21. **Illegal Building Entry.** Student may only enter Residence Halls/Apartments utilizing the authorized front entry. Students may not enter through windows or emergency exits. Students may only enter buildings to which they are assigned or escorted by an assigned resident.

22. **Guests.** Students are responsible at all times for the actions of their guests. Students are expected to escort their guests at all times. Unattended guests may be asked to leave the Residence Halls/Apartments and host students may be held accountable for any misconduct by a guest, even if they are not with the guest at the time of the infraction.

23. **Misuse of Laundry Facilities.** Student Laundry Facilities are intended for University Residents ONLY. Allowing non-residents access to the Laundry Facility may result in loss of laundry privileges and disciplinary sanction. Laundry Facilities may only be used during posted hours.

24. **Loitering.** Students are prohibited from loitering in and/or around residential facilities, including parking lots, balconies, stairwells, etc.

25. **Lobby Use.** Students may only use designated lobbies at times posted. Students may not use lobbies for student organization meetings or events without prior authorization from the Community Directors and appropriate University Staff.

26. **Noise.** Students have the right to sleep and study at the time of their choosing. Students are expected to respect any request from any other student or staff to decrease the noise volume. As a general rule of thumb, students should expect to not be able to hear anything from more than one door away (in traditional residence halls). Students that create constant noise problem may be relocated to alternate residential facilities and if problems persist, may be removed from the residential facilities entirely.

27. **Occupancy.** Student Housing Assignments are intended to be utilized by those students that have a contract with University Housing. Residents may have no more than two guests per Occupant of the room at any one time. Residents are responsible for the actions of their guests at all times. Students are strictly prohibited from allowing other students and non-students from cohabitating for any amount of time. Those students found in violation of “wild-cattin’” with forfeit University Housing immediately and face disciplinary action.

28. **Prohibited Items.** The following items are strictly prohibited in any Residence Hall/Apartment:

- Empty or Full Alcohol Containers/Shot Glasses/Glassware associated with alcohol consumption.
- Drug Paraphernalia (scales, wrappers, rolling devices, hookahs, grinders, bongos, etc.)
- Unapproved Appliances (Microwaves, George Foreman Grills, etc.)
- Candles/Incense
- Animals of any kind (other than service animals)
- Fireworks
- Water balloons/ water guns

- Firearms/Weapons/Knives
- Weights and Weightlifting Equipment
- Electronic Cigarettes
- Stripper poles

29. ***Pets/Animals.*** Pets/Animals are strictly prohibited in Residence Halls/Apartments. Students may have fish in a 10 gallon or less fish tank. Service and Comfort Animals are permitted with prior authorization from the Disability Office and Director of Housing/or designee as provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

30. ***Quiet Hours/Courtesy Hours.*** Courtesy Hours are in effect 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Students may request students to lower noise levels at any time of the day or night.

Quiet Hours:

Sunday-Thursday 11pm-8am

Friday-Saturday 12am- 8am

\*Final Exam Week 24 Hours beginning the weekend prior to Exam Week beginning.

\*Student violating Quiet Hours during Exam Periods may be asked to move off campus immediately as well as face disciplinary sanction.

31. ***Sports in the Hallways/Walkways/Stairwells.*** Students are prohibited from engaging in activities in the hallways/walkways/stairwells of Residence Halls/Apartments. These activities include, but are not limited to: running, skating, speed walking, jogging, roller blading, skateboarding, rough housing, golfing, biking, bouncing/kicking a ball, throwing a ball or frisbee, or any other activity meant to be played in a larger space. Students engaged in these activities may be liable for any damages incurred during these incidents.

32. ***Hall Solicitation.*** Solicitation is prohibited in University Residence Halls/Apartments. All solicitation should be reported immediately to Hall Staff.

33. ***Floor/Hall Meetings.*** Students are expected to attend all Floor/Hall meetings as directed by Hall Staff. Failure to attend a Floor/Hall meeting will not be an acceptable excuse for not receiving information distributed at the meeting. Students are responsible for all information distributed at a Floor/Hall Meeting. If the meeting is taking place at time the student is unable to attend, they must contact Hall Staff prior to the meeting to receive any pertinent information.

34. ***Trash Removal.*** Students are responsible for removal of all trash from their Residence Halls/Apartments and depositing in appropriate receptacles. Students may face fines for failure to manage their own trash appropriately.

35. ***Room Sanitation.*** Residents are expected to keep rooms in reasonable condition. Reasonable condition would include keeping food in appropriate containers, taking care of dishes in a timely manner, maintaining appropriate hygiene in bathrooms, kitchens, and other common areas, regularly doing laundry and other general maintenance and good house-keeping chores.

36. ***Vehicle Maintenance and Cleaning.*** Students are prohibited from performing vehicle maintenance and washing on University property.

37. ***Overnight Visitation.*** Students may only have overnight guests visit with the approval of all room occupants, only on Friday and Saturday nights (Sunday night if Monday is a holiday), and must fill

out the Overnight Guest Registration Form with Residence Life Staff 24 hours in advance. Students that fail to properly register guests will lose overnight guest privileges. Students may only have one overnight guest at a time. Due to space limitations, Residence Life Staff may limit how many students may have a guest on any given weekend per room. Overnight Guest Visitation is not available during Exam Weeks or during Breaks. The Division of Student Affairs reserves the right to eliminate Overnight Guest Visitation at any time and need only notify students of this change.

