

**VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**STUDENT HANDBOOK**  
**2019 – 2020**

The *Virginia State University Student Handbook* is edited and published by the Office of the Dean of Students and the Student Handbook Committee. It serves as a general source of information for Virginia State University students. All information is subject to change without warning. The Office of the Dean of Students would like to thank all University officials, programs, offices, and departments that contributed to the completion of the *Virginia State University Student Handbook*

## **FOREWARD**

The **STUDENT HANDBOOK** facilitates communication among the members of the Virginia State University community; while serving as a source of necessary and useful information that will assist students in understanding and becoming familiar with the policies of the university and their rights, responsibilities and privileges pertaining to their experience at VSU, “The Opportunity University”.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

<b>PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>MISSION</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>VALUES</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>HISTORY &amp; TRADITIONS</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>ACADEMIC POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND REGULATIONS</b> .....	<b>3</b>
Academic Honesty.....	5
Academic Sanctions .....	5
Classroom Attendance .....	7
Classroom Conduct.....	7
Course Syllabus .....	8
Grades.....	8
Incomplete Grade Policy .....	9
Grade Point Average.....	10
Grade Reports.....	10
Grade Appeal Procedure.....	10
Registration.....	11
Release of Records .....	11
<b>RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES</b> .....	<b>18</b>
Americans With Disabilities Accessibility Policy.....	19
Assembly Rights.....	20
Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Misconduct and Retaliation.....	22
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).....	34
Hazing Policy .....	37
Health Center.....	37
Resident Bill of Rights.....	38
SCHEV Student Complaint Process .....	39
Student Grievance Procedure.....	40
Academic Grievances .....	41
Academic Grievances Against Faculty.....	42
<b>SAFETY AND SECURITY</b> .....	<b>44</b>
Department of Police and Public Safety .....	44
The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act of 1998 .....	44
Operation ID .....	45
Rape Aggression Defense (R.A.D.).....	47
Adopt Hall .....	47
Emergency Call Boxes .....	47
Zero-Tolerance Program.....	47
Emergency Alert System .....	47
Violence Prevention/Threat Assessment .....	47
Campus Community Police Academy .....	48
Sexual Assault and Rape .....	49

<b>STUDENT INVOLVEMENT .....</b>	<b>53</b>
Student Government Association (SGA).....	53
Student Senate .....	54
Mr. and Miss Virginia State University and Class Kings and Queens .....	55
Pan-Hellenic Council.....	57
Recreation and Leisure Programs: Intramural Sports.....	57
Student Organizations.....	57
Student Publications .....	58
University Committees/Student Representation .....	60
Varsity Athletics .....	60
Athletic Program.....	60
<b>STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT .....</b>	<b>61</b>
Preamble .....	61
Disciplinary Standards and Procedures .....	61
Violation of Public Laws by Students .....	62
Channels for Charges Against a Student .....	63
Immediate Suspension .....	64
Rights of the Accused.....	65
Administrator’s Court.....	66
Administrative Judicial Panel.....	66
Procedures for Department of Student Conduct Formal Hearings .....	67
Granting or Denying Appeals.....	69
Contents of Appeal Letter.....	70
Action and Appeals .....	70
Sanctions.....	70
Violations and Penalties .....	73
Standards for Student-Organization Conduct .....	82
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>90</b>
Appendix A: Information to Know.....	90
Appendix B: Definitions.....	96
Appendix C: Directory Information.....	100
Appendix D: Grade Appeal Procedures.....	104



## VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY

VIRGINIA STATE, VIRGINIA 23806

P.O. Box 9001

(804) 524-5070

(804) 524-6506 FAX



Greetings!

Trojans, welcome home! On behalf of the Virginia State University (VSU) Board of Visitors, administrators, faculty, staff and alumni, it is my sincere hope that your academic experience will be one filled with exceptional opportunities and achievements.

As a member of the VSU family, you are part of a rich legacy of Trojans who have pride themselves on being trailblazers for their communities and families. You are part of a campus community with numerous dedicated members who are ready and equipped to motivate and encourage you to be successful in all of your endeavors.

Throughout your matriculation at VSU, I challenge you to take advantage of the programs and services that are available to help ensure your success, build lasting relationships, participate in community service, take a semester to study abroad, pursue undergraduate research and have the best transformative experience you possibly can. Remember you stand on the shoulders of countless individuals you are counting on you to those global leaders to make a difference in our communities, in the Commonwealth of Virginia and the world.

It is my expectation that all loyal sons and daughters of VSU will have a very productive academic year. Lastly, if you see me on campus, say hello, and feel free to share with me how things are going for you in the Land of Troy.

Hail State! Hail State! Hail! Hail! Hail!

Sincerely,

Makola M. Abdullah, Ph.D.  
President

# VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY

## MISSION

---

Virginia State University, a public, comprehensive 1890 Land Grant institution and historically black college/university, is committed to the preparation of a diverse population of men and women through the advancement of academic programs and services that integrate instruction, research, extension, and outreach. The University endeavors to meet the educational needs of students, graduating lifelong learners who are well equipped to serve their communities as informed citizens, globally competitive leaders, and highly effective, ethical professionals.

## VALUES

---

1. **Student Centered** – Promoting the intellectual, physical, social, and emotional development of students in all facets of University life.
2. **Integrity** – Displaying the highest degree of ethical commitment in the pursuit of knowledge.
3. **Engagement** – Developing civically engaged citizens who value all persons and demonstrate the desire to positively impact their immediate surroundings, nation, and world.
4. **Customer Service** – Creating an atmosphere of respect, collegiality, and responsiveness to provide excellent service to our internal and external constituents.
5. **Excellence** – Utilizing a balanced approach to create a high expectation of achievement, awareness, and intellectual development among our students, faculty, and staff.
6. **Scholarly Research** – Conducting scholarly activity at the forefront of our disciplines and applying translational discoveries and intellectual pursuits to benefit the community.
7. **Global** – Preparing globally aware citizens that respect and appreciate cultural differences of all people through service and the dissemination of knowledge to the world.
8. **Teaching** – Providing learning environments and activities consistent with best educational practices to create a framework where scholarship is intentional, transformational, and deepens understanding in the preparation of future leaders.
9. **Diversity** – Fostering a community that identifies, values, and respects differences of all people by creating a positive experience for students, faculty, staff, and the community.

## HISTORY & TRADITIONS

---

Virginia State University was founded on March 6, 1882, when the legislature passed a bill to charter the Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute. The bill was sponsored by Delegate Alfred W. Harris, a Black attorney whose offices were in Petersburg, but who lived in and represented Dinwiddie County in the General Assembly. A hostile lawsuit delayed opening day for nineteen months, until October 1, 1883. In 1902, the legislature revised the charter act to curtail the collegiate program and to change the name to Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute. In 1920, the land-grant program for Blacks was moved from a private school, Hampton Institute, where it had been since 1872, to Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute. In 1923 the college program was restored, and the name was changed to Virginia State College for Negroes in 1930. The two-year branch in Norfolk was added to the college in 1944; the Norfolk division became a four-year branch in 1956 and gained independence as Norfolk State College in 1969. Meanwhile, the parent school was renamed Virginia State College in 1946. Finally, the legislature passed a law in 1979 to provide the present name, Virginia State University.

In the first academic year, 1883-84, the University had 126 students and seven faculty (all of them Black), one building, 33 acres, a 200-book library, and a \$20,000 budget. By the centennial year of 1982, the University was fully integrated, with a student body of nearly 5,000, a full-time faculty of about 250, a library containing 200,000 books and 360,000 microform and non-print items, a 236-acre campus and 416-acre farm, more than 50 buildings, including 15 dormitories and 16 classroom buildings, and a biennial budget of \$31,000,000, exclusive of capital outlay.

The University is situated in Chesterfield County at Ettrick, on a bluff across the Appomattox River from the city of Petersburg. It is accessible via Interstate Highways 95 and 85, which meet in Petersburg. The University is only two and a half hours away from Washington, D.C. to the north, the Raleigh-Durham- Chapel Hill area to the southwest, and Charlottesville to the northwest.

Virginia State University has a long history of outstanding faculty and administration. The first person to bear the title of President, John Mercer Langston, was one of the best-known blacks of his day. Until 1992, he was the only black ever elected to the United States Congress from Virginia (elected in 1888), and he was the great-uncle of the famed writer Langston Hughes. From 1888 to 1968, four presidents - James H. Johnston, John M. Gandy, Luther H. Foster, Robert P. Daniel served an average of 20 years, helping the school to overcome adversity and move forward. The next twenty years, 1968-1992, saw six more presidents—James F. Tucker, Wendell P. Russell, Walker H. Quarles, Jr., Thomas M. Law, Wilbert Greenfield, and Wesley Cornelius McClure. On June 1, 1993, Eddie N. Moore, Jr., the former Treasurer of the Commonwealth of Virginia, became the twelfth President of Virginia State University. Dr. Keith T. Miller became Virginia State University's 13th president from 2010 to 2014. In 2015, Dr. Pamela V. Hammond became the first woman to lead Virginia State University in 133 years. She was appointed as interim president on January 1, 2015. On February 1, 2016, Dr. Makola M. Abdullah became the 14th President of VSU.

# BOARD OF VISITORS SUMMARY

---

Virginia State University, established in 1882, was the nation's first state-supported land grant college for African Americans. Located in Chesterfield County, the University now offers undergraduate, masters, post-baccalaureate certificate and doctoral degrees across the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences and mathematics, engineering, and computer sciences for a diverse population of students. Code of Virginia, Title 23.1, Chapter 27.

The board of visitors is authorized to make all needful rules and regulations concerning the University. The board of visitors or other governing body of every state-supported institution of higher education in Virginia is authorized to establish rules and regulations for the acceptance of students; for the conduct of students and the suspension and dismissal of students who fail or refuse to abide by such rules; for the rescission or restriction of financial aid; for the employment of professors, teachers, instructors and all other employees; and for parking and traffic on property owned by the institution.

The board of visitors or other governing body is required to establish policies and procedures regarding a dependent student's receipt of mental health treatment at the student health or counseling center under certain circumstances and regarding the release of a dependent student's educational record.

The board of visitors or other governing body is authorized to establish programs to promote compliance among students with laws relating to the use of alcoholic beverages; to establish guidelines for the initiation or induction into any social fraternity or sorority; and promote the awareness and prevention of sexual crimes committed upon students. Code of Virginia, Title 23.1, Chapter 13.

Regulations may be obtained from Virginia State University, 1 Hayden Drive, Virginia State University, Virginia 23806. Internet address: <http://www.vsu.edu/>.



# **ACADEMIC POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND REGULATIONS**

---

## **AAUP JOINT STATEMENT ON RIGHTS AND FREEDOM OF STUDENTS**

In June 1967, a joint committee comprised of representatives from the American Association of University Professors, U.S. National Student Association; Association of American Colleges; National Association of Student Personnel Administrators; and the National Association of Women Deans and Counselors met in Washington, DC. and drafted in part the Joint Statement of Rights and Freedoms of Students published below.

<https://www.aaup.org/report/joint-statement-rights-and-freedoms-students>

Since its formulation, the Joint Statement has been endorsed by each of its five national sponsors, as well as a number of other professional bodies. The Association's Council approved the statement in October 1967 and the 54<sup>th</sup> annual meeting endorsed it as association policy. While Virginia State University endorses this statement, nothing in its content should be interpreted or construed to supersede existing policies or procedures.

### **PREAMBLE**

Academic institutions exist for the transmission of knowledge, the pursuit of truth, the development of students, and the general well-being attainment of society. Free inquiry and free expression are indispensable to the attainment of these goals. As members of the academic community, students should be encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for truth. Institutional procedures for achieving these purposes may vary from campus to campus, but the minimal standards of academic freedom of students outlined are essential to any community of scholars.

Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable tenets of academic freedom. The freedom to learn depends upon appropriate opportunities and conditions in the classroom on the campus and in the larger community. Students should exercise their freedom responsibly.

The responsibility to secure and to respect general conditions conducive to the freedom to learn is shared by all members of the academic community. Each college and university has a duty to develop policies and procedures which provide and safeguard this freedom. Such policies and procedures should be developed at each institution within the framework of general standards and with the broadest possible participation of the members of the academic community. The purpose of this statement is to enumerate the essential provisions for students' freedom to learn.

## **I. FREEDOM OF ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION**

The admission policies of each college and university are a matter of institutional choice—provided that each college or university makes clear the characteristics and expectations of students that it considers relevant to success in the institution's program. While charge-related institutions may give admission preference to students of their own persuasion, such preference should be clearly and publicly stated. Under no circumstances should a student be barred from admission to a particular institution on the basis of race. Thus, within the limits of its facilities, each college and university should be open to all students who are qualified according to its admission standards. The facilities and services of a college should be open to all of its enrolled students, and institutions should use their influence to secure equal access for all students to public facilities in the local community.

## **II. IN THE CLASSROOM**

### **A. PROTECTION OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

Students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study in which they are enrolled.

### **B. PROTECTION AGAINST IMPROPER EVALUATION**

Students should have protection through orderly procedures against prejudiced or capricious academic evaluation. At the same time, they are responsible for maintaining standards of academic performance established for each course in which they are enrolled.

### **C. PROTECTION AGAINST IMPROPER DISCLOSURE**

Information about student views, beliefs and political associations which professors acquire in the course of their work as instructors, advisors, and counselors should be considered confidential. Protection against improper disclosure is a serious professional

obligation. Judgments of ability and character may be provided under appropriate circumstances, normally with the knowledge or consent of the student.

Virginia State University features academic environments within seven colleges: the College of Agriculture, the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business, the College of Engineering and Technology, the College of Natural and Health Sciences, the College of Education, the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the College of Graduate Studies. The University offers 44 baccalaureate and 11 master's degree programs, 2 doctoral degree programs, and 6 certificates. Virginia State University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The Reginald F. Lewis College of Business is accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business.

Graduate programs provide access for nontraditional students in the surrounding counties to continue their education toward formal degrees, for professional growth, or for self-enrichment. The emphasis is on convenience and access, with workshops, seminars, and institutes, in addition to credit courses, on campus and at off-campus sites.

## **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

Intellectual and scholastic freedoms are safeguarded through the application of principles of academic honesty. Violations of academic honesty represent a serious breach of the Virginia State University honor code and may be considered grounds for disciplinary action. Academic dishonesty includes (a) plagiarism—presentation of the written words of others as if they were one's own; and (b) cheating—giving, aiding, or seeking improper assistance during the process of taking a test or examination.

Penalties for academic dishonesty may be loss of credit for the work in question, loss of credit for the course, and/or suspension or expulsion from the University.