38. ***Windows and Screens.*** Students are prohibited from entry or exiting Residence Halls/Apartments through windows. Students are prohibited from throwing objects or removing window screens for any reason. Students may not display any sign or object on the outside of a Residence Hall/Apartment window or remove a screen for any reason, other than emergency evacuation. Students are also prohibited from passing items through window.

## SECTION 5: OVERVIEW OF THE CONDUCT PROCESS

### Investigating and Adjudicating Violations of the Code of Student Conduct Complaint Procedures

Any member of the University community may file a complaint against any student or student organization for misconduct by contacting the Division of Student Affairs, the Office of Student Conduct, or the Department of Public Safety. Both offices work collaboratively to address complainants. While a student may make a complaint to either office, certain complainants should be directed immediately to the Department of Public Safety. In particular, complaints that are of a criminal nature or that present an immediate danger to the safety and well-being of the complainant or any other individual or any property should be directed immediately to the Department of Public Safety (358-3010), though a complainant can discuss the matter with the Division of Student Affairs or the Office of Student Conduct. If a student has any doubt about the nature or seriousness of a complaint, any of these offices are willing to receive the information. Nevertheless, complaints should be submitted as soon as possible after the incident has taken place. The administrator and/ or staff person with whom the complainant discusses the incident will demonstrate an ethic of care and concern. Students and other complainants should be forthright in discussing the incident. Although the complaint can be discussed orally, it must be subsequently reduced to a written statement that sets forth the following:

1. The name and address of the complainant and his or her status in the University community (e.g., student, faculty, staff).
2. The name and address of the student against whom a complaint is lodged.
3. The alleged misconduct which forms the basis of the complaint.
4. A statement demonstrating the facts of the alleged misconduct, which should include:
  - a. date of the occurrence,
  - b. time of occurrence,
  - c. place of occurrence, and
  - d. a brief narrative of the events.

Upon receipt of a complaint, the Coordinator of Student Conduct will notify the accused student that proceedings have been instituted against him or her. The accused student is required to report to the Coordinator of Student Conduct within five days of the alleged misconduct. The purpose of the preliminary conference is to allow the Coordinator of Student Conduct, or his or her designee, to discuss the alleged misconduct with the accused student. The accused student may ask any questions he or she desires about the student judicial process. He or she will have an opportunity to present his or her interpretation of the alleged incident.

The Coordinator of Student Conduct, having heard the alleged offender's interpretation and after reviewing relevant documents and statements will decide on one of the following:

1. **Consultation.** The Coordinator for Student Conduct may adjourn the preliminary conference pending further consultation with the complainant. This will allow the Coordinator of Student Conduct to gather additional pertinent facts before deciding on the next step of the judicial process.

2. **Mediation.** Based on the nature of the incident, the coordinator may seek to address the complaint through mediation. The mediation process provides an alternative to a formal hearing. It is intended to allow the individuals involved in the matter to discuss their respective understandings of the incident with assistance of the Vice President for Student Affairs, the Coordinator of Student Conduct, a counselor, or a faculty member. Mediation is designed to encourage each person to speak directly with the other and to accept personal responsibility where appropriate. Mediation seeks to facilitate the resolution of the incident to the satisfaction of the persons involved.

3. **Administrative Action.** The Coordinator of Student Conduct may adjudicate the case administratively. In certain cases, when a student accepts responsibility for the misconduct, the Coordinator of Student Conduct can issue an administrative sanction.

4. **Formal Adjudication.** Based on the nature of the misconduct, the Coordinator of

Student Conduct may proceed with the case formally by referring it to one of the following judicial bodies:

- Code of Conduct Violations: Coordinator of Student Conduct, Board of Student Conduct, or a Hearing Officer
- Housing Policy Violations: Coordinator of Student Conduct, Board of Student Conduct, SGA Judiciary, or Resident Directors.

5. **Pleas.** If the Coordinator of Student Conduct decides to proceed with the case formally, the accused student will be informed of the pleas available to him or her through the student conduct review system.

The pleas that are available to students and the subsequent outcomes are described below:

- **Responsible:** A student who accepts responsibility for the alleged violation waives his or her right to a hearing and accepts the sanction(s) offered by the judicial body. Should the offender perceive that the sanctions are too severe, he or she may follow the appeal procedure.

- **No Contest:** The alleged offender may plead no contest and accept the sanction(s) offered by the Coordinator of Student Conduct, hearing officer, or judicial body. (This plea is for students who are involved in either civil or criminal proceedings arising out of the same incident.)
- **Not Responsible:** A student who denies responsibility for the alleged violation will have his or her case heard by the judicial body that has authority to hear the case. A date and time shall be set for a hearing not less than two nor more than seven class days after the student has made his or her “not responsible” declaration.