## **ACADEMIC SANCTIONS**

**The following guidelines provide the minimum academic standards of the University and required maintenance of grade point averages for a student to avoid academic sanctions.**

- 1. A new student (first time in college freshmen or transfer student without an Associate Degree) must earn a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 1.5 each semester during the first two regular semesters in residence. Thereafter, the student must earn at least a 2.0 semester average each regular semester (to avoid Academic Warning) or have a cumulative average of a 2.0 (to avoid Probation or Suspension).*

*Transfer students with the Associate Degree must maintain a 2.0 semester GPA each*

regular semester (to avoid Academic Warning) or have a cumulative GPA of 2.0 (to avoid Probation or Suspension)

2. **Academic Warning** will occur when a student's semester average falls below the required minimum.
3. **Academic Probation** occurs when a will occur when a student's semester and cumulative average falls below the required minimum for two semesters.
4. **Academic Suspension** for poor scholarship will occur when a student's semester and cumulative average falls below the required minimum for three semesters. Students will not be readmitted to the university except under the following circumstances:
  - A. Students who return to the university, having earned an Associate Degree (college-prep track) will be readmitted under the same terms and conditions as a transfer student.
  - B. Under exceptional circumstances (such as serious and documented health or financial difficulties), a student may appeal his/her suspension to the department chair and college dean who may then, in turn, recommend readmission to the Academic Credits Committee (ACC). Such an appeal can only be made after the student has been out for the period of one year. The student must present a letter from at least one faculty member in support of his or her appeal. If the appeal is successful, the student will be readmitted on "warning".
5. *If a student voluntarily withdraws from the university for a semester (for any reason), that student will return on the same status with which he/she left. (That is, if the student left on "warning," he/she will return on "warning;" if he/she left on "probation," he/she will return on "P\probation.")*<sup>1</sup>

STUDENT MUST MAINTAIN EITHER THE SEMESTER OR CUMULATIVE GPA, AS SPECIFIED

Completed Semesters	Semester GPA	Cumulative GPA
1	1.5	N/A
2	1.5	N/A
3+	2.0	OR 2.0

<sup>1</sup> See Virginia State University *Catalog*, "Academic Sanctions: <http://www.vsu.edu/academics/academic-catalog.ph>

Each request for readmission is evaluated by ACC. The appellant must demonstrate that he/she is prepared to succeed academically via written recommendation from the appellant's dean and department chairperson and documentation of academic pursuits/activities (e.g., college course work successfully completed at other accredited institutions, college-equivalency experiences, relevant internships, military service, etc., as applicable).

- If the request for readmission is approved, ACC may make stipulations with regard to maximum number of credit-hours in which the applicant may enroll, change of major, required cumulative or term grade point average, among others as deemed appropriate to the student's academic progress during previous enrollment and work completed during the period of suspension.
- If the request for readmission is denied, ACC will inform the applicant in writing as to what the student can do to reapply in the future, or the application may be denied and permanent expulsion imposed.

#### **ADVISEMENT**

Upon admission to the University, first-year students will be assigned an academic advisor from the department in which they are enrolled in addition to a point of contact within the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE). Nontraditional students and students who have not declared a major field of study will also be advised through the Academic Center for Excellence. Every other student will only be assigned an academic advisor from the department in which they are enrolled.

#### **CLASSROOM ATTENDANCE**

Classroom attendance is expected of all students. An instructor may reduce the grade for any student who exceeds four hours of absences for a four-semester-hour course, three hours of absences for a three-semester-hour course, two hours of absences for a two-semester-hour course, and/or one hour of absences for a one-semester-hour course.

#### **CLASSROOM CONDUCT**

Disruptive and disrespectful behavior on the part of any student shall not be tolerated. The instructor has the right to determine appropriate standards of behavior in the class, as long as the requirement does not infringe upon the individual's rights. Appropriate classroom decorum shall be described in the course syllabus.

Use of cell phones, similar communication devices, or any unauthorized electronic data storage device in learning situations, other than to receive emergency notifications, may constitute a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

## **COURSE SYLLABUS**

Faculty members will provide students with a course syllabus by the second meeting of class. The course syllabus shall include, but is not limited to, the following information:

1. Instructor's first and last name
2. Office hours when the instructor will be available to students
3. Description of course content
4. Course objectives
5. Special assignments and due dates
6. Examination and special-assignment schedules
7. Classroom-decorum and attendance policies
8. Grading system and other pertinent information

## **GRADES**

The approved grade symbols and grade-symbol definitions are as follows:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Quality Points</b>
A	Excellent	4
B	Good	3
C	Average	2
D	Below Average	1
F	Failure	0

The following grades are also used and have no quality-point value, thereby being neutral in GPA determination:

---

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Definition</b>
I	Incomplete grade: a student, otherwise passing, has for good reason failed to complete course requirements; for undergraduates, must be removed within one year or be changed to an F
P	Satisfactory completion: at the graduate level, successful completion of research and thesis
S	Satisfactory completion: at the undergraduate level, successful completion of certain experiences Satisfactory progress: at the graduate level Satisfactory progress: in research and thesis
U	Unsatisfactory performance: student has not earned credit hours for which she/he has enrolled
W	Withdrawn
R	No credit given: administrative indication; awarded to Special Services students
AU/Z	Course audit
N	Non-attendance
O	Omitted Grade: administrative indication

---

## **INCOMPLETE GRADE POLICY**

Due to extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the student, an incomplete grade may be assigned if the student was passing as determined by the instructor. A student who is passing a course but has not completed all of the required work due to extenuating circumstances by the end of the term may, with the permission of the instructor, be assigned a grade of “I”. Grades of “I” are not assigned to any course that a student fails to attend.

The instructor must submit to the department chair the Justification for Assigning an Incomplete (“I”) Grade form which should include the required work to be completed, the current grade and the percentage of work completed. This form must be signed by the instructor and student (when possible). This document must be signed by the chair and kept in the departmental student file with a copy provided to the student.

Incomplete grades will not count as hours attempted in computing cumulative grade point averages. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor for the removal of an incomplete grade. All incomplete grades must be removed by the last day of classes of the term in which the student is next enrolled, or the grade will automatically be changed to “F”. A student should not re-register for a course(s) in which incomplete grades have been received. A student with 12 or more credits of “I” on their record may not register without permission from the dean.

### UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

An “I” grade received must be replaced by the last day of classes in the next semester that the student is enrolled after receiving the “I” grade.

### GRADUATE STUDENTS

The “I” grade will remain on the record until the required work is completed. Graduate students should finish the course requirements as soon as possible but within one year.

### **GRADE POINT AVERAGE**

The GPA is determined by dividing total quality points earned by total quality hours attempted for grades of A, B, C, D, and F. The highest grade in courses that have been repeated is used in the calculation.

### **GRADE REPORTS**

Midterm and final grade reports can be viewed by the student via the Blackboard Web for Student Module, which is accessed through the Virginia State University website at <http://www.vsu.edu/> or directly at <http://blackboard.vsu.edu>

### **GRADE APPEAL PROCEDURE**

Students may appeal final grades based upon documented evidence that a grade was incorrectly awarded. Grade appeals should be requested within ONE YEAR of the semester in which the grade was awarded. The appeal procedure for a student with a complaint about grading requires initial contact with the instructor involved and further contact with the instructor's department chairperson if the matter is not resolved between the instructor and student. If the matter is not resolved at the departmental level, a grade appeal should be submitted to the dean of the college in which the instructor teaches. The dean shall then forward the request to the College Grade Appeal Committee for deliberation.

College Grade Appeal Committees consisting of at least one faculty member from each department shall deliberate requests for grade appeals and recommend an action to the college dean. The dean shall review the recommendation and make a decision on the outcome of the appeal.



The dean shall serve as the final arbiter on the matter. Only if circumstances warrant further deliberation should grade appeals be referred to the Academic Credits Committee.

For more information on grade appeals and other requests for exceptions to academic policies please see Appendix D.

## **REGISTRATION**

Current enrolled students are required to register for the upcoming semester. During this period students are required to see their advisors for curriculum updates. Students are required to register for sequence and number of credit hours required within the curriculum for each semester. A full-time course load for undergraduates is generally 15 semester hours; the maximum course load is 18 semester hours. Any exceptions must be approved by the department chair and the college dean.

## **RELEASE OF RECORDS**

The University reserves the right to withhold transcripts, certificates, registration materials, and any other information about a student when outstanding financial obligations have not been cleared by appropriate University officials.

## **SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS POLICY (Effective July 2011)**

Students receiving Federal Financial Aid must adhere to the following Federal Regulations regarding standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP).

Virginia State University is required by Federal Regulations to adhere to minimum standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) that relate to a student's eligibility for federally funded financial aid programs, state and institutional grants, scholarships, employment and loan programs.

Students must meet the minimum satisfactory academic progress standards in order to initially receive and maintain eligibility for Title IV funds. The satisfactory academic progress standards apply to all students in degree seeking programs of study who wish to be considered for financial assistance.

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS (This Category of Students includes Baccalaureate and Post-Baccalaureate)**

Cancellation letters are mailed as a courtesy to students. Whether or not a student receives a cancellation letter, each student is expected to understand the SAP requirements and monitor

his/her academic performance. A Cancellation letter is a notice that a student is not eligible to receive financial aid. A student will receive a cancellation letter if any one of the following criteria is reached:

- The student's cumulative GPA is less than 1.5 after attempting less than 30 hours, or less than 2.0 after attempting 30 or more hours (transfer credits are included in total hours attempted)
- The student earns less than 67% of their overall attempted hours at VSU (transfer credit hours are not included)
- The student attempts more than 150% of the hours required for their degree program (transfer credits included)
- The student completely withdraws from his/her last two semesters.

Example: A student in an undergraduate program that requires 120 credit hours will have eligibility for aid canceled after attempting more than 180 hours.

#### **REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATE/PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS (This Category of students includes Master, Post-Masters, and Doctoral)**

Cancellation letters are mailed as a courtesy to students. Whether or not a student receives a cancellation letter, each student is expected to understand the SAP requirements and monitor his/her academic performance. A Cancellation letter is a notice that a student is not eligible to receive financial aid. A student will receive a cancellation letter if any one of the following criteria is reached:

- The student's cumulative GPA is less than a 3.0
- The student earns less than 67% of their attempted hours (transfer credit hours not included)
- The student attempts more than 150% of the hours required for their degree program (transfer credits included)
- The student completely withdraws from his/her last two consecutive semesters

**Example: A student who is in a graduate degree program would be sent a SAP cancellation letter at the point their cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 or they fail to pass the required credit hours.**

## FINANCIAL AID STATUS EXPLANATION

- **Good** – Student is in good academic standing
- **Warning** – Student is alerted that their financial aid is in jeopardy due to their academic performance
- **Cancellation** – Student is informed by letter that their financial aid has been canceled
- **Over** - Student attempted 180 credit hours or more (Undergraduate); 45 hours or more (Graduate)

## SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (Appealing Cancellation of Financial Aid Eligibility)

A student whose eligibility for financial aid has been canceled may submit an appeal if mitigating circumstances prevented the student from achieving Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). If a student feels that they violated SAP standards due to mitigating circumstances, the student may submit a Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Form to the VSU Office of Student Financial Aid.

## DECISIONS OF THE SAP APPEALS COMMITTEE ARE FINAL

### **Supporting Documentation** (*All appeals must include supporting documentation*)

To confirm your circumstances), you must attach documentation from an objective third party

**(Example: physician, counselor, lawyer, social worker, teacher, religious leader, academic advisor and/or VSU Counseling Center).**

Your third party documentation must:

- Be submitted on official letterhead with appropriate signatures or via email from a valid VSU email account
- Verify that the circumstances occurred during the timeframe referenced in your appeal Verify that the circumstance(s) will no longer influence your academic performance
- If document submitted is an obituary notice of immediate family member, then your relationship to that family member must also be documented

Mitigating circumstances must be documented, and any appeal submitted without documentation will be **denied**. In some cases, the student will be instructed on the SAP Appeal to submit an Audit form from your advisor.

We realize that sharing personal information may be difficult. Be assured that your statement

will remain confidential. Only Financial Ad Personnel will review your appeal. Appeals without appropriate supporting documentation **WILL NOT BE REVIEWED.**

## **DEADLINES**

To insure timely processing, it is your responsibility to initiate an appeal before the specified deadline.

### **Please submit Completed SAP Appeals to:**

Office of Student Financial

Aid Attn: SAP Committee

P.O. Box 9031 112 Gandy Hall  
Virginia State University, VA 23806  
(804) 524-6818 Fax

Students will be notified in writing or by email of the results of their appeal. Appeal decisions are based on the information presented on the appeal form and the SAP criteria; therefore, it is important that the appeal contain as much supporting information and documentation as possible. Lack of supporting documentation is grounds for denial of the appeal. Appeal will fall into the following categories:

1. A-Deny (Denied) - Student is not eligible to receive financial aid (Private Loans Only)
2. Reinstated – Student is approved to receive financial aid for one semester but must meet specified criteria during the term to receive aid the next term.

---

**The Virginia State University Academic Center for Excellence** takes pride in providing the building blocks and tools necessary for our students to achieve academic and professional greatness.

Our “love army” of support for our students, with close relationships that develop between professors and students, in academic settings, as well as through our advising programs, continue to preserve our credibility as Virginia’s *Opportunity University*. The Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) emerged as an innovative hub where Trojans “*embrace and engage in transformative educational opportunities throughout their academic journey.*”

ACE is a full-service center structured to provide you with the sustenance and resources necessary to promote character building, academic excellence and career goal achievements. ACE advisors are here to support and encourage you every step of the way. The uniquely designed space

includes state-of-the-art technology, private pods for individual studying and meeting space for group collaborations.

From your freshman experience, to life after receiving your degree, ACE will be instrumental in preparing you to not only be a productive member of society, but a competitive contender in any career environment.

## MISSION

The Academic Center for Excellence empowers students to embrace and engage in transformative educational opportunities throughout their academic journey.

## VISION

The vision is for all Trojans to be reflective, self-valuing, community-centered scholars committed to transforming their lives and the lives of others.

**ACE offers programs and services for you** that build an academic skill set, create a sense of community, and reduce self-handicapping measures.

The uniquely designed center provides a conducive learning environment and friendly atmosphere implemented to promote educational excellence, reinforce academic and social well-being, and help you embrace the role of a learner and a discoverer while engaging in a life-changing experience.

**Trojan Odyssey** is essential to assist you with the transition to college life. The Lyceum Series is designed to engage and enhance your overall educational experience.

- Critical thinking and analysis programs
- Welcome Week and Trojan Introduction Program
- Social and professional engagement referrals
- Undergraduate research and social entrepreneurship
- Mentorships
- Lyceum Series (For upcoming Lyceum Series featured speakers, programs, and events visit our calendar) \*link to calendar
- Trojan Leadership

**Strategic Learning** (formerly known as University College and Trojan Peer Coaching) assists with enhancing your academic and scholarly pursuits.

- Individual academic and life style coaching

- Study abroad opportunities
- Stress reduction and time management strategies
- Peer Tutoring
- Group support workshops

**Academic Advising** works closely with you and faculty to ensure that you have the support needed to obtain a degree conducive to your life, educational and career goals.

- Course scheduling
- Academic performance monitoring
- Credit hours tracking

**Career Services** provides you with the support needed to ensure a successful post-graduation transition.

- Freshman, transfer and upper class guidance
- Career advising, planning and preparation
- Explore job and internship opportunities
- Graduate school admission assistance

## **Virginia State University Withdrawal Policy**

It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw from the university. Students are required to take the following actions to officially withdraw from the university. Complete the Withdrawal Data Sheet from the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE), Second Floor, Johnston Memorial Library.

- ✓ **The Academic Center for Excellence (ACE)**
  1. ACE serves as the initial contact and will provide academic advising on the reason for the withdrawal.
  2. If the student is immediately suspended and sent to ACE, ACE handles the withdrawal process for the student.
  3. The office explains the withdrawal data sheet, the process, and each of the enclosed offices requiring signatures:
- ✓ **Financial Aid Office**
  1. The student will be asked if they have first visited ACE.
  2. The department will check to see if a student has Title IV financial aid (grants or loans) or a State Grant (Virginia, DC, etc.).
  3. The exit interview process will be explained.
  4. The "date of withdrawal" entered on the form and in Banner is very important; this determines whether funds will be sent back if less than 60% of the semester has not passed.

5. Financial Aid has up to 45 days for processing, but normally processes every two weeks.
- ✓ Residence Life and Housing
    1. The office will sign the form for housing and meals.
    2. The signature only applies to on-campus students.
    3. After the 5<sup>th</sup> day of class there is no proration on housing.
    4. There is no proration on meals.
  - ✓ Johnston Memorial Library
    1. The Circulation Department reviews the student's library account.
    2. If there are library items checked out to the account, the staff will request that the student returns items(s) before the withdrawal form can be signed.
    3. If library items are not returned by the end of the semester, a \$50 charge is placed on the student's account.
  - ✓ Post Office
    1. The withdrawal process only impacts on-campus students.
    2. If on-campus, it is required that the student return's the mailbox key.
    3. If the key is not returned by the end of the semester, a \$10 charge is placed on the account.
  - ✓ Student Accounts
    1. A hold will be placed on the account when the student receives the form for clearance.
    2. The withdrawal form has been revised to reflect balance, refund process (date), and amount.
  - ✓ Registrar's Office
    1. Insures that all departments have signed and dated the withdrawal form as it applies and is retrieved from the VSU One Card.
    2. Each students' VSU One Card must be submitted to the Registrar's Office with the form.
    3. If the student has money on the one card; the student must report to "Student Accounts" for a refund.
    4. Trojan dollar credits are managed by the Trojan Card Office. Refund requests are made in writing by the student, and should contain the V# and current/permanent mailing address.
    5. The office collaborates with the Financial Aid Office to make sure that the same forms are used prior to processing.
  - ✓ Judicial Affairs (signature not required on the form)
    1. The office sends letters to notify departments of the student's status upon the hearing.
    2. It depends on the charge whether the student is automatically suspended.
    3. If the student is immediately suspended and sent to ACE, ACE will handle the withdrawal process for the student.

Area/Department Distribution List-Representatives

ACE	Ms. Barbara Joyner, Joseph Lyons
Financial Aid	Ms. Myra Phillips, Zelda Tucker-Dugger
Library	Mr. Michael Walker, Ms. Sheila Carrington
Residence Life	Mr. Desmond Crawley, Mr. Derrick Peterson
Post Office	Mr. Maurice Pegram
Student Accounts	Ms. Crystal Wright
Registrar	Ms. Nedra Jones, Mr. Saleem Sullivan

University Withdrawal Checklist

- ✓ Check the academic calendar for deadlines to drop or withdraw from courses.
- ✓ Communicate with your advisor and instructors immediately.
- ✓ Obtain all required administrative office signatures.
- ✓ Contact the Financial Aid Office to confirm the account balance or financial implications of the university withdrawal.
- ✓ Campus residents should contact the Office of Residence Life.
- ✓ Student athletes should contact their Athletic Coordinator.
- ✓ Recipients of veteran benefits should contact the Veterans Affairs Office.
- ✓ Submit the university withdrawal form to the Registrar's Office.

## **RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

---

Virginia State University fosters an atmosphere that inspires academic and moral excellence, where the rights and opinions of others are respected and a sense of integrity and fairness prevail.

Virginia State University will provide opportunities for each student to develop a sense of dignity, a positive self-concept, focused self-direction, and a functional set of skills in an effort to mold them into a constructive member and positive reflection of the Virginia State University community.

As a community of scholars in which the ideals of freedom of inquiry, freedom of thought, freedom of expression and freedom of the individual are sustained, VSU is committed to supporting the exercise of any right guaranteed to individuals by the United States Constitution, Virginia Constitution, federal law, and the Code of Virginia as we educate students relative to their rights and responsibilities.

Virginia State University seeks to maintain an environment where students have the following rights:

- *Expression* - Students can freely examine and exchange diverse ideas in an orderly manner inside and outside the classroom;
- *Association* - Students can associate freely with other individuals, groups of individuals and organizations for purposes which do not infringe on the rights of others;
- *Freedom from Discrimination* - Students can expect to participate fully in the University community without discrimination as defined by federal and state law and University



regulations;

- *Safe Environment* - Students can function in their daily activities without unreasonable concerns for personal safety;
- *Discipline* - Students can expect discipline to be implemented through established procedures containing all elements of due process for the adjudication of charges, and the opportunity for continued University involvement (as appropriate) until the resolution of the charges;
- *Privacy* - Students are free of unreasonable intrusions into personal records and/or matters relevant to identity, living space and well-being;
- *High Quality Resources* - Students have access to high quality resources which support intellectual and social development;
- *Counseling* - Students have access to support in managing personal adjustments, understanding self and others, and career planning and personal decision making;
- *Grievance Process* - Students have access to established procedures for respectfully presenting and addressing their concerns/complaints to the University;
  
- *Learning Beyond Formal Instruction* - Students have access to a variety activities beyond the classroom, which support intellectual and personal development.
- *Education* - Students have access to excellent faculty, academic technology, classrooms, libraries, presentations and other resources necessary for the learning process.
- *Personal Growth* - Students live and study in a setting that fosters personal growth.
- *Participation in Community Affairs* - Students have opportunities to interact with people and institutions both within and beyond the University community.
- *University Governance* - Students participate in the governance of the University, with opportunities including but not limited to the Joint Administration, and Judiciary, allocations of student activities fees, programming (Trojan Activities Board), Residence Life, and through membership on University and school committees.
- *Prompt Responses from Administration* - Students have the right to expect prompt and courteous responses from the University's academic and administrative departments.
- *Academic and Administrative Policies* - Students can expect academic and administrative policies that support intellectual inquiry, learning, and growth.

## **FREE SPEECH RIGHTS**

Freedom of speech is one of the “great bulwarks of liberty, and can never be restrained except by despotic governments . . . [and] any citizen may freely speak, write, and publish his sentiments on all subjects, being responsible for the abuse of that right . . .” Thus, Virginia State University officially recognizes freedom of speech as a fundamental right and is committed to creating an environment that cultivates the discovery, improvement, transmission, and dissemination of knowledge by means of research, teaching, discussion, and intentional debate. University

campuses have had a long history of allowing its members to engage in vigorous and uninhibited debate and such discourse will continue to exist within our academic environment.

Moreover, Virginia State University will ensure free, robust, and uninhibited debate and deliberation by enrolled students, whether on or off campus, and will permit our students to interact through lectures, speeches, etc., with individuals whose views may differ from those we embrace. Although our students may find themselves confronted with language, ideas and opinions that may be deemed deeply offensive, disagreeable, unwelcome, odious or hateful, Virginia State University will not shield its students from speech protected by the First Amendment and stands solidly compelled to uphold the tenants of freedom of speech and intellectual inquiry. (Excerpts taken from Virginia House of Delegates Resolution NO. 431, February 22, 2017) Please refer to the revised Free Speech Policy: <http://www.vsu.edu/student-life/student-activities/free-speech/index.php>.

## **ASSEMBLY RIGHTS**

Freedoms of speech, expression, and assembly are fundamental rights of all persons and are central to the mission of the University. However, these activities are subject to the well-established right of colleges and universities to regulate time, place, and manner so that the activities do not include unlawful activity or activity that endangers or imminently threatens to endanger the safety of any member of the community or any of the community's physical facilities, or any activity that disrupts or obstructs the function of the university or imminently threatens such disruption or obstruction. The University shall not discriminate on the basis of the political, religious, philosophical, ideological, or academic viewpoint expressed by any person.

### *Rules for Demonstrations Rallies, and Assemblies*

1. Only current Virginia State University students, faculty, and staff recognized by Virginia State
2. University may participate in demonstrations/rallies/assemblies on University property.
3. Picketing must not be carried on so as to interfere with entrance traffic or the normal flow of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, good order and discipline, and normal business activities.
4. Demonstration/Rally/Assembly form is recommended to be submitted to the Department of Student Activities (2) business days before the day of activity or as soon as possible.

Any person, organization or group whose use of an outdoor/indoor area for demonstration or protest is expected or reasonably likely to have more than fifty (50) people in attendance is asked to notify the Department of Student Activities by emailing a completed demonstration/rally form to [cperry@vsu.edu](mailto:cperry@vsu.edu) at least two (2) business days before the day of the activity.

The demonstration/rally form will include information as to the reason for expressive activity, specific location and boundaries to be used for the event, the estimated expected number of

persons, and the name and contact information of at least one person who can be contacted regarding logistics of the event, which should include at least one person who will be personally

present. Security and clean-up costs will not be charged to the person or group. The form is requested to ensure that there is sufficient space for the large group event, that the large group event does not conflict with any other scheduled use of the outdoor space, and that sufficient university resources are available for crowd control and security. If such advance notice is not feasible because of circumstances that could not be reasonably anticipated, such as because of very recent or still-unfolding news developments, the person or group should provide the university with as much advance notice as circumstances reasonably permit.

## **AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACCESSIBILITY POLICY**

The VSU Board of Visitors, the Administration, the Faculty and the staff are committed to a policy of non-discrimination on the basis of disability. The University does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the administration of its educational programs and activities, including admissions, employment practices, and access to or treatment in programs and services.

Qualified disabilities will be defined according to the parameters of § 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended. The University will provide reasonable accommodations, upon request, a qualified disabled individuals who require such accommodations in order to perform the essential functions of their jobs, meet the academic or technical standards of University academic programs, or have an equal opportunity to participate in University programs or activities.

Accommodation requests related to conditions of employment must be made directly to the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Manager located on the third floor of Virginia Hall. Any eligible student requiring an accommodation must request such services directly from the Student Accessibility Office located in Room 101, Memorial Hall. All accommodation requests must be in writing, must include documentation of a specified disability from a qualified professional, and must be consistent with the current documented needs of the individual requesting said accommodation(s).

Reasonable accommodations for eligible/qualified students may include:

- Priority registration and scheduling
- Alternate testing sites & procedures
- Exam proctoring
- Extended time for testing
- Taped recorded lectures
- Access to apply for voter registration
- Auxiliary aids
- Alternate formats for printed materials
- Assistive technology & training
- Note takers/Scribes

- Readers
- Accessible classrooms & adaptive equipment
- Personal counseling
- Referrals
- Virginia Relay and TTY

The Student Accessibility Office can be reached by telephone at (804) 524-5061. Inquiries regarding interpretation or compliance with the University's accessibility policy should be directed to the EEO Manager, Virginia State University, Post Office Box 9412, Virginia State University, VA 23806 or telephone (804) 524-1007.

## **TITLE IX Policy and Guidelines: discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct and retaliation**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish clearly and unequivocally that Virginia State University prohibits discrimination, sexual assault, harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking and retaliation as well as any other sexual misconduct by individuals subject to its control or supervision.

### **Authority, Responsibility, and Duties**

This policy governs the conduct of all university students and visitors (including, but not limited to, students participating in camp programs, non-degree seeking students, exchange students, when on the campus of Virginia State University, on university property, or in facilities, owned, or controlled by Virginia State University, or being utilized for university-related events. Any exceptions in the application or enforcement of these policies must be approved by the President of Virginia State University or designee. This policy also is applicable to any conduct that occurs off campus that has continuing effects creating a hostile environment on campus. Allegations of on-campus or off-campus violations of this policy should be reported to the Title IX Coordinator in accordance with the guidance below and the Discrimination Grievance Procedures, Policy 1103. The Discrimination Grievance Procedures Policy can be accessed at <http://www.vsu.edu/counseling/sexual-assault/index.php>.

### **Policy Statements**

The University is committed to maintaining an environment that is safe and free from harassment, sexual assault, stalking, dating and domestic violence, and discrimination based on race, sex, color, national origin, religion, age, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, genetic information, against otherwise qualified persons with disabilities, or based on any other status protected by law. The University will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct against its students,

faculty, staff, approved volunteers or visitors.

### **Prohibited Acts**

The following acts are prohibited and therefore are policy violations:

- Engaging in sexual assault, harassment, stalking, or relationship violence or any other act of sexual misconduct;
- Retaliating in any manner against an individual who reports sexual assault, harassment, stalking, or dating violence or any other act of sexual misconduct;
- Interfering with procedures to investigate or redress a complaint of sexual assault, harassment, stalking, or dating violence or any other act of sexual misconduct; and
- Making an intentionally false accusation of sexual assault, harassment, stalking, or dating violence or any other act of sexual misconduct through the University's procedures.

Any member of the University community who engages in one of these prohibited acts against any other member of the University community may be subject to corrective action, inclusive of sanctions, termination, and/or legal prosecution.

Students who violate policy are afforded Due Process as it relates to Rights and Responsibilities including but not limited to a fair and impartial hearing. Students also have the right to bring witnesses and/or an advisor to hearings called by the Office of Student Conduct.

### **Definitions**

- A. **Discrimination** is inequitable and unlawful treatment based on an individual's protected characteristics or statuses -- race, sex, color, national origin, religion, age, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, genetic information, disability, or any other status protected by law -- that excludes an individual from participation in, denies the individual the benefits of, treats the individual differently or otherwise adversely affects a term or condition of an individual's employment, education, living environment or participation in an educational program or activity. This includes failing to provide reasonable accommodation, consistent with state and federal law, to persons with disabilities.
- B. **Harassment** is a form of discrimination in which unwelcome verbal, written, or physical conduct is directed toward an individual on the basis of their protected characteristics or statuses, by any member of the campus community. Harassment does not have to include intent to harm, be directed at a specific target, or involve repeated incidents. Harassment violates this policy when it creates a hostile environment, as defined below.

- C. **Sexual harassment** is a form of discrimination based on sex. It is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other conduct of a sexual nature including: verbal (e.g., specific demands for sexual favors, sexual innuendoes, sexually suggestive comments, jokes of a sexual nature, sexual propositions, or sexual threats); non-verbal (e.g., sexually suggestive emails, other writings, articles or documents, objects or pictures, graphic commentaries, suggestive or insulting sounds or gestures, leering, whistling, or obscene gestures); or physical (e.g., touching, pinching, brushing the body, any unwelcome or coerced sexual activity, including sexual assault). Sexual harassment, including sexual assault, can involve persons of the same or different sexes. Sexual harassment may also include sex-based harassment directed toward stereotypical notions of what is female/feminine v. male/masculine or a failure to conform to those gender stereotypes.