6. **Other Actions.** The Coordinator of Student Conduct can also exercise the following actions regarding an alleged violation:

- **Drop the Case:** The Coordinator of Student Conduct may elect to drop the case should the allegation have no merit or drop the case for lack of sufficient evidence. In these instances, both the complainant and the accused student will be notified of such in writing.
- **University Summary Suspension.** A student may be summarily suspended from the University and all of its grounds by the Vice President for Student Affairs or designee and without following the hearing procedures articulated in the handbook if the Vice President for Student Affairs or designee is satisfied that the student’s continued presence on the campus constitutes a serious threat of harm to the student or to any other person on the campus or to the property of the University or property of other persons on the University campus. Within five business days after being summarily suspended, the student may request a hearing upon which the summary action was based. A student who has been summarily suspended from the University shall be required to leave the University’s grounds immediately and shall be notified that he or she could be arrested for trespassing if he or she returns to the University without authorization from the Vice President for Student Affairs or designee.
- **Residential Summary Suspension.** A student may be residentially summarily suspended from the ALL residential facilities owned/ operated on behalf of Savannah State University and all of its grounds by the Vice President for Student Affairs or designee and without following the hearing procedures articulated in the handbook if the Vice President for Student Affairs or designee is satisfied that the student’s continued presence within the residential facilities constitutes a serious threat of harm to the residential community, student or to any other person within University Housing or to the property of University Housing or property of other persons that resides in University Housing.

Within five business days after being residentially summarily suspended, the student may request a ‘basis of the residential summary suspension hearing’ upon which the residential summary action was based. A student who has been residentially summarily suspended from the University Housing shall be required to leave the University Housing immediately and shall be notified that he or she could be arrested for trespassing if he or she returns to the University Housing without authorization from the Vice President for Student Affairs or designee. If a student requests a hearing, a student may be permitted to reside in University Housing, pending the final outcome of the case.

## **7. The Implication for Failing to Appear Before a Tribunal**

If a student notified to appear before the Coordinator of Student Conduct, the Student Government Judiciary, the Board of Student Conduct, Resident Director or a Hearing Officer fails without excuse to comply, the accused will be processed in absentia. If substantial evidence is presented establishing that the violation occurred as alleged, the accused student shall be notified and an appropriate sanction will be provided by written notice. When an extension of time appears necessary to avoid undue hardship or injustice, time may be extended to enable a student to respond to an accusation or prepare a defense.

## **8. Conduct Review Holds**

While the University reserves the right to hear cases in absentia as described above, in certain cases the University may feel it necessary for cases to move forward with active student participation. In these cases, the University reserves the right to place a Conduct Review Hold on a student's account in order to compel participation in the Conduct Review Process. When this option is utilized, students' will not be permitted to enroll in courses, drop/add courses, participate in University activities or conduct normal business with the University. Conduct Review Holds may also limit a student's ability to use their University ID card to access goods and services at the University, including Dining Center meals.

## **9. Failure to Comply with University Sanctions**

If a student has been assigned sanctions and that student fails to meet the deadline for those sanctions, a Conduct Review Hold will be placed on the students account with Savannah State University. This hold will limit the students' ability to register for courses, participate in University activities, and conduct normal business with the University, including using SSU ID Cards to access meals and other University goods and services. Ample time shall be provided to ensure students have the ability to complete sanctions within a reasonable amount of time. At the discretion of the adjudicating body, this hold may not be removed until the student has made satisfactory effort to comply in completion of the required sanction(s). As this process would occur only after final appeals have been exhausted, this is not an appealable action.

## **SECTION 6: STUDENT CONDUCT AUTHORITY**

1. **Conduct Review Authorities.** The Vice President for Student Affairs is responsible to the President for the supervision, administration, and operation of University policy related to student misconduct. There are five tribunals that have authority to adjudicate certain kinds of student misconduct. These judicial bodies are as follows:

### **Coordinator of Student Conduct**

The Coordinator of Student Conduct is the University's judicial affairs administrator. The Coordinator of Student Conduct has authority to receive complaints on student misconduct, direct such investigations as may seem appropriate, summon students who are directly involved or have knowledge of misconduct, and serve as a hearing officer. At the conclusion of an investigation, it is the responsibility of the Coordinator of Student Conduct to determine whether to take no action, refer the matter to an appropriate internal or external agency/department, or issue a charge to a student for violating the Code of Student Ethics.

Depending on the nature of the misconduct, the Coordinator of Student Conduct will determine if the case can be adjudicated either administratively by mutual consent of all parties involved or formally.

For clarity of purpose, less severe cases of misconduct can be resolved and/or adjudicated administratively. In such cases, the Coordinator of Student Conduct can impose any sanction on the student. Certain less severe cases may be resolved by mutual consent of all parties involved, such as, but not limited to, mediation sessions or mandatory counseling from the Office of Counseling and Disability Services, Harris-McDew Student Health Center, or other unit. In the event there is no mutual consent to resolve the incident, the case will be referred to either the Board of Student Conduct or the Student Government Association Judicial Branch, depending on the nature of the offense.