This policy prohibits the following types of sexual harassment:

- A. **Term or condition of employment or education.** This type of sexual harassment (often referred to as "quid pro quo" harassment) occurs when the terms or conditions of employment, educational benefits, academic grades or opportunities, living environment or participation in a Virginia State University activity are conditioned upon, either explicitly or implicitly, submission to or rejection of unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors, or such submission or rejection is a factor in decisions affecting that individual's employment, education, living environment, or participation in a Virginia State University program or activity.
- B. **Hostile environment. Acts that create a hostile environment** may be created by oral, written, graphic or physical conduct that is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive and objectively offensive that it interferes with, limits or denies the ability of an individual to participate in or benefit from educational programs, services, opportunities, or activities or the individual's employment access, benefits or opportunities. Mere subjective offensiveness is not enough to create a hostile environment. In determining whether conduct is severe, persistent or pervasive, and thus creates a hostile environment, the following factors will be considered: (a) the degree to which the conduct affected one or more individuals' education or employment; (b) the nature, scope, frequency, duration, and location of the incident(s); (c) the identity, number, and relationships of persons involved; (d) the perspective of a "reasonable person" in the same situation as the person subjected to the conduct, and (e) the nature of higher education.
- C. **Sexual Misconduct** includes sexual assault, sexual exploitation, dating violence, domestic violence and stalking.
- D. **Sexual Assault** is non-consensual contact of a sexual nature. It includes any sexual contact when the victim does not or is unable to consent through the use of force, fear, intimidation, physical helplessness, ruse, impairment or incapacity (including impairment or incapacitation as a result of the use of drugs or alcohol, knowingly or unknowingly) when the victim does not give or is unable to give consent; intentional and non-consensual touching of, or coercing, forcing, or attempting to coerce or force another to touch, a

person's genital area, groin, inner thigh, buttock or breast; and non-consensual sexual intercourse, defined as anal, oral, or vaginal penetration with any object. Some types of sexual acts which fall under the category of sexual assault include the following: rape, attempted rape and fondling.

Rape is defined as the penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim.

Fondling is defined as the unwanted touching of the private parts of another person or forcing an unwilling person to touch another person's intimate parts (e.g. genitalia, groin, breast or buttock, or clothing covering them) for the purposes of sexual gratification, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of their age or because of their temporary or permanent mental incapacity.

- A. Consent** is knowing, voluntary and clear permission by word or action, to engage in mutually agreed upon sexual activity. Silence does not necessarily constitute consent. Past consent to sexual activities, or a current or previous dating relationship, does not imply ongoing or future consent. Consent to some sexual contact (such as kissing or fondling) cannot be presumed to be consent for other sexual activity (such as intercourse). The existence of consent is based on the totality of the circumstances, including the context in which the alleged incident occurred.

Consent cannot be granted by an individual who:

1. is incapacitated by any drug or intoxicant;
2. has been purposely compelled by force or threat of force;
3. is unaware that the act is being committed;
4. is impaired because of a mental or physical condition;
5. is coerced by supervisory or disciplinary authority; or
6. is less than the statutory age of consent.

- B. Coercion** is unreasonable pressure for sexual activity. Coercion cannot be used to obtain consent. Coercion includes the use of physical force, threats, and intimidating behavior to get another party to engage in sexual activity. When someone makes it clear that they do not want to be a part of such sexual activity, want to stop, or do not want to go past a certain point of sexual interaction, continued pressure beyond that point can be coercive.

- C. Incapacitation** occurs when an individual is unable to give consent because they are mentally and/or physically helpless, unconscious, or unaware, due to drug or alcohol consumption (voluntarily or involuntarily) or for some other reason. Engaging in sexual activity with someone a person knows to be – or should know to be – mentally or physically incapacitated is non-consensual and a violation of this policy. Mental or physical incapacitation can be a result of alcohol or other drug use, unconsciousness,



blackout, sleep, involuntary physical restraint, or consuming so-called “date-rape” drugs, Rohypnol, Ketamine, Gamma-Hydroxybutyrate (GHB), Burundanga, etc.

- D. Sexual Exploitation** occurs when a person takes non-consensual or abusive sexual advantage of another for anyone’s advantage or benefit other than the person being exploited, and that behavior does not meet the definition of sexual assault. Sexual exploitation includes prostituting another person; non-consensual visual or audio recording of sexual activity; non-consensual distribution of photos, or postings (such as audio, video, images, or transcriptions) of an individual’s sexual activity or intimate body parts with an intent to embarrass such individual, non-consensual voyeurism and observation of people engaging in intimate behaviors, performing normal bodily functions, or displaying various states of undress without the person’s consent; knowingly transmitting a sexually transmitted infection (STI); or exposing one’s genitals to another in a non-consensual circumstances, or inducing incapacitation with the intent to engage in sexual misconduct.
- E. Stalking** is a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to: (i) fear for their or others’ safety, or (ii) suffer substantial emotional distress, meaning significant mental suffering or anguish that may, but does not necessarily, require medical or other professional treatment or counseling. A “course of conduct” means two or more acts, including, but not limited to, acts which the stalker directly, indirectly, or through third parties, by any action, method, device, or means follows, monitors, observes, surveils, threatens, or communicates to or about, a person, or interferes with a person’s property.

A "reasonable person" means a reasonable person under similar circumstances and with similar identities to the victim. "Substantial emotional distress" means significant mental suffering or anguish that may, but does not necessarily, require medical or other professional treatment or counseling.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Following a person;
- Appearing uninvited and unwanted at their home, place of business, or classroom;
- Making harassing phone calls;



- Mailing written messages, or sending electronic messages, including but not limited to e-mail, voice-mail, text messaging, and use of GPS and social networking sites;
- Leaving messages or objects at a person's home, place of business, vehicle, or classroom;
- Stealing personal property and identity information
- Vandalizing personal property; and,
- Posting information or spreading rumors about the victim on the internet, in a public place, or by word of mouth.

**A. Dating Violence** is violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim. A social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature means a relationship which is characterized by the expectation of affection or sexual involvement between the parties. The existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on the reporting party statements and with a consideration of the length of the relationship, the type of relationship, and the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship. Dating violence can be a single event or a pattern of behavior that includes, but is not limited to, sexual or physical abuse or the threat of such abuse. Dating violence does not include acts covered under the definition of domestic violence.

**B. Domestic Violence** is a pattern of behavior, including acts or threatened acts, that includes asserted violent misdemeanor and felony offenses committed by (i) by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim; (ii) by a person with whom the victim shares a child in common;

- a. (iii) by a person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner; (iv) by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia; or (v) by any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person's acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction in which the crime of violence occurred.

**C. Relationship Violence** is a term used to reference conduct associated with dating or domestic violence.

### **Retaliation Prohibited**

Any form of retaliation, including intimidation, threats, harassment, and other adverse action taken or threatened against any complainant or person reporting or filing a complaint alleging discrimination, sexual harassment, or sexual misconduct or any person cooperating in the investigation of allegations of discrimination, sexual harassment, or sexual misconduct to include testifying, assisting or participating in any manner in an investigation pursuant to this policy and the Discrimination Grievance Procedures is strictly prohibited by this policy. Action is generally deemed adverse if it would deter a reasonable person in the same circumstances from opposing

practices prohibited by this policy. Retaliation may result in disciplinary or other action independent of the sanctions or interim measures imposed in response to the underlying allegations of discrimination, sexual harassment or sexual misconduct

### **Reporting and Filing Complaints**

Complaints and reports of discrimination, retaliation, sexual misconduct, and sexual harassment should be made to the Title IX Coordinator. VSU's Title IX Coordinator is responsible for overseeing the investigation of all reports of alleged discrimination, sexual harassment, or sexual misconduct in accordance with the Discrimination Grievance Procedures and to oversee and address any problems that arise during any complaint.

The Virginia State University's Title IX Coordinator is Deborah Howard.

Deborah Howard  
Virginia Hall 313  
804-524-5371  
TitleIX@vsu.edu

### **Confidential and Anonymous Reporting.**

Confidential reporting resources are available on campus in the Counseling Center, Student Health and United Campus Ministries. Licensed mental health providers, medical providers, and the campus minister are the only persons who may guarantee confidentiality on campus. Off campus confidential counseling resources are listed below. VSU officials have varying reporting responsibilities under state and federal law. If a victim of conduct in violation of this policy or another reporting party wishes to make a confidential report, it must be made to physicians and other medical personnel at Student Health Services or Counseling Center staff. These individuals will encourage victims to make a report to VSU police, the Title IX Coordinator, or local law enforcement.

The victim- otherwise called the complainant- and the accused - otherwise called the respondent- should ask about confidentiality before reporting to other offices because other offices are limited in their ability to maintain confidentiality. Students, student organizations and their advisors cannot keep reports confidential, even if working with officials above that are able to maintain confidentiality of reports.

### **Reporting**

The University strongly encourages the reporting of all incidents of sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator or any member of the Title IX team. A report is an account or description of a specific incident. There is no time limit for filing a complaint of sexual misconduct. However, complainants should report as soon as possible to maximize the University's ability to respond. Filing a formal complaint is a written or verbal request for the University to investigate an incident and take appropriate actions. The University will investigate all formal complaints of sexual misconduct and will take appropriate disciplinary or corrective action in each instance. The

University will investigate informal and formal complaints of sexual misconduct in a manner that preserves to the greatest extent possible the confidentiality of both parties.

- A. A student, who files a formal complaint of sexual misconduct, will be provided a written explanation of their rights and options found in the Trojan Bill of Rights.
- B. The University encourages individuals who make a report or file a formal complaint of sexual assault, stalking and relationship violence, regardless of where the report is made, to also contact the Sexual Assault Services Coordinator for assistance. The Coordinator will assist the victim in accessing and navigating services, resources, and referrals both on and off campus.
- C. Sexual assault, stalking and relationship violence may be reported to the VSU Department of Police and Public Safety, local law enforcement, Sexual Assault Services, Student Conduct Office, Vice President of Student Success and Engagement, Title IX Coordinator, or anonymously to a Campus Security Authority (CSA).

**Campus Reporting and Investigation:**

**Deborah Howard, Title IX Coordinator**  
Virginia Hall  
P.O. Box 9412  
804-524-5371  
Email: dhoward@vsu.edu

**Dr. Kelvin Rachell, Dean of Students**  
Foster Hall, Room 307-A  
804-524-5271  
Email: krachell@vsu.edu

**Office of Human Resources\***  
(804) 524-3087  
(804) 524-5654

**Office of the Provost\***  
Virginia Hall 200

**Student Conduct**  
(804) 524-5866 or (804) 524-2391  
Foster Hall, Room 304

**VSU Police**  
(804) 524-5411 or (804) 524-5360  
Email: Police@vsu.edu

**Sexual Assault Services\***  
Memorial Hall, Room 401  
(804) 524- 6942 or (804) 524-5939

*\*(Not for investigations)*

**Sexual Misconduct Survivor Procedures and Services**

Individuals who experience sexual assault or relationship violence are strongly encouraged to seek medical attention and to be examined for physical injury, the presence of sexually transmitted diseases, or pregnancy.

**Medical Care and Preservation of Evidence.**

An individual who has been sexually assaulted should seek medical care and a forensic examination as soon as possible after the assault at one of the local hospitals listed below. An individual may request a Sexual Assault Advocate at any hospital, if one is not provided.

**It is important for the individual to be examined within 120 hours of the assault to recover physical evidence. The Preliminary Evidence Recovery Kit (PERK) is a free exam that is used to collect evidence.** Preserving evidence is often a key step in the successful investigation of alleged sexual misconduct.

Individuals have the right to have evidence collected and retained anonymously by local law enforcement while they consider whether or not to pursue criminal charges.

Individuals who have been assaulted can enhance the preservation of physical evidence if they:

1. Do not wash their hands, bathe, douche, or urinate until after the forensic examination;
2. Do not eat, blow their noses, drink liquids, smoke or brush their teeth if oral contact took place until after the forensic examination;
3. Do not change clothes until after the forensic examination. Individuals who change clothes should place in a paper bag the clothing worn during the assault and take the bag with them to the forensic examination;
4. Do not clean or straighten the location of the crime until law enforcement officials have an opportunity to collect evidence; and
5. Do not erase or destroy text messages, pictures, online postings, video and other documentary or electronic evidence that may corroborate a complaint.

### **On-campus care**

For Virginia State University students, medical care/consultation is available at Student Health Services if the complainant chooses not to go to the hospital. Student Health Services provides pregnancy and STI testing, and prophylactic treatment for STIs.

Students may obtain taxi vouchers for transportation to a medical facility for the forensic or PERK exam. A taxi voucher is obtained from Student Health Services, Counseling Services or Residence Life staff. Transportation by ambulance is obtained by dialing 911. The campus police can assist in transporting individuals who choose to report to local law enforcement.

**Hospitals:**

VCU Health System, Medical College of Virginia  
Forensic Nurse Examiner available 24 hours (804) 828-5250  
1006 E. Marshall St. Richmond, VA 23298

Bon Secours St. Mary's Hospital  
Forensic Nurse Examiner available 24 hours (804) 285-2011  
5801 Bremo Rd. Richmond, VA 23226

Southside Regional Medical Center  
(804) 765-5000  
200 Medical Park Boulevard – Petersburg, VA 23805

**Confidential Counseling and Support Resource Numbers:**

On campus offices are located in Memorial Hall:

- Sexual Assault Services..... (804) 524-6942 or (804) 524-5939
- Counseling Services..... (804) 524-5939 or (804) 524-5061
- Student Health Services..... (804) 524-5711

**Free Off Campus Counseling Resources:**

- The James House 24 hr. Hotline/TTY ..... (804) 458-2840
- Chesterfield Domestic and Sexual Violence Resource Center..... (804) 318-8265
- Greater Richmond regional Hotline .....(804) 612-6126
- LGBTQ Partner Abuse & Sexual Assault Helpline ..... 1-866-356-6998

**Criminal Reporting**

- A. If a victim is in immediate danger or needs immediate attention, the individual should contact 911 or use the emergency call box (blue emergency lights) to connect directly to the campus police station. Some conduct in violation of this policy may also be a crime under Virginia law. Individuals are encouraged to report incidents of sexual misconduct to law enforcement, even if the reporting individual is not certain if the conduct constitutes a crime. Crimes dealing with minors must be reported to local law enforcement.

### **Amnesty for Other Violations**

The University encourages reporting of incidents of sexual misconduct. Sometimes, complainants are hesitant to make reports because they fear that they may be charged with violations of the Student Code of Conduct, such as underage drinking at the time of the incident. To encourage reporting of sexual misconduct incidents, the University will consider all factors and exercise discretion on a case –by-case basis towards a complainant with respect to taking action for other violations of the Student Code of Conduct.

### **Interim Measures**

During the investigation and resolution of complaints, the University may take interim measures to protect the complainant and other members of the VSU community from any harassment, discrimination, retaliation, and/or further violation perpetrated by the respondent. If in the judgment of the Vice President of Student Success and Engagement, the Title IX Coordinator or other VSU administrative leader, the respondent jeopardizes the safety and well-being of any member of the VSU community, the University may provide interim remedies to address the situation. To the degree feasible, VSU will seek the consent of the complainant before taking interim measures. Interim measures may include, but are not necessarily limited to, changing class schedules and housing, enforcing no-contact orders, barring access to campus, utilizing escorts on campus, requiring referral and coordination of counseling and health services, and modifying work, academic or training requirements.

### **Rights of the Complainant and the Respondent**

Regardless of whether or not a complainant elects to pursue a hearing or whether or not the incident is alleged to have occurred on or off campus, the University will assist complainants of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking and will provide each complainant with a written explanation of their rights and options (see Trojan Bill of Rights in the appendix).

1. Confidentiality of the names of both parties and personally-identifiable information will be protected and excluded from timely warning, emergency notifications and record-keeping such as Campus Security Authority reports. Personally-identifiable information will be safeguarded in disciplinary proceedings and criminal investigations.

2. Both parties are entitled to the same opportunities to attend any pre-hearing and to review each other's written statements, and have others present during an institutional disciplinary proceeding, including the opportunity to be accompanied to any related meeting or proceeding by an advisor of their choice. During the formal hearing the complainant may choose to testify in person before the respondent or in an area separated from the respondent.
3. Both parties have the right to change university housing and academic arrangements if requested and such changes are reasonably available.
4. Both parties have the right to have access to existing campus mental health and support services.
5. A complainant who obtains an Order of Protection from the Commonwealth of Virginia should provide a copy to campus police and the Title IX Coordinator. A complainant may then meet with campus police to develop a Safety Action Plan, which is a plan for campus police and the complainant to reduce risk of harm while on campus or coming and going from campus. This plan may include, but is not limited to, escorts, special parking arrangements, or independent study arrangements.

### **Corrective Actions and Disciplinary Procedures**

1. If the respondent is a student, the University utilizes the process outlined in the Code of Student Conduct. Mediation or informal, cooperative resolution is not appropriate in cases of sexual misconduct.
2. The Dean of Students or Vice President of Student Success and Engagement or the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Human Resources and/or the Office of University Counsel, can advise a complainant of the procedures applicable in a given case.
3. **Standard of Evidence.** In accordance with the Office on Civil Rights (OCR), a "preponderance of the evidence" is the standard for investigating and conducting student discipline proceedings in domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, sexual misconduct and stalking cases. The "preponderance of the evidence" standard requires that the weight of the evidence, in totality, supports a finding that it is more likely than not that the alleged misconduct occurred. Decisions based on a preponderance of the evidence standard may not meet other evidentiary standards required for a finding of guilt in criminal proceedings.
4. Sanctions that may be imposed for students resulting from the University disciplinary process to include the following: verbal warning, written reprimand, denial of specified

university privileges, fines, restitution, removal of the student from the course in progress, community service, probation, mandatory assessment or education program, suspension, and expulsion.

5. Both the complainant and the respondent shall be informed simultaneously and in writing of the outcome of any institutional disciplinary proceeding; appeal procedures; and/or any change to the result before it becomes final; and when the result becomes final.

### **Education and Prevention Programs**

The University engages in comprehensive, intentional, and integrated programming, initiatives, strategies, and campaigns intended to end discrimination, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking.

Educational programming consists of primary prevention and awareness programs for all incoming students and new employees and ongoing awareness and prevention campaigns for students and employees that:

1. identify domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking;
2. define sexual misconduct, coercion, and consent,
3. provide a description of safe and positive options for bystander intervention.
4. include information on risk reduction.
5. explain statistics and risk factors for sexual assault; explain the role of alcohol and drugs in sexual assault; identify the rights of victims and accused; explain confidentiality and reporting options;
6. include disciplinary procedures and sanctions; resources available on campus and in the community which include advocacy, counseling, medical attention, and law enforcement regulations and web-based resources.



## **University Counseling Center**

The University Counseling Center (UCC) offers short-term solution-focused, supportive therapeutic approaches, and crisis interventions. Short-term Solution Focused counseling is intended to prevent the development or exacerbation of conditions that may compromise students overall well-being and functioning. To that end, the UCC provides students up to 12 confidential counseling sessions and makes referrals to community-based providers for insight-oriented mental and behavioral health issues that require more in-depth assistance like Psychosis and Bipolar Disorder. UCC staff assist students address peer, faculty, family, and romantic relationships, substance abuse, sexual assault and advocacy, stress management, adjustment issues, parenting, and grief and loss issues. UCC Staff coordinate care for students that are receiving services from private providers in the community. Psychiatric services are also available. All of the services in the UCC are provided by professionally trained mental health providers and a board certified psychiatrist.

University Counseling Center  
Memorial Hall 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
(804) 524-5939

## **HEALTH CENTER**

The Student Health Center provides quality health care services to all students attending VSU. Our professional staff includes a physician, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, medical assistants, health educator, clinical and administrative assistants. Students must present a validated Trojan ID card for health care services. Our services include acute care, laboratory testing, prescriptions, immunizations, physicals, and health education. All services provided are strictly confidential, and staff members adhere to HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) and FERPA guidelines. A confidential medical record is maintained for each student seen by the staff. Information in the record is not released to anyone without the student's written informed consent or a court order. Students presenting to the Student Health Center are only provided excuses for missed classes upon the discretion of the clinician. Medical excuses are not given during the midterm or final examination periods. The Student Health Center medical excuses are accepted at the discretion of the professor.

The Student Health Center is responsible for assuring college entrance health compliance for all full time students. A completed physical examination and health history form within the past year; along with an immunization record in compliance with the Commonwealth of Virginia laws must be on file for all full-time students upon entering Virginia State University. In efforts to provide surveillance for tuberculosis on the campus, all students must be screened for tuberculosis upon entering the university according to the guidelines of the American College Health Association and Centers for Disease Control. Students who fail to meet these requirements will not be permitted to register for classes for the following semester. This compliance is to protect the health and safety of our campus population. The VSU Student Health Center is located:

Student Health Center  
Memorial Hall Basement  
(804) 524-5711

## **FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)**

### **Policy Statement Concerning the Confidentiality of Student Records**

Students attending, or who have attended, Virginia State University are afforded certain rights concerning their education records under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), as amended (20 United States Code (U.S.C.) §1232g), and regulations of the United States Department of Education (34 C.F.R. Part 99).

It is the policy of Virginia State University not to release education records or personally identifiable information contained therein, other than directory information, without the student's written consent. Such prohibition against release generally does not extend to record requests from other school officials at the University with a legitimate educational or administrative interest, other schools to which a student is seeking to transfer, state and federal education authorities, accrediting organizations, appropriate officials in cases involving health and safety, or organizations conducting studies on behalf of the University, or to requests pursuant to judicial orders or lawfully issued subpoenas. Questions concerning this policy may be referred to the Office of the University Registrar.

Directory information under this policy includes:

- student's name
- photographs
- major field of study
- enrollment status (whether a student is currently enrolled, and if so, full-time, half-time, etc.)
- class
- academic level
- anticipated date of graduation
- certification that the student has applied for a degree
- dates of attendance
- degree(s) earned, date degrees awarded, and level of distinction attained
- honors and awards received
- participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- weight and height of members of athletic teams

The University may disclose personally identifiable information designated as directory information from a student's records without a student's prior written consent unless the student informs University officials, including the University registrar, that specified categories of directory information are not to be released. Requests to withhold directory information from

campus directories and other University publications must be submitted to the Registrar's Office no later than 5:00 PM on Friday of the second week of classes in the Fall semester.

### **Notification of Rights under FERPA for Postsecondary Institutions**

FERPA affords each student certain rights with respect to their education records. These rights include the following:

**The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the University receives a request for access.** The student must submit to the Office of the University Registrar a written or electronic request (electronic requests must include their electronic signature) that identifies the record(s) the student wishes to inspect. A University official will make arrangements for access and notify the student of the time and place the records may be inspected. If the University official to whom the request was submitted does not maintain the records, that official shall advise the student of the correct official to whom to address the request.

**The right to request the amendment of education records that the student believes is inaccurate or misleading.** The student may ask the University to amend records that they believe are inaccurate or misleading. The student should write to or send an electronic message with their electronic signature to the University official responsible for the record, clearly identify which part of the record they dispute and specify what is inaccurate or misleading. If the University decides not to amend the record, the University will notify the student of the decision and advise the student of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding hearing procedures will be provided to the student when they are notified of the right to a hearing.

**The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.** During a regular semester of the academic year, a full-time course load for undergraduates is 15 semester hours. The maximum course load allowed for most students is 18 semester hours. For students with honor roll status, the maximum number of semester hours may be increased by 3. Students on academic sanction will be allowed no more than 15 credit hours per semester. Students must register for courses in the sequence outlined by the curriculum.

Disclosure without consent is permitted, for example, when requested by school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the University in an administrative, supervisor, academic, research, or support-staff position (including law-enforcement-unit; personnel and health staff); a person or company with whom the University has contracted (such as an attorney, auditor, or collection agent); a person serving on the Board of Visitors; or a student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing their tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill their professional responsibility.

The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by Virginia State University to comply with the requirements of FERPA; address complaints and requests for assistance to

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of  
Education 400 Maryland  
Avenue, SW Washington, DC  
20202-5920

### **Parental Access to Student Education Records**

Under FERPA, *student* refers to an individual who has reached the age of 18 or is attending an institution of postsecondary education. *Parent* means a parent of a student and includes a natural parent, a guardian, or an individual acting as a parent in the absence of a natural parent or guardian. At the postsecondary or collegiate level, FERPA grants parents no inherent right to inspect a student's education records. Normally, parents, as defined above, may inspect a student's education records and personally identifiable information only when one of the following conditions has been met: (1) the student has given written consent for the release of records to the parent(s), or (2) the parents produce sufficient documentary evidence that one or both of them declared the student as a dependent on their most recent federal income tax return as authorized by federal income tax laws. See 26 U.S.C. §152 for the definition of "dependent" for income tax purposes.

### **RESIDENT BILL OF RIGHTS**

All students will be held accountable for violations of any rules and regulations of Virginia State University policies and procedures as provided in this *Student Handbook* and the *Community Living Guide*.

#### **You have the right to the following:**

1. A reasonable amount of privacy in your room.
2. Environments in which you can study, sleep, work, and conduct daily personal business without distraction.
3. Expect respect of your personal property by the University and its officials and your roommate.
4. Host guests (according to Residence Life & Housing rules and regulations).
5. A clean, healthy, and safe environment.
6. Environments free from fear of intimidation, physical and emotional harm, and racial

and sexual harassment.

**Your responsibilities are as follows:**

1. Be accountable for your behavior and actions. Respect others' property and the property of the University.
2. Respect and preserve the rights of others and always be aware of potential cultural differences.
3. Do your part to reinforce your security and the security of those around you.
4. Fulfill all of the provisions of your residence-hall contract.
5. Report immediately any maintenance problems occurring in your room to your residence hall staff.
6. Ask immediately for help from your Residence Coordinator or other members of the residence-hall staff if you are in need of assistance.
7. Report all violations of the rules and regulations to your residence hall staff and or Campus Police.

(NOTE: Please refer to the *Community Living Guide* for policies and procedures governing residence halls).

The University does not assume liability, directly or indirectly, for personal items belonging to a student. Personal items include, but are not limited to, clothing, books, musical equipment, televisions, radios, watches, rings, automobiles, or any other items that are leased or owned by the student. Students are encouraged to contract for their own insurance coverage.

The University is not a collection agency for private businesses, nor will the University assume this role, directly or indirectly. Any and all bills, cashing of checks, and contracts created or entered into are the sole responsibility of the student and the private business in question.

## **SCHEV STUDENT COMPLAINT PROCESS**

In accordance with section VAC 40-31-100 of the Virginia Administrative Code, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) is responsible for investigating all written and signed student complaints against postsecondary educational institutions operating in Virginia.

In order for SCHEV to initiate an investigation, the following must be true:

- The student has exhausted all available grievance procedures established by the institution.
- The student did not receive a satisfactory resolution and is contacting SCHEV as a last resort in the grievance process.
- The student has submitted the complaint to SCHEV electronically using the “Student Complaint Form.” The student’s complaint must contain a detailed description of the claim, including dates, times, and full names of all involved, as well as the actions taken by both the student and the school to resolve the matter.
- The student has electronically signed the form attesting to the truth and accuracy of the complaint.
- The student recognizes that SCHEV will not investigate anonymous complaints. By signing the form, the student acknowledges that SCHEV may share the information provided with the school or other relevant organizations in order to help resolve the dispute. SCHEV does not guarantee a resolution resulting from this submission or its investigation into the allegation.

Upon receiving a student complaint, SCHEV will open an investigation if the matter being disputed falls within its jurisdiction. If preliminary findings indicate a violation of SCHEV regulations by the institution, SCHEV shall attempt to resolve the complaint through mediation. All parties will be notified in writing of the outcome of the investigation. If the complaint falls outside SCHEV’s jurisdiction, it may be directed to the institution’s Board of Visitors, the accrediting body, or another agency authorized to address the concerns, if appropriate.

The student may be contacted during the investigation to submit documented evidence of the allegations against the institution, which may include copies of enrollment agreements, contracts, syllabi, receipts, financial-aid notices, promissory notes, or relevant correspondence from the institution related to the complaint. Students should not submit

original documents, as they may not be returned.

Students are reminded that they always have the right to seek advice from a private attorney. Students should be aware that the submission of a complaint will be recorded and may be used for statistical reporting or other purposes. Please contact SCHEV at (804) 371-2285 if you have any questions about the student complaint procedure.

<http://surveys.schev.edu/students/studentcomplaint.asp>

## **University Complaint Policy**

<http://www.vsu.edu/files/docs/student-complaint-form.pdf>

## **STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

Virginia State University is committed and dedicated to fair and equal treatment, policies, and procedures regarding the resolution of all matters affecting its students, regardless of race, color, gender, age, disability, political affiliation, national origin, religious belief, or association. The Student Grievance Procedure applies to academic and nonacademic student complaints, disputes, or perceptions of unfair or discriminatory treatment.

Procedural due process is the means by which all matters involving students' complaints or disputes will be resolved.

It is recommended that a student initiate an academic grievance within 20 class days during the academic term of the date the incident occurred. Nonacademic grievances shall be initiated within 10 calendar days during the academic term of the date the incident occurred. Failure to adhere to established deadlines by any principal party involved in a grievance may result in immediate termination of the Student Grievance Procedure.

### **Step I (Initial)**

A student with a grievance or complaint shall discuss their grievance with the faculty or staff member or student whose action(s) or decision(s) they are contesting. The student shall submit a written statement to the defending party that clearly, precisely, and specifically describes the nature of the grievance and the relief or resolution desired. If the student is not satisfied with the resolution of their grievance at Step I, the student may proceed to Step II or consult with an appropriate advisor or counselor for assistance or guidance.

(NOTE: Advisors, counselors, and attorneys for either party shall neither be present nor participate in the Step I meeting. Electronic or automated taping or recording of the Step I meeting is not permitted.)