### **Board of Student Conduct**

The Board of Student Conduct, which is comprised of faculty, staff, and students, has jurisdiction for hearing cases involving alleged violations of the Code of Student Conduct. Through the Coordinator of Student Conduct, the Board has authority to summon any member of the University community as a witness in a case of student misconduct.

The Board of Student Conduct is comprised of faculty members, staff members, and students . All members are appointed to a one-year term and receive annual training from the Office of Student Conduct. These individuals form the pool from which the Board of Student Conduct is selected to hear cases.

The adjudication panel itself consists of at least one faculty members, one staff member, and one student.

### **Student Government Association Judiciary**

The Student Government Association (SGA) Judiciary has authority to hear and adjudicate Housing Policy student misconduct allegations that have been referred to it in conjunction with the Residential Judicial Board. Members of the SGA Judiciary shall be available to serve on both the Residential and Student Conduct Boards. The Chief Justice shall chair such cases. In his/her absence, the senior member of the Student Judiciary will chair the hearing. The Coordinator of Student Conduct will serve as an advisor to the SGA Judiciary during all cases. The Student Judiciary consists of nine members as follows: the chief justice who is elected by the student body and eight associate justices, all of whom are appointed by the chief justice and approved by the SGA Congress. Five members of the judiciary, one of which must be the chief justice or the senior justice, must be present in order to conduct a hearing. The SGA judiciary is empowered to hear Housing Policy cases of misconduct.

### **Hearing Officers**

Hearing Officers, appointed by the Vice President for Student Affairs, are staff and faculty members who have authority to receive complaints on student misconduct, direct such investigations as may seem appropriate, and summon students who are directly involved or have knowledge of misconduct, and serve as a hearing officer. At the conclusion of an investigation, it is the responsibility of the hearing officer to determine whether to take no action, refer the matter to an appropriate internal or external agency/department, or issue a charge to a student for violating the Code of Student Conduct. Depending on the nature of the misconduct, the hearing officer will determine if the case can be adjudicated either administratively by mutual consent of all parties involved or formally. For clarity of purpose, less severe cases of misconduct can be resolved and/ or adjudicated administratively. In such cases, the hearing officer can impose any

sanction on the student. Certain less severe cases may be resolved by mutual consent of all parties involved, such as, but not limited to, mediation sessions or mandatory counseling from the Office of Counseling and Disability Services. In the event there is no mutual consent to resolve the incident, the case will be referred to either the Board of Student Conduct or the Student Government Association Judiciary, depending on the nature of the offense. For formal hearings, a hearing officer is empowered to issue sanctions when a student is found responsible for violating the Code of Student Conduct. The Vice President, with the approval of the University President, appoints up to four staff members to serve as hearing officers for one-year terms. Hearing Officers are empowered to hear violations of the Code of Student Conduct other than Housing Policy violations.

### **Resident Directors**

Each residence hall on campus is supervised by full time professional Resident Directors. Resident Directors have full authority to adjudicate any violations of Housing Policy that occur in or around University Housing Facilities. Resident Directors will only hear cases involving violations of Housing Policy and minor Code of Student Conduct violations. Resident Directors will be assigned cases at the discretion of the Director of Housing in consultation with the Coordinator of Student Conduct.

### **2. Adjudication of Academic Dishonesty Cases**

The rights and responsibilities of academic freedom are at the core of intellectual integrity of the institution. Students are expected to behave honestly during the learning process in order to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty. Cheating and other forms of academic dishonesty undermine Savannah State's educational value for everyone, and especially for the individual who cheats.

Misunderstanding of appropriate academic conduct will not be accepted as an excuse for academic dishonesty. Students should consult with the instructor in the course, the department chair/program director, or the academic dean if there is doubt about appropriate academic conduct. Students who are believed to have engaged in academic dishonesty will be reported to their department chair/program director for adjudication. Procedures for adjudication of violations of academic dishonesty are available in the Office of Academic Affairs.

### **4. Mental Health Withdrawals**

To ensure that Savannah State University students receive due process rights, Savannah State University has initiated the following Mental Health Withdrawal Procedure. Before a student may be withdrawn for mental health reasons there must first be the following chain of events:

1. The student displays behavioral indicators, which are determined by a mental health professional to be of danger to himself/herself or others.
2. When a mental health professional recommends that a student needs to be withdrawn from school for mental health reasons, an informal hearing will then be set up to determine whether or not the student should be withdrawn.

3. In this informal hearing, conducted by the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, the student or his or her representative may present any pertinent information that he or she believes will have a bearing on the particular case. This procedure is enacted to insure that the student's legal rights are not violated and that the University has the right to remove any student whom it feels, based on professional evaluation, and may present a danger to himself/herself or others.

## SECTION 7: FORMAL CONDUCT PROCEDURES

### A. Order of Hearing

In adjudicating formal cases, all tribunals/hearing officers will proceed in the following order:

1. Call to order by the chairperson or Coordinator of Student Conduct;
2. Reading of the charge(s) and specification of the alleged incident of misconduct by the chairperson or Coordinator of Student Conduct;
3. Presentation of the complainant's case, including presentation of witness, by the Coordinator of Student Conduct;
4. Presentation of the accused student's case, including presentation of witnesses;
5. Closing statement by the complainant;
6. Closing statement by the accused student;
7. Adjournment; and
8. Deliberation by tribunal.

During the hearing, members of the tribunal may raise questions to either the complainant or accused student as well as any witnesses. This is done at the direction of the chair. There is no right of one party to cross-examine the other party or witnesses but questions to consider and ask may be suggested to the Chair and panel by the parties. The student may have an advisor present with them throughout the proceedings but this individual's participation is specifically limited to advising the student only and in no other manner is permitted to participate in the hearing.

### B. Burden of Proof

Students will be presumed not responsible until proven otherwise by a preponderance of evidence. During the hearing, the burden of proof rests upon the University official and/or complainant bringing the charges. During the deliberation, the conduct body shall determine, by majority vote (if the conduct body consists of more than one person), whether the student violated the particular section of the Code of Student Conduct. The conduct body's determination shall be made on the basis of whether it is "more likely than not" that the accused student violated the Code of Student Conduct.

### C. Rules of Evidence and Procedure

Most aspects of a college's or University's judicial system differ sharply from those found at state and other outside conduct systems. Colleges and universities, however, adhere to fairness and due process. Nevertheless, formal rules of evidence and procedures followed by courts of law shall not be applicable during hearings. All matters upon which the decision may be based must be introduced into evidence at the proceeding before the tribunal hearing the case. The decision of the tribunal shall be based solely upon such matters. Improperly acquired evidence shall not be admitted. The adjudicating body may exclude evidence that in its judgment is immaterial, irrelevant, or unduly repetitious.

### D. Privacy of Proceedings

All informal and formal hearings shall be conducted in private in order to protect the confidential nature of the proceedings, unless the defendant elects to have an open hearing. If the latter is the case, such a request must be in writing by the defendant. However, state and federal laws pertaining to open hearings takes precedence over either the defendants' or the victims' request for an open or closed hearing.

#### **E. Record of the Proceeding**

There shall be a record, such as a tape recording, of all formal hearings before a Conduct Review Board. The record shall be the property of the University.

#### **F. The Decision**

The student shall be notified in writing of the decision within three days of the conduct review body's decision. All cases, except those adjudicated by the Coordinator of Student Conduct or a hearing officer, will be decided by majority vote as to both findings and sanctions. The victim or victims have the opportunity to learn of the decision through the Coordinator of Student Conduct. Every student shall also be advised in writing of his/her right to appeal the decision.

#### **G. Disciplinary Status**

Upon a determination that a student has violated the Code of Student Conduct or Housing Policies, every student will be placed on one of the following Disciplinary Statuses:

**Written Reprimand.** A written statement by the Office of Student Conduct that a student's behavior has been inappropriate, and that any further violation of University standards will result in stronger disciplinary action.

**Residence Hall Probation.** Students may be placed on Residence Hall Probation for repeated or serious violations of either the Code of Student Conduct or Housing Policies. Students placed on Residence Hall Probation will receive notice in writing and the probation will be for a defined period of time. While on Residence Hall Probation, further violations of either the Code of Student Conduct or Housing Policies may result in removal from University Housing and/or the University.

**Residence Hall Suspension.** Separation of the student from the residence halls or residence facilities owned by or operated for the institution for a specified length of time, after which the student may be eligible to return. In instances when a student is suspended from a residence facility, he or she may not transfer to another residence facility owned by or operated for the University.

**Residence Hall Expulsion.** Permanent separation of the student from the residence halls or residence facilities owned or operated by the institution. In instances when a student is expelled from a residence facility, he or she may not transfer to another residence facility owned by or operated for the University.

**University Probation.** Students may be placed on University Probation for repeated or serious violations of either the Code of Student Conduct or Housing Policies. Students placed on University Probation will receive notice in writing and the probation will be for a defined period of time. While on University Probation, further violations of either the Code of Student Conduct or Housing Policies may result in removal from the University.

**University Suspension.** Separation from the University for a stated period of time, with conditions of readmission stated in the notice of suspension. Students who are suspended from the University shall be denied access to the institution, including its facilities, grounds, residence halls, activities, or privileges

for which the student might otherwise be eligible. After the period of suspension has expired, a student may apply in writing to have the suspension notation on his or her transcript removed.

**University Expulsion.** Permanent separation of the student from the University. Students who are expelled from the University shall be denied access to the institution, including its facilities, grounds, residence halls, activities, or privileges for which the student might otherwise be eligible. The expulsion notation on the transcript may be permanently posted as determined by the president.

#### **H. Disciplinary Sanctions**

Upon a determination that a student has violated the Code of Student Conduct or Housing Policies, students may receive a disciplinary sanction. Disciplinary sanctions listed below may be imposed, either singularly or in a combination, by the appropriate conduct review body. These sanctions are not all-inclusive.

1. **Restitution.** A monetary penalty assessed against the student to cover the cost of services or replacing physical property of the University or student or staff victims which has been stolen, damaged intentionally, or damaged as a result of gross negligence (In cases where the damage is in areas such as residence halls and lounges used jointly by groups of students, and the person responsible for the damage or theft is not known, the penalty may be applied against all students using the facility on a pro rata basis). The payment of a fine by a student or group of students shall in no way negate the right of the University to seek restitution for damages through appropriate civil proceedings.