### **Step II (Intermediate)**

If no resolution was found or if the student does not agree with the outcome of Step I, the student may file a written grievance or complaint with the faculty or staff member's or student's appropriate supervisor, department chair or school dean within three business days



of the attempt to resolve the matter at Step I. The student's written grievance shall include the document describing the issue(s) produced for Step I. The administrative-unit supervisor shall notify each party of the date of a Step II meeting within three business days following the receipt of the written grievance. Within five business days of the notification of the parties, the administrative-unit supervisor will convene the parties in an attempt to resolve the dispute. The administrative-unit supervisor shall prepare a report on the status or disposition of the grievance and distribute the report to both parties within five business days after the meeting.

(NOTE: Advisors, counselors, and attorneys for either party shall neither be present nor participate in the Step II meeting. Electronic or automated taping or recording of the Step II meeting is not permitted.)

### **Step III (Advanced)**

If the student is not satisfied with the status or disposition at Step II, they may file a written appeal with the appropriate associate vice president, vice president (or designee), or provost within three business days following the receipt of the disposition of the grievance at Step II. Within five business days of the receipt of the student's appeal, the vice president shall schedule a meeting with a Student Grievance Panel for all principal parties involved with the grievance. A Student Grievance Panel shall convene not later than 10 business days following the notification of all parties of the Student Grievance Panel hearing. The appropriate vice president (or designee) or the provost shall prepare a report of the final disposition of the grievance and distribute copies of the report to the student and all other appropriate parties.

(NOTE: Advisors, counselors, and attorneys for both parties are permitted to be present and participate in the Step III hearing **as observers only**. Electronic or automated taping or recording shall be performed, and a copy will be available to the principal parties upon request.)

## **ACADEMIC GRIEVANCES**

Grievances against faculty may be academic or nonacademic. Academic grievances relate solely and specifically to violations of or noncompliance with policies and procedures relating to teaching, research, community service, extension/public service, grading, and grade review and noncompliance with other established academic policies and procedures. Only a party directly affected by any of the instances enumerated above may file a grievance against a faculty member.

A nonacademic grievance is a response to an alleged violation of University policy or procedure not enumerated above, such as an allegation of sexual harassment or discrimination, fiscal or financial misconduct, or misuse or abuse of University resources.

Allegations of this type shall be filed in writing with an officer in the Office of Human Resources. It shall be the sole responsibility of this officer to proceed in accordance with established policy.

The roles, duties, responsibilities, and obligations of department chairs, college deans, and the provost to manage and administer academic programs in accordance with University policies and procedures are not diminished by this section.

Students may not file a grievance under this procedure regarding general grading policies contained in course syllabi; grades given to other students; assignments given by faculty; financial-aid decisions; course-substitution or waiver decisions; teaching and instructional techniques and methods; academic policies announced by department chairs, college deans, school officials; or other policies contained in official University catalogs, handbooks, or documents.

### **ACADEMIC GRIEVANCES AGAINST FACULTY**

Any student who has an academic grievance against a faculty member may first bring the matter to the attention of their academic advisor or counselor. Where appropriate, the student shall be advised to seek an informal resolution with the affected faculty member through the appropriate department chair and college dean.

Failing a satisfactory informal resolution of the grievance, the advisor or counselor shall determine if the matter falls within the jurisdiction of the Academic Credits Committee. If it does, the student shall be advised to seek the help of their department chair in accordance with the procedures provided for in the undergraduate University Catalog, which can be found online at <http://vsu.edu/academics/academic-catalog.php>.

If the matter is not within the jurisdiction of the Academic Credits Committee, the student shall file a written statement with their department chair. If a department chair is the subject of the grievance, the written statement shall be filed with the dean of the appropriate school. Except as otherwise provided for, the department chair shall have original jurisdiction over academic grievances filed by students.

1. The department chair or college dean, within three teaching days, shall inform the appropriate academic official and the faculty member, in writing, of the grievance and schedule a meeting at the earliest convenience of the parties.
2. At the meeting, which is scheduled as described above, a record of the facts and contentions of the parties shall be determined and a decision reached and reported to the dean of the appropriate school. Copies of the record and decision shall be distributed to all parties involved. Based on the record, the dean shall make a judgment to affirm, modify, or reject the decision, and they shall communicate it to the parties.

3. Any party to the proceeding may petition the provost in writing for a review of the decision. The provost may, at their discretion, elect to receive the petition and affirm, modify, or reject the decision. The decision of the provost shall be final.

## **SAFETY AND SECURITY**

---

## **DEPARTMENT OF POLICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY**

The Virginia State University Police Department (VSUPD) is located on campus and is responsible for providing a safe environment for the VSU Community, twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week. VSUPD is comprised of 25 sworn law enforcement officers, 20 security officers, and 20 public safety staff members. Sworn officers have full police powers and authority as outlined in the Virginia Campus Police Act § 23.1-812. Other VSUPD divisions include, Investigations, Emergency Communications, Security, Parking Enforcement, Fire and Safety Operations, and Records Management.

The Department of Police and Public Safety is charged with and dedicated to the task of protecting life and property on the campus of the University. The ultimate objective of the department is the establishment and maintenance of a campus environment that is safe, sane, secure, and conducive to high-quality endeavor. This is achieved through educational programming and the development of personal relationships that foster a positive community. The department works hand in hand with other departments and student organizations to design programs to educate students about safety and security, the Act, rape aggression defense, property-theft prevention, and workplace violence.

## **THE JEANNE CLERY DISCLOSURE OF CAMPUS SECURITY POLICY AND CAMPUS CRIME STATISTICS ACT OF 1998**

Formally known as the Campus Security Act and commonly called the Clery Act, this act requires higher-education institutions to disclose information about crime on and around their campuses and is enforced by the United States Department of Education. The law was amended in 1992 to add a requirement that schools afford the victims of sexual assault on campus certain basic rights. It was amended again in 1998 to expand the reporting requirements and to formally name the law in memory of Jeanne Clery, a Lehigh University freshman found raped and murdered in her dorm room in 1986. Subsequent amendments in 2000 and 2008 added provisions dealing with notification about registered sex offenders and with campus emergency response. The 2008 amendments also added a provision to protect crime victims, informers, and others from retaliation.

The Clery Act requires colleges and universities to publish an annual security and fire-safety report by October 1. The report must document three calendar years of select campus crime statistics, including security policies and procedures and information on the basic rights guaranteed to victims of sexual assault. The law requires schools to make the report available to all current students and employees. Prospective students and employees must be notified of its existence and given a copy upon request in order to assist them in making an informed decision about whether

to attend the institution. The Act further requires that institutions maintain a public crime log; disclose statistics regarding crimes that occur on campus, in unobstructed public areas immediately adjacent to or running through the campus, and at certain non-campus facilities; and issue timely warnings about certain crimes that pose a serious or ongoing threat to students and employees. Institutions of higher learning are mandated to devise an emergency response, notification, and testing policy; compile and report fire data to the federal government; and publish an annual fire-safety report. The Clery Act also reserves mandates for institutions to enact policies and procedures to handle reports of missing students.

On March 7, 2013, President Barack Obama signed a bill that reauthorized the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). Strengthening the Clery Act as part of the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act, or Campus SAVE Act VAWA addendum, the bill included amendments that afforded additional rights to victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking on university and college campuses. Every post-secondary institution participating in Title IV financial aid is required to compile statistics of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking that occur in or on property adjacent to the institution and that are reported to Campus Security Authorities. Additionally, those same institutions are required to include a statement of policy regarding prevention programs, educational programs, investigation procedures, administrative disciplinary-action and appeal procedures, possible sanctions, victim/survivor procedures, and procedures for notification.

## **PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

### **Social Media Pages**

The VSU Police Departments has established social media platforms for VSU Police Department. We will use these platforms to promote crime prevention, department services, training opportunities, recruitment, contests, current university events, etc. You can find our pages on the following links.

[www.facebook.com/vsupd](http://www.facebook.com/vsupd)

[www.twitter.com/vsupolice](http://www.twitter.com/vsupolice)

[www.instagram.com/vsupd](http://www.instagram.com/vsupd)

### **Operation ID**

Operation ID is a crime-prevention effort aimed at preventing theft of personal property. The Police Department provides equipment with which students can mark their personal property with some form of identifying information (e.g., name or driver's license number, or other identifying information). Such markings may deter theft or aid in police recovery efforts if theft should occur.

## **RAVE Guardian Mobile Safety App**

With safety at top of mind, the Virginia State University Police Department has launched Rave Guardian, a free mobile app that turns your smartphone into a personal safety device.

By downloading Rave Guardian on your mobile device, you can invite friends and family to join your network as your “Guardians.” Once you have established who you want to be your Guardians, you can request one or more of them to virtually walk with you on or off campus. It’s like having an emergency blue light system and a trusted friend with you at all times.

How does the Guardian app work?

First, download and set up an account. The Rave Guardian App can be downloaded in the Apple or Google Play stores by searching for “Rave Guardian”.

- Create an account using your university email.
- Your username will be your university email address
- Students will use: jdoe@students.vsu.edu
- Staff will use: jdoe@vsu.edu
- Enter your personal information and set up your guardian network.
- Confirm your account and you will have access to app functions specifically designed for VSU.

Users can add their name, campus address, medical notes and other pertinent information for campus safety in case of emergency.

## **Emergency RAVE Alert Program**

RAVE Alerts notify students, faculty, and staff of any urgent information that the Chief of Police or designee deems appropriate. Once enrolled on campus, each student is provided information through their campus e-mail account about how to sign up for the program. When registering for RAVE ALERT, the student has the opportunity to designate the telephone numbers and e-mail addresses to which the alerts should be sent. Students are strongly encouraged to register to receive text messaging through the RAVE ALERT program.

If a RAVE Alert is issued, the VSU Community should take proper precaution as messages will contain information regarding personal safety. Students will also have the ability to add additional phone numbers and email addresses for multiple alerts.

### **Rape Aggression Defense (R.A.D.)**

Personal defense classes are offered to all students, faculty, and staff. Instruction includes evasive and defensive techniques presented by certified instructors.

### **Adopt Hall**

Each residence hall is assigned a police officer who assists Residence Life staff in conducting safety and security programs, seminars, classes, and events for student residents.

### **Emergency Call Boxes**

The Police Department monitors and responds to calls from emergency call boxes located throughout the campus. In emergency situations, use the one-button speed dial on the highly visible white call boxes to summon police assistance.

### **Zero-Tolerance Program**

The University has zero tolerance for violence, possession of drugs or alcohol, or weapons. University policy absolutely forbids the possession of alcohol or of illegal drugs, firearms, or weapons of any kind on campus, or the possession of any such illegal items by students, staff, and faculty whether on or off campus. Weapons are defined as firearms, crafted weapons, knives, box cutters, razors, zip guns, paint ball guns, or any other item capable of shooting a projectile or inflicting a wound or cut.

### **Emergency Alert System**

The University has established an emergency-communications system to alert the entire campus of any immediate safety threat, man-made or natural. Should a threat occur, an outdoor siren will sound, and information will be broadcast via campus-wide loudspeakers, University e-mail, the campus broadcast system, and University text messages.

### **Violence Prevention/Threat Assessment**

Virginia State University prohibits the use of language or behavior that threatens unlawful physical violence and has the effect of intimidating, frightening, coercing, or provoking others. Prohibited acts include threats communicated verbally or nonverbally, in writing, through gestures, or by any other means, including by electronic transmission. These include threats communicated directly to an intended victim or to or through a third party.

Persons communicating threats may be subject to disciplinary action by the institution, including criminal prosecution if the behavior constitutes a violation of Virginia law. Persons identified as engaging in threatening language or behavior may be subject to suspension or removal from the institution.

Persons who are identified as engaging in threatening language or behavior may be required, as a condition of continued enrollment, to participate in a mental-health evaluation as part of the threat-assessment process.

The Threat Assessment Team appointed by the president includes representatives from law enforcement, mental-health professions, the administration, and legal counsel. Personnel from Student Success and Engagement, Counseling Services, Residence Life, Human Resources, and/or Health Services may be assigned to the team, if deemed necessary.

*Threat Reporting:* Threats or threatening behavior may be reported directly to the Threat Assessment Team or to the nearest University faculty or staff, who will report the information to the Threat Assessment Team. Threats or threatening behaviors must be reported as soon as the threat is identified. In emergencies, call (804) 524-5411 or 911, or go to the University Police offices on Carter G. Woodson Avenue.

### **Internet Safe Exchange**

Buyers/Sellers can meet in the VSU Police Department lobby – monitored 24/7. If after hours, please utilize the door buzzer to let the Emergency Communications Department know that you are in the lobby making a transaction. Parking is available in front of the building with labeled signs.

### **Campus Community Police Academy**

The Academy is a six-week program open to volunteers from the faculty, staff, and student body. The purpose of the Academy is to educate the Virginia State University community about the Police Department, increase the community's involvement in law-enforcement programs, and allow the community to see firsthand the department and its personnel, policies, goals, and services.

Each week, a different topic is addressed, including department policies and procedures, emergency response, drug awareness and the use of narcotic canines, police ethics, professionalism, use of force, and officer safety.

Applications to attend the Citizens Police Academy may be obtained from the Police Department offices on Carter G. Woodson Avenue.



## **Walking Escort Program**

Students, employees and all members of the University community are encouraged to call the Walking Security Escort Service, operated by the VSU Police Department, whenever the need arises.

To use third services call (804) 524-5360, and have a valid VSU One card. The VSU One card must be presented upon receiving service. Escort services are provided seven (7) days a week, twenty—four (24) hours a day, and are for campus use only.

## **VSU Trespassing Ban**

### **GENERAL**

It is the policy of the VSU Police Department to provide a safe and secure environment for students, faculty, staff and visitors of the VSU community through patrol activities and enforcement of applicable law and regulation on VSU property. The purpose of this directive is to establish the policy and procedure to be followed when individuals are banned from VSU property.

When an individual poses an unreasonable threat to persons, property, or university operations within areas owned or controlled by VSU, the Chief of Police or his designee is authorized by the Code of Virginia [§ 23-234](#) and [§ 15.2-1717.1](#) to issue a Ban Notice (ban) that excludes individuals from all VSU property, or a specific building or area. When circumstances warrant, banned individuals may be allowed to visit VSU property for pertinent reasons, within the discretion of the Chief of Police or designee. Violations of the ban constitute a Class 1 Misdemeanor and may be grounds for arrest.

### **TRESPASSING BAN**

If a student violates the VSU Student Code of Conduct or the Criminal Laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia and is arrested and/or the Interim Suspension Protocol is initiated, the student will receive a Trespass Ban Notice. The trespassing ban notice will mean that you are not allowed to attend classes, all events on campus and you cannot remain on any VSU Property. The trespassing ban can only be lifted by the Chief of Police after the completion of the below requirements:

1. You must request the removal of your trespass ban in writing to the Chief of Police.
2. You must have a Student Conduct Hearing with a disposition sanction letter.
3. You must complete the requirements listed on your sanction letter (if applies).
4. If you are arrested, your court case must be concluded with a disposition on the charge(s).
5. You must bring your court documentation (if applies) and your student conduct sanction letter to VSU Police to have your trespassing ban lifted.

There will be **no exceptions** to the above policy. If you are observed on campus and your trespassing ban has not been lifted, you will be arrested. This may further disrupt your education.