2. **Mandatory Educational/Community service.** A mandatory participation in a specific educational program, work assignment, or the completion of a research-related assignment. The student is responsible for all related expenses. Failure to comply with the educational/ community service sanction could result in suspension from the University.

3. **Loss of Privileges.** Denial of specified privileges for a designated period of time. Loss of privileges may include, but is not limited to: the ability to have guests on campus, attend programs or events, or otherwise participate in University functions.

4. **Organization Deactivation** - Loss of privileges, including University recognition for a specific period of time or permanently. Loss of privileges may include, but is not limited to a prohibition on social events, fund-raising projects, intramural events, and completion of community service hours and special projects.

5. **Fines.** Reasonable fines may be imposed. As fines are a sanction, fines may not be substituted with Community Service. Failure to meet fine obligations will result in a financial hold being placed on a student's account that will prevent registration and other University business from being completed.

6. **Confiscation of Prohibited Property.** Items whose presence is in violation of University policy will be confiscated and will become the property of the University. Prohibited items may be returned to the owner at the discretion of the Coordinator of Student Conduct and/or Campus Police.

7. **Behavioral Requirement.** This includes required activities including, but not limited to, seeking academic counseling or substance abuse screening, writing a letter of apology, etc.

8. **Educational Program.** Requirement to attend, present and/or participate in a program related to the violation. It may also be a requirement to sponsor or assist with a program for others on campus to aid them in learning about a specific topic or issue related to the violation for which the student or organization was found responsible. Audience may be restricted.

9. **Administrative Housing Move.** If a student has repeated or egregious Housing Policy violations, a Conduct Officer may choose to conduct an Administrative Housing Move to another Savannah State University housing facility. Residence will be responsible for any additional charges that result from this conduct sanction. Should a resident wish not to comply with the Administrative Housing Move, that student may choose to move off campus, however they would also be responsible for any administrative charges applicable to early contract termination. Housing staff will decide on the reassignment details.

10. **Eligibility Restriction.** The student is deemed “not in good standing” with Savannah State University for a specified period of time. Specific limitations or exceptions may be granted by the Coordinator of Student Conduct and terms of this conduct sanction may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Ineligibility to hold any office in any student organization recognized by the University or hold an elected or appointed office at Savannah State University; or
- b. Ineligibility to represent Savannah State University to anyone outside the University community in any way including: participating in the study abroad program, attending conferences, or representing the University at an official function, event or intercollegiate competition as a player, manager or student coach, etc.

11. **Other Sanctions.** Additional or alternate sanctions may be created and designed as deemed appropriate to the offense with the approval of the Coordinator of Student Conduct or designee.

The Coordinator of Student Conduct and/or the Hearing Officer will inform the student of the sanctions in writing. The student will also be informed of the appeal procedure. The findings of the Coordinator of Student Conduct and/or the Hearing Officer will be final unless the student chooses to appeal the decision.

## **I. Group Violations**

A student group or organization and its officers and membership may be held collectively and individually responsible when violations of this code by the organization or its member(s):

- Take place at organization-sponsored or co-sponsored events, whether sponsorship is formal or tacit;
- Have received the consent or encouragement of the organization or of the organization’s leaders or officers; or
- Were known or should have been known to the membership or its officers.
- Organization fails to take official and/or appropriate disciplinary action against involved member(s).

Hearings for student groups or organizations follow the same general student conduct procedures. In any such action, individual determinations as to responsibility will be made and sanctions may be assigned collectively and individually and will be proportionate to the involvement of each individual and the organization.

The following sanctions may be imposed upon groups or organizations found to have violated the Code of Student Conduct:

- One or more of the sanctions listed above
- Deactivation, de-recognition, loss of all privileges (including status as a Savannah State University registered group/organization), for a specified period of time.

J. **Amnesty**. The University may choose to exercise the following amnesties when it deems them appropriate:

#### **For Victims**

Savannah State University provides amnesty to victims who may be hesitant to report to University officials because they fear that they themselves may be accused of minor policy violations, such as underage drinking, at the time of the incident. Educational options will be explored, but no conduct proceedings or conduct record will result.

#### **For Those Who Offer Assistance**

To encourage students to offer help and assistance to others, the University pursues a policy of amnesty for minor violations when students offer help to others in need. At the discretion of the Coordinator of Student Conduct, amnesty may also be extended on a case-by-case basis to the person receiving assistance. Educational options will be explored, but no conduct proceedings or conduct record will result.

#### **For Those Who Report Serious Violations**

Students who are engaged in minor violations but who choose to bring related serious violations by others to the attention of the University are offered amnesty for their minor violations. Educational options will be explored, but no conduct proceedings or record will result.

Abuse of amnesty requests can result in a decision by the Coordinator of Student Conduct not to extend amnesty to the same person repeatedly.

#### **K. Safe Harbor**

Savannah State University has a Safe Harbor rule for students. The University believes that students who have a drug and/or addiction problem deserve help. If any University student brings their own use, addiction, or dependency to the attention of University officials outside the threat of drug tests or conduct sanctions and seeks assistance, a conduct complaint will not be pursued. A written action plan may be used to track cooperation with the Safe Harbor program by the student. Failure to follow the action plan will nullify the Safe Harbor protection and campus conduct processes will be initiated.

## **L. Parental Notification**

Savannah State University reserves the right to notify the parents/guardians of dependent students regarding any conduct situation, particularly alcohol and other drug violations. The University may also notify parents/guardians of non-dependent students who are under the age of 21 of alcohol and/or other drug violations. Parental notification may also be utilized discretionarily by administrators when permitted by FERPA or consent of the student.

## **M. Disciplinary Records**

All conduct records are maintained by the University for seven (7) years from the time of their creation except those that result in separation (suspension or expulsion, including from housing) and those that fall under Title IX, which are maintained indefinitely.

## **Conduct Review Appeals Procedures**

In each case involving imposition of a disciplinary sanction, the accused shall have the right to appeal the decision. All appeals must be in writing and submitted to the appropriate office within five (5) business days of the original decision. The written request for review must state the grounds for appeal with precision and specify the reasons justifying the assertion of error.

The Vice President for Student Affairs takes final action in cases not resulting in the following:

- I. Suspension or expulsion from the university, and/or
- II. Removal from on-campus housing, and/or
- III. Retraction of a degree or previously awarded credit for class
- IV. Other issues as solely determined by the Vice President of Student Affairs which require presidential review.

The University President takes final action in every case resulting in the following:

- I. Suspension or expulsion from the university, and/or
- II. Removal from on-campus housing, and/or
- III. Retraction of a degree or previously awarded credit for class
- IV. Other issues as solely determined by the Vice President of Student Affairs which require presidential review.

All appeals to the University President must be in writing and submitted to the appropriate office within five (5) business days of the original decision. The University President or her designee has twenty (20) business days to respond to a student's written appeal.

In all cases, the student may not be required to appear before the Director of Student Life, the Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs, the Vice President for Student Affairs or the University President or designee. Such a request for appearance may be granted or denied in the sole and sound discretion of the Director of Student Life, the Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs, the Vice President for Student Affairs or the University President or designee. The case shall be reviewed and one of the following determinations made:

- Affirm the findings and sanctions.
- Affirm the factual findings, but raise or lower the recommended sanction.
- Reverse one or more findings of guilty, and eliminate or modify the sanction, as appropriate.

If procedural error prejudiced the ability of the accused to defend him/herself before any of the tribunals the case may be returned for a new hearing.

- Apply another action as appropriate.

#### **A. Appeals to the Director of Student Life**

A student may initiate an appeal to the Director of Student Life concerning a decision made by the Coordinator of Student Conduct, Student Government Association regarding Housing Policy infractions not resulting in suspension or expulsion. Students who are appealing housing fines and other infractions that feel that further action are warranted following the Coordinator of Student Conduct decision or housing fine notification may appeal to the Director of Student Life.

#### **B. Appeals to the Assistant Vice President**

A student may initiate an appeal to the assistant vice president concerning a decision made by the coordinator of student ethics, the Student Government Association Judicial Branch, the Board of Student Conduct, or a Hearing Officer. Students who are appealing a suspension, expulsion and/or other infractions and feel that further action is warranted following a Coordinator of Student Conduct decision may appeal to the Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs.

1. The Assistant Vice President need not rehear the evidence in the case; therefore, the student must submit a complete written statement based on Section E. Guidelines for Appeals as described below. In ordinary cases, the student may not be required to appear before the assistant vice president. Such a request for appearance may be granted or denied in the sole and sound discretion of the assistant vice president.

2. The Assistant Vice President shall review the case and make a decision following the Guidelines of Appeals, Section E below.

#### **C. Appeals to the Vice President for Student Affairs**

If a student is not satisfied with the decision rendered by the assistant vice president regarding his or her case, the student may initiate an appeal to the vice president for student affairs concerning the assistant vice president's decision. An appeal to the vice president for student affairs may be made only on the grounds stated in Section E. Guidelines for Appeals as described below. The appellant, as appropriate, may assert additional grounds.

The vice president for student affairs need not rehear the evidence in the case; therefore, the student must submit a complete written statement as described above. In ordinary cases the student may not be required to appear before the vice president for student affairs. Such a request for appearance may be granted or denied in the sound discretion of the vice president for student affairs.

The vice president for student affairs shall review the case and make a decision following the Guidelines of Appeals, Section E below.

#### **D. Appeals to the President of the University**

If a student is not satisfied with the decision rendered by the Vice President of Student Affairs regarding his or her case resulting in suspension, expulsion, removal from housing and/or retraction of a degree or previously awarded credit for a class, the student may initiate an appeal to the University President regarding the decision of the vice president of student affairs. An appeal to the University President may be made only on the grounds stated in Section E. Guidelines for appeals as described below. The appellant, as appropriate, may assert additional grounds. The University President or designee need not rehear the evidence in the case; therefore, the student must submit a complete written statement as

described above. In ordinary cases the student may not be required to appear before the University President or designee. Such a request for appearance may be granted or denied in the sole and sound discretion of the University President. The University President or designee shall review the case and make a decision following the Guidelines of Appeals, Section E below.