## **CONDITIONS FOR BAN FROM VSU PROPERTY**

When an officer encounters an individual whose conduct would justify a ban from VSU, the officer will conduct a field interview. If the conduct constitutes a criminal offense, the officer shall use his/her discretion in determining whether an arrest should be made in lieu of a field interview.

If a ban is on file, the officer may arrest the individual for trespassing or issue a summons, as appropriate. Then an individual will be issued a criminal summons or take to the Chesterfield County Magistrate/Chesterfield County Sheriff Office for processing.

## **VSU BAN PROCESS**

- A. If an officer determines that the individual should be banned from VSU property, the officer will notify the Shift Commander.
- B. The Ban Notice shall be signed by the Chief of Police or designee in his/her discretion.
- C. The officer shall provide a copy of the Ban Notice to the excluded individual.
- D. The Ban Notice shall provide information on the banned individual's right to contest and appeal the ban, which shall be guided by the following procedures:
  1. A banned individual may contest the ban by contacting the Office of the Chief of Police to request a meeting or evaluation of the ban via email.
    - a. The Office of the Chief of Police can be reached by telephone, mail or email:  
(804) 524 – 5598  
1 Hayden Street  
PO Box 9405  
Virginia State University, VA 23806  
police@vsu.edu
    - b. The Chief of Police will sustain, rescind, or modify the ban after meeting with the banned individual.
    - c. If the Individual would like to contest the decision issued by the Chief of Police, they may contact the Vice President for Administration only under the below conditions:
      1. No criminal charges are pending
      2. There is not a VSU Student Conduct sanctions letter in place forbidding the individual from being on campus or attend classes.
      3. The threat Assessment Team has not deem the individual a threat to the VSU Community.
  2. The Vice President for Administration can be reached by telephone, mail or email:  
Phone 804-524-5070  
VP of Administration  
1 Hayden Street

PO Box 9001  
Virginia State University, VA 23806  
Email address here: VPA@vsu.edu

### **PROTOCOL FOR BANNED PERSONS**

- A. Persons excluded from VSU property may request exceptions based on legitimate reasons for visiting VSU property, such as Student Conduct Hearing(s), a scheduled appointment with university administrator. Requests for exceptions must be made in writing to the Chief of Police.
- B. Ban records will be retained according to the Virginia Public Records Act (VPRA) § 42.1-85, specifically the Library of Virginia-approved Records Retention Schedule GS-117.

### **FORMS**

- A. Field Interview Report
- B. Incident Based Report
- C. Ban Notice

\*\*\*Based on the severity of the incident, the Chief of Police or his designee have the authority to continue the trespass ban or issue a trespassing ban to ensure the safety and security of the VSU Community.

## **Sexual Assault Policy (See Title IX policy on page 28)**

An individual accused of sexual assault or rape can be prosecuted under Virginia criminal statutes. A student accused of sexual assault or rape may also be disciplined under the University's student conduct or student-athlete conduct policies and regulations, even if the law enforcement and criminal justice authorities choose not to prosecute the student. Disciplinary action could result in expulsion from the University.

Verbal misconduct of a sexual nature, in the absence of physical contact, is not defined as sexual misconduct. Verbal misconduct may constitute sexual harassment, which is also prohibited under University regulations and is specifically addressed elsewhere in the sections entitled DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND RETALIATION.

### **If you have been non-consensual contact of a sexual nature, get help as follows:**

1. Go to a safe place.
2. Contact someone who can help you: the police, a friend, a sexual-assault crisis hotline, any or all of the above. You or the person you have contacted should call 911 or the University Police (804-524-5411) if you haven't already.
3. Don't shower, bathe, drink or eat, douche, or change clothes after the assault. (These activities destroy physical evidence that may be important if you decide to prosecute the assailant.) Take a change of clothes with you.
4. Get medical attention at a hospital emergency room right away.
5. Allow the police to take you to the hospital or meet you there. A rape counselor can meet you there too. You may request a sexual assault advocate/counselor to meet with you there too.
6. Provide as much detail about the assault as possible. The memory of specific details is often fragmented immediately after an assault, but it tends to improve after sleep. Contact the police or a hearing officer to provide additional information as your memory improves. This will help in any legal action that you may decide to take.

7. Remember that you are not alone and the assault was not your fault. Seek help on campus or obtain resources off campus to aid in healing.

**The University will respond to a sexual assault or rape as follows:**

1. Any member of the university may notify the Title IX Coordinator of any sexual assault or rape that has occurred. The University Police will notify the Title IX Coordinator and the Dean of Students or designee. The Dean of Students will notify the parents if the student is not a legal adult.
2. The victim may be transported by the University Police to a medical facility.
  - The officer will advise the victim not to wash, bathe, shower, or douche.
  - The officer will provide an evidence recovery kit and make sure it arrives at the medical facility with the victim.
  - The officer may notify other jurisdictions to include Chesterfield County or the Virginia State Police Bureau of Criminal Investigation and request the assistance of a crime-scene technician.
3. After the examination, counseling will be arranged either at the examining facility or with one of the local rape crisis and sexual assault and domestic violence hotlines:
  - Greater Richmond Regional Hotline (804) 612-6126
4. The student also has the option to receive counseling at the University. Counseling is an important step in helping someone who has been sexually assaulted regain control of their life. Sexual assault can be a traumatic experience that requires professional attention. Trained professionals are available on or off campus for assistance and support.

We strongly encourage students who have been sexually assaulted to report the crime immediately, whether for a disciplinary hearing within Virginia State University's system, prosecution through the local justice system, or both. Reporting the assault allows the victim to receive needed services and recover faster and more fully. Reporting might also prevent further assaults by the assailant. Virginia State University students who have been assaulted are encouraged to prosecute the assailant through the court system and seek redress through the University's Student Conduct system. The Student Code of Conduct prohibits sexual misconduct. A violation of the Student Code of Conduct should be reported directly to the Office of Student Conduct. Students may also inform the Residence Life staff, Campus Police, or the Dean of Students, who will forward the information to the Title IX Coordinator and/or the Department of Student Conduct. The student will be asked to describe the incident in writing to the Department of Student Conduct. The student may also relate the incident verbally, with a friend present if the student wishes. The Department of Student Conduct will initiate the administrative hearing process.

**The victim’s rights are as follows:**

1. To have a person of their choice accompany them throughout the disciplinary process (including the hearing).
2. To have the proceedings remain confidential.
3. To be present during the entire proceedings.
4. As established in the state criminal codes, not to have their sexual history discussed during the hearing, except as it relates to the specific incident in question.
5. To relate their account of the incident and describe how the crime has affected them.
6. To testify during a closed hearing (with the respondent present or in an area separated from the respondent).
7. To be informed simultaneously and in writing of the respondent’s hearing; the outcome of the formal hearing; appeal procedures/review; and/or any changes to the result before it becomes final; and when the result becomes final.
8. To be informed immediately of the outcome of the hearing.

**Telephone Numbers and Addresses**

---

<b>Name of Agency/Office</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>
Virginia State University Police Department	(804) 524-5411 (Emergency) (804) 524-5360 (Non-Emergency)
Vice President for Academic Affairs	(804) 524-5779
AVP for Student Success and Engagement	(804) 524-5350
Dean of Students	(804) 524-551
Director of Student Activities	(804) 524-5517
Department of Student Conduct	(804) 524-5504
Southside Regional Medical Center	(804) 765-5565 (Emergency Room)
Greater Richmond Regional Hotline	(804) 612-6126
VSU Sexual Assault Services	(804) 524-5939
On-Call Counselor and Advocate	(804) 481-5738
VSU Health Services	(804) 524-5711
Virginia Action Alliance Hotline	(1-800) 838-8238
The James House	(804) 458-2704 (Office) (804) 458-2840 (Hotline)

---

**The Sexual Assault Response Coordinator will ensure close coordination among the University's support services and can explain the complainant's/ victim's options, identify resources, and help the complainant/victim regain control over their life.**

The James House offers a variety of services for survivors. They include:

- A 24-hour hotline with trained volunteers available at any time, day or night, to provide support, information, and referral
- Support groups
- Accompaniment to the hospital

The University encourages students, faculty, and staff to uphold the sexual-misconduct policy in order to promote a zero-tolerance culture and to ensure a safe environment conducive to living and learning.

## **STUDENT INVOLVEMENT**

---

If you join a service, recreation, or academic organization, your education will be substantially enhanced. Your participation in a student organization identifies you as a mature student with energy, dedication, responsibility, and accountability. The Department of Student Activities is eager to assist you in achieving your goals and realizing your personal and professional aspirations so that you will become a successful student and contributing citizen of the global community. As a community member, you are expected to understand and follow all institutional rules and University policies as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct and in this *Student Handbook*. Engage in all that Virginia State University offers to have a rewarding experience.

### **STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (SGA)**

SGA is comprised of the following officers:

- President (elected)
- Vice President for Academic Affairs (elected)
- Vice President for Student Success and Engagement (elected)
- Vice President for Finance (elected)
- Vice President for Administration (elected)
- Vice President for Institutional Advancement (elected)
- Executive Secretary (appointed)
- Director of Marketing and Campus Relations (appointed)

- Trojan Pride Coordinator (appointed)
- Graphic Designer (appointed)

Each spring, the sophomore, junior, and senior classes vote to elect their officers, kings, queens, and representatives.

The SGA is open to all undergraduate students. Students can become involved in the SGA by election to the office of SGA or class president, by appointment, or as a member of the Student Senate. There are also volunteer opportunities throughout the year. For information about these opportunities, visit the SGA office in Foster Hall.

### **Qualifications for SGA**

1. Must be a current full-time Virginia State University undergraduate student in good social and academic standing with the University and plan to be a full-time student for the upcoming year.
2. Must have successfully completed the Trojan Leadership Program (include copy of certificate if applicable).
3. Must have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.00 for elected positions and 2.500 for appointed positions with no “I” grades on the academic transcript.
4. Must have earned at least 65 semester hours.
5. Must be no younger than 18.
6. Must be of good moral character and shall not have been convicted of any crime, excluding vehicular moving violations. Any Student Conduct infractions must be resolved at the time of candidacy.
7. Must adhere to the *VSU Student Handbook* and *Student Organizations Handbook*.
8. Must participate in the Mr. and Miss Virginia State University pageant and understand that the pageant committee is the governing authority of the pageant and may disqualify any contestant who does not abide by the rules and regulations of the pageant.

### **STUDENT SENATE**



The Student Senate is the legislative body of the SGA. Its membership includes representatives from each of the four classes; representatives from each college; a representative from the Graduate School; and representatives from the Leadership Council, the National Pan-Hellenic Council, Residence Life, Athletics, and Honors Program, Reserve Officer Training Corps, and commuter students. The duties, responsibilities, and qualifications of the Student Senate are outlined in the Constitution and Bylaws of the SGA..

## **Mr. and Miss Virginia State University and Class Kings and Queens**

Mr. and Miss Virginia State University serve as the University's official ambassadors and student host and hostess. They make personal appearances on and off campus and participate in events on behalf of the University. They must be students in good standing at the University, maintaining a 3.00 or higher grade point average during their reign. They are selected each spring through a combination of a panel of pageant judges and student voting.

Mr. and Miss Virginia State University's court includes their first and second runner-ups and class kings and queens: Mr. and Miss Freshman (elected during the fall elections), and Mr. and Miss Sophomore, Mr. and Miss Junior, and Mr. and Miss Senior (each elected during the spring elections). Mr. and Miss Virginia State University 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Runner-Ups must maintain a 3.00 or higher grade point average, while class kings and queens must maintain a 2.50 or higher grade point average.

### **Qualifications for Mr. and Miss Virginia State University**

1. Must be a current full-time Virginia State University undergraduate student in good social and academic standing with the University and plan to be a full-time student for the upcoming year.
2. Must have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.00 with no "I" grades on the academic transcript.
3. Must have earned at least 65 semester hours.
4. Must be no younger than 18.
5. Must be of good moral character and shall not have been convicted of any crime, excluding vehicular moving violations. Any Student Conduct infractions must be resolved at the time of candidacy.
6. Must adhere to the *VSU Student Handbook* and *Student Organizations Handbook*.

7. Must participate in the Mr. and Miss Virginia State University pageant and understand that the pageant committee is the governing authority of the pageant and may disqualify any contestant who does not abide by the rules and regulations of the pageant.

### **Qualifications for Candidates for Class Kings and Queens**

1. Must be a current full-time Virginia State University undergraduate student in good social and academic standing with the University and plan to be a full-time student for the upcoming year.
2. Must have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.50\* with no “I” grades on the academic transcript.
3. Must be no younger than 18.
4. Must have earned the following semester hours:

<b>Title</b>	<b>Hours required as of the semester prior to election*</b>	<b>Hours required upon beginning reign*</b>
Mr./Miss Freshman	N/A	N/A
Mr./Miss Sophomore	12-18	30
Mr./Miss Junior	42-48	60
Mr./Miss Senior	72-78	90

\* *Mr. and Miss Freshman are exempt from the minimum GPA and hours requirement needed to obtain their positions.*

5. Must be of good moral character and shall not have been convicted of any crime, excluding vehicular moving violations. Any Student Conduct infractions must be resolved at the time of candidacy.
6. Must adhere to the *VSU Student Handbook* and *Student Organizations Handbook*.

### **PAN-HELLENIC COUNCIL**

The Virginia State University chapter of the National Pan-Hellenic Council Inc. (NPHC) governs the nine Greek-lettered fraternities and sororities that are members of the NPHC. The NPHC serves as an umbrella organization that promotes unity among its affiliate members and monitors their activities through an internal disciplinary board.

The NPHC is involved with cultural, academic, and social spheres of campus life. The Virginia

State University chapter is further involved in community activities, including literacy programs, community service, and voter registration.

Membership in the Virginia State University chapter of NPHC is limited to Greek-lettered organizations whose national headquarters are financial members of the NPHC and whose local chapters are in good standing (both financially and socially) with the University and the Virginia State University NPHC chapter.

## **STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS**

Student organizations provide students with opportunities to develop their intellectual, emotional, spiritual, physical, and professional abilities. These organizations are important components of the academic life of the University. To meet all the different developmental needs of students, Virginia State University offers a multitude of student groups. Every student is encouraged to join the organizations that appeal to them. Research has shown that involvement in student organizations improves students' interpersonal skills and builds competence in leadership, communication, teamwork, organizing, decision making, and planning.

### **University Requirements for Membership**

Persons seeking membership in any organization must meet the following criteria:

- Must have earned at least thirty (30) semester hours at Virginia State University (with the exception of SGA, Code Blue, TAB, Royal Court, Sports Clubs, Freshman Elected Offices, Academic & Departmental Organizations, and Royal Court);
- Must be enrolled for the minimum hours required for a half-time student at VSU (6 hours);
- Must have and maintain a current and cumulative minimum grade point average of 2.5 or better in order to maintain active membership.

Virginia State University academic eligibility policy supersedes organizational policy (including national and/or regional affiliate policies) except when an organization's policy demands higher academic standards than Virginia State University's student organizational academic eligibility expectations.