E. **Guidelines for Appeals**. An appeal may be made only on the grounds stated below:

1. ***Due Process***. Failure of the conduct body to follow procedures, including failure to observe the rights of the accused, but only if such failure actually resulted in preventing the accused from adequately defending against the charge.

2. ***Substantial Evidence***. The findings are not supported by substantial evidence or the sanctions are not supported by the findings.

3. ***Bias***. Demonstrated bias on the part of one or more members of the adjudicating body. “Bias” requires more than merely knowing the accused or knowing something about the case. Disqualification occurs only where it can be established that the Coordinator of Student Conduct, a member of the Board of Student Conduct, or SGA Judicial Branch was incapable of rendering a fair decision.

4. ***Excessive Sanctions***. Whether the sanction imposed by the adjudicating body was excessive, in light of the nature of the offense and the students’ conduct record.

5. A review of the case will result in one of the following determinations:

- i. Affirm the findings and sanctions.
- ii. Affirm the factual findings, but raise or lower the recommended sanction.
- iii. Reverse one or more findings of responsibility, and eliminate or modify the sanction, as appropriate.
- iv. If procedural error prejudiced the ability of the accused to defend himself/herself before any of the tribunals, the case may be returned for a new hearing.
- v. Apply another action as appropriate.

F. Appeals to the Board of Regents

Should the student be dissatisfied with the decision of the University President, he or she has the right to appeal in writing to the Board of Regents. The appeal to the Board shall be submitted in writing to the Executive Secretary of the Board (Board of Regents, 270 Washington Street, SW, Atlanta, GA 30334) within twenty calendar days after the institution’s final decision and shall cite all the reasons for dissatisfaction with the previous decision.

## **Addendum- Title IX Compliance Policy for Sexual Harassment, Discrimination, & Assault**

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs and activities that receive federal funding.

Title IX states: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

Title IX prohibits sex discrimination in any university program including, but not limited to health services, counseling, psychological services, athletics, admissions, academic programs, extracurricular activities, employment, financial aid, housing, and student services. Title IX prohibits discrimination by and against both males and females, by students, faculty and staff, and visitors.

The policy of Savannah State University is to implement affirmative action and equal opportunity for all employees, students and applicants for employment or admission without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, veteran status, physical or mental disability.

### **Which behaviors are considered discrimination based on sex in violation of Title IX?**

Discrimination based on sex contains a broad category of activities that prevent or limit the victim from participating in or benefiting from an education program or activity.

Examples of sex-based discrimination, include, but are not limited to:

- Unequal admission, participation, or employment opportunities in education programs and activities based on a person's sex
- Unequal opportunities to participate in intercollegiate athletics or to receive athletics-based financial assistance based on a person's sex.

### **Sexual Harassment**

Discrimination based on sex also includes sexual harassment. This is unwelcomed sexual conduct, intimidation, or coercion that is severe and pervasive, and that prevents or limits the victim from participating in or benefiting from an education program or activity. Harassers and victims may be either male or female, and may be students, faculty, or staff.

Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Criminal sexual conduct, such as rape and sexual assault
- Requesting or pressuring an individual for sexual favors
- Discussing sexual activities
- Sexual conduct of any nature, which is not freely and mutually agreeable to both parties
- Sexual remarks about one's clothing, body or sexual activities
- Sexual jokes, innuendo, texts, teasing and/or remarks
- Verbal harassment or abuse
- Stalking
- Indecent exposure
- Unnecessary touching, patting, cornering, fondling, hugging, against a person's body

#### Consensual Relationships

The existence of consensual relationship must be immediately disclosed to your supervisor. Consensual romantic or sexual relationships between supervisor and employee or between faculty and students are strongly discouraged. No person involved in a consensual relationship should have direct responsibility for evaluating the employment or academic performance or for making decisions regarding the promotion, tenure, or compensation of the other party to the relationship.

#### Retaliation is Prohibited!

It is unlawful to retaliate against an individual for filing a complaint or for cooperating in an investigation of complaint regarding Title IX. SSU will take strong responsive action if retaliation occurs. Any person found to have retaliated against an individual reporting, filing, or cooperating in a Title IX matter is subject to SSU disciplinary procedures up to and including expulsion or termination.

#### Who do I contact if I have a concern?

Savannah State University has designated three individuals to oversee compliance efforts under Title IX and to investigate any complaint of discrimination based on sex.

#### Coordinator

Toya C. Camacho, Equity/Diversity Officer  
Colston Administration Building, Room 208  
T: 912.358.4150 Email: camachot@savannahstate.edu

#### Deputy Coordinators

Bonita Bradley, Assistant Vice-President for Student Affairs  
King Frazier Student Center, Suite 247  
T: 912.358.3118 Email: bradleyb@savannahstate.edu

Danita Townsend, Associate Athletics Director for Administration & Student Welfare  
Office of Intercollegiate Athletics  
T: 912.358.3449 Email: townsendd@savannahstate.edu