## **STUDENT PUBLICATIONS**

*The Virginia Statesman* is the principal on-campus student publication. The director of Student Activities controls its operation.

In addition to providing a forum for the expression of student views, *The Virginia Statesman* also serves as an extended laboratory for the Languages and Literature Department and the Mass Communications Department, affording students an opportunity to develop and use writing, critical-thinking, organizational, management, and leadership skills.

An editorial board ensures that each edition of *The Virginia Statesman* meets high standards of quality and truly represents Virginia State University and its student body. The Board includes staff, faculty, students, and alumni.

*The Trojan Yearbook* is an annual publication that provides a written and pictorial history of the year's events. The yearbook is co-edited by students under the supervision of the staff advisor from Student Activities. It is available to the student body prior to the end of the Spring semester. After students receive their copies, the book will be available to faculty, staff, alumni, and others.

## **RECREATION AND LEISURE PROGRAMS: INTRAMURAL SPORTS**

The Virginia State University Intramural Program provides quality intramural activities for students, faculty, and staff. The intramural sports program enhances college life by advocating teamwork, sportsmanship, and leadership development activities and promotes recreation, fitness, and wellness.

The Office of Recreation and Leisure, located in 408 Foster Hall, coordinates a variety of programs during the fall, spring, and summer semesters. The game room on the lower level of Foster Hall features a billiards/pool room, an aerobics room, a game room, and a lounge area. In the game room there are a variety of games, such as board games, card games, checkers, chess, backgammon, foosball, table tennis (ping-pong), table hockey, air hockey, and table shuffleboard. Students may also play Wii, Xbox, and PlayStation.

The Office of Recreation and Leisure coordinates open hours for swimming in Daniel Gymnasium.

Throughout the year, the Office of Recreation and Leisure organizes intramural sports and activities for the student body, including card tournaments, ping-pong tournaments, pool tournaments, flag football, powder-puff football, basketball, soccer, tennis, and many others.

## **TROJANS ACTIVITIES BOARD**

The Trojans Activities Board (TAB) assists the Department of Student Activities at Virginia State University in identifying, planning, implementing, and evaluating cultural, social, educational, entertainment and recreational activities catering to the student body, inclusive to faculty and staff.

### **Executive Board**

The Trojans Activities Board consists of three executive officers. The officer positions consist of the President, Vice- President, and Secretary. The Co-Curricular Program Coordinators serve as advisors and governing officers to the Executive Board. The Executive Board supports the Trojans Activities Board and enforces its constitution and bylaws. The ethical leadership and high standards of the board and its individual members help create a quality learning experience for all members.

### **Program Committees**

The lifelines of TAB: the program committees plan and implement programs and events to meet the vast needs and expectations of the campus community. There are seven committees, each responsible for a different entity of programming. Student chairs are selected to lead these committees. Each chair develops and maintains their designated committee during the duration of their term. The selection committee may also choose, with the assistance of the chair, to appoint additional committee chairs if necessary. Such flexibility allows for new ideas and approaches when necessary. The committees are as follows:

Spirit and Tradition, Talks and Lectures, Afternoon Entertainment, Cultural Awareness,  
Performing Arts, Special Events, and Publicity

## **VARSITY ATHLETICS**

Full-time students will be admitted to most home athletic events with a valid Virginia State University student picture identification. At some games students will have to present a ticket issued to them prior to the game. Announcements and flyers will notify students when a ticket is required. A student interested in participating as an athletic manager, student trainer, statistician, or games-management assistant should contact the Athletic Department at (804) 524-5030 or (804) 524-5031.

Men's varsity sports include baseball, basketball, cross country, football, golf, tennis, indoor track and field, and outdoor track and field. Women's varsity sports include bowling, basketball, cross country, softball, tennis, indoor/outdoor track and field, and volleyball.

The Virginia State University Cheerleaders, commonly known as the "Woo Woos," are perennial Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association champions. Tryouts for students are held each spring. Interested students should contact the Athletic Department.

# **STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

---

A student's conduct at Virginia State University is expected to reflect that of a person engaged in a serious endeavor—the pursuit of an academic degree. The Student Code of Conduct was designed to promote an environment in accordance with the highest standards of academic excellence, institutional integrity, and the free expression of ideas and opinions. The Student Code of Conduct contains rules and regulations governing student conduct and represents a means by which the orderly development of appropriate student conduct is assured.

## **PREAMBLE**

Students are expected to abide by all University rules, regulations, and standards, and by the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia and the federal government. Students are expected to act responsibly and to avoid conduct detrimental to themselves, their fellow students, and the University.

It is not possible to list all acts of misconduct or disorderly conduct that can occur on campus, but students are required to exhibit the highest forms of good manners and behavior and respect for the University community and its inhabitants. Although the misconduct is not necessarily listed herein, students are held responsible for any misconduct that is adverse to good order or tends to degrade or demean disciplinary codes or procedures on campus. The following policies are intended to delineate, as completely as practicable, the University's expectation of student decorum at the University.

## **DISCIPLINARY STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES**

By authority of the Board of Visitors, the president is delegated the responsibility and authority for establishing and enforcing regulations governing student life. The president has further delegated these responsibilities and authority to the Vice President for Student Success and Engagement and the University Police Chief, respectively. The regulations are designed to enable the University to protect itself and its members against the conduct of those who would impair or infringe upon the disciplinary rules and regulations of the University. The regulations and procedures contained herein were formulated through the process of shared governance. This fact in no way abrogates the authority granted by the Board of Visitors to the President and designee(s) to determine, manage, and maintain a system of discipline and safety in the University community. The Board of Visitors and the administration may alter or modify the rules and regulations concerning student conduct and discipline at any time.

The administrative process is authorized to make a determination as to whether the student's conduct is in violation of the Student Code of Conduct. The applicable criterion of review is the preponderance of the evidence standard. The term "preponderance of evidence" is the standard of proof that applies to student conduct proceedings or determinations. It means that the evidence supports a conclusion that it is more likely than not that a policy violation occurred. Evidence is presented by the parties and/or witnesses called by the parties. Evidence presented may be in the form of, but is not limited to (a) oral or written testimony from parties or witnesses; (b) affidavits and depositions; (c) police reports and memoranda; (d) properly signed court documents; and (e) other taped, text messages, emails, video or written statements.

### **VIOLATION OF PUBLIC LAWS BY STUDENTS**

The University considers students to be citizens of the community and expects them to abide by its laws. While it is not the University's desire to assume the regulatory and police functions of public government, the University is duly authorized to adjudicate cases when a student is charged with a violation of a city, county, state, or federal law that would tend to have a negative effect on the University's standing in the community. The University is neither bound to wait for civil or criminal procedures to be completed nor bound by decisions rendered by the judicial agency. A student offender may be charged by both the University and a county, state or federal law-enforcement agency for the same offense. The University reserves the right to bring charges that it deems appropriate, and it will do so whenever the student's continued enrollment is considered a threat to persons or property and/or it adversely affects established procedures of discipline and decorum.

Criminal and traffic infractions/offenses are processed through local, state, and federal courts of law. Students can be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for administrative action for criminal offenses that occur on or off campus. Appeals of any criminal offenses where an arrest was affected, will have to process through the appropriate court system. Parking tickets can be appealed through the VSU Parking Committee as outlined in the VSU Parking Manual.

The University may interim suspend any student, pending a hearing, who has been convicted of a felony that adversely reflects upon their character and fitness as a member of the student body or that negatively reflects upon the University's mission. Felony convictions of any type, including any conviction for illegal use, possession, or distribution or intent to use, possess, or distribute controlled substances (i.e., drugs), may be cause for expulsion.

If a student is arrested, the University is in no way responsible for providing bond, directly or indirectly. However, all students are required to report immediately, or as soon as is practical, all infractions of public law with which they are involved or charged to the Dean of Students. Failure to do so may result in immediate suspension.

Violation of, or being formally charged with the violation of, a public law in a legal jurisdiction



outside the campus of Virginia State University is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct. This does not apply to traffic infractions.

Disciplinary action may be taken when a student is on property other than the University campus where such student's conduct violates federal, state, or local laws and where such conduct materially and adversely affects the student's suitability as a member of the University's community and/or adversely affects the University's educational mission.

### **CHANNELS FOR CHARGES AGAINST A STUDENT**

Whenever, in the opinion of any member of the University community, a student's or a student organization's conduct is disorderly or disruptive, it is the responsibility of the person(s) observing the breach of conduct to report the same in writing to the Dean of Students, the University Police, the Director of Student Conduct or the Director of Student Activities.

The Office of Student Conduct is authorized to process and facilitate adjudication of all complaints filed against students. The following procedures are to be followed:

1. The complaint shall be communicated to the Office of Student Conduct. The student shall be notified of the violation(s) in writing, unless a more effective form of notification is deemed appropriate. Violations may be presented in person, by placement in a student's residence-hall mailbox, by e-mail to the accused student's official University e-mail address, or by mail to the accused student's local or permanent address on file in the Office of the University Registrar. **Students are reminded that their Virginia State University e-mail address is the official means of communication between the University and the student.** All students are required to maintain accurate and current local and permanent addresses with the University registrar. Following notification of violations, students are strongly encouraged to and shall be afforded the opportunity to meet with a University official who can explain the University's administrative hearing process and discuss the violation(s). Failure of the respondent to respond to the initiation of violations or schedule a pre-hearing conference shall in no way prevent the University from scheduling and conducting a formal hearing in the absence of the respondent.
2. The Department of Student Conduct shall send a notification to the student informing them of the violation(s) and requesting their appearance at a pre-hearing conference within three business days of receipt of the complaint.
3. The student shall be advised of their rights at the pre-hearing conference.
4. The student shall be informed that the case will be heard by the Administrative Judicial Panel, disciplinary Hearing Conference or the Administrator's Officer as determined by the Director of the Department of Student Conduct.
5. The student shall be informed that the formal hearing cannot occur within three business days of the pre-hearing unless the student waives their right in writing to have the formal hearing scheduled three days following the pre-hearing.

6. The student shall be advised that they are responsible for informing the witnesses and/or representative about the hearing.
7. The student shall appear at their hearing. An audio tape shall be made by the University of each hearing. Electronic or automated taping or recording by students is not permitted.
8. The student shall return to the Department of Student Conduct within three business days to receive information regarding the decision of the Administrative Judicial Panel or the Administrator's Officer. Disciplinary Hearing Conference decisions will be made with the student on the conference day. Where warranted, letters will be emailed.
9. If a student wishes to appeal, they must submit a written letter of appeal within (2) two business days of receipt of the disposition letter containing the findings and/or the sanction(s) for cases heard by the Administrative Judicial Panel or the Administrator's Court. The student shall not be present when a case is reviewed on appeal unless requested by the appeal authority. An appeal response letter shall be sent to the student regarding the case within (10) ten business days of receipt of the appeal letter by the Dean of Students.
10. A student receiving the sanction of suspension or expulsion may, at the discretion of the Dean of Students, be able to attend their classes and/or remain in the residence hall while their case is on appeal.
11. A no-contact order may be in effect during the appeal process. Students violating the no-contact order may subject themselves to additional disciplinary action.

## **INTERIM SUSPENSION**

Interim suspension from the University or the suspension or limitation of privileges may be imposed by the President, or the Vice President for Student Success and Engagement or designee(s) pending final disposition of the student's case. Interim suspension will be imposed for offenses that constitute a clear and present danger to the property and safety of the University and its constituents or that pose a serious detriment to the established system of discipline and decorum on the campus. The offenses are listed below:

Drugs: Section 6, 6.01, 6.02

Weapons: Section 7

Fighting: Section 8, 8.01, 8.02, 8.03

Hazing: Section 16

Gender Based Violence and Sexual Misconduct: Section 12

Before suspending a student and/or whenever possible, the appropriate administrator (Dean of Students or designee) will confer with the student to hear their explanation, give them the reasons for the immediate suspension, and advise the student of their rights via a pre-hearing. A trespassing ban will be issued by Virginia State University Police Department after your pre-hearing conference.

If a student is suspended or dismissed from a residential facility for disciplinary or financial reasons, the University relinquishes all obligations relative to the student's room and board. The student is to leave the campus within 24 hours of the suspension or dismissal decision. The University is not liable for personal belongings left in residence halls during the Interim Suspension.

## **RIGHTS OF THE ACCUSED**

1. At least three business days prior to the formal hearing by the appropriate administrative hearing panel or administrator, the student is entitled to the following:
  - a. A pre-hearing conference;
  - b. Written notification of the time and place of the formal hearing;
  - c. A written statement of the violation(s), to enable the student to prepare a response (If applicable); and
  - d. The names, if known, of witnesses who may testify at the formal hearing
2. The student shall be entitled to appear in person and to present their response to the appropriate administrative hearing panel or administrator, and may call witnesses on their behalf.

3. The student shall be entitled to decline to answer questions.
4. The student shall be entitled to be accompanied by a representative of their choice. The representative may be an attorney, a member of the faculty or staff, a fellow student, or another individual. If the student engages an attorney, written notice must be given to the Director of the Department of Student Conduct at least (2) two business days prior to the hearing. The representative shall be permitted to advise and otherwise counsel the respondent before, during, and after the proceedings but shall not be permitted to actively and personally examine witnesses or argue the respondent's case.
5. The student shall be entitled to an expeditious hearing of their case.
6. The student shall be notified of their right to appeal the findings and sanction(s) of the Administrative Judicial Panel or Administrator's Court by submitting a letter of appeal to the Dean of Students within (2) business days following receipt of the disposition letter. Should the respondent appeal, the findings and/or sanction(s) of the Administrative Judicial Panel or Administrator's Court will remain in effect unless modified by a higher body.
7. If a student fails to attend the scheduled formal hearing, they can be tried in absentia.
8. A student may waive their right to a formal hearing. Such a waiver must be executed by the student in writing and communicated to the Department of Student Conduct. The findings and sanction(s), if any, will be made and imposed by the Director of Student Conduct or designee. The waiver of a hearing also waives any right to an appeal.

## **ADMINISTRATOR'S COURT**

**Composition:** The Administrator's Court will consist of the Director of Student Conduct or the Dean of Students' designee. They will serve as the administrator to adjudicate student violations of the Student Code of Conduct.

**Jurisdiction:** The Administrator's Court adjudicates those disciplinary cases assigned to it by the Director of Student Conduct or the Dean of Students' designee. This Court also hears cases when circumstances prevent the Department of Student Conduct from convening the requisite members of the Administrative Judicial Panel. Infractions or conduct that is deemed minor, insignificant, marginal or juvenile will be adjudicated by the Administrator's Court.

**Powers:** The Administrator's Court is authorized to determine whether a violation has occurred. When a decision is reached that the student's conduct violated the Student Code of Conduct, the Director of Student Conduct or designee will impose the necessary disciplinary sanction(s). The sanction(s) to be imposed may be selected from all sanctions applicable to student conduct.

**Appeals:** Decisions handed down by the Administrator's Court may be appealed to the Dean of Students. Students appealing a case must submit a written letter of appeal to the Dean of Students' office within (2) two business days of receipt of the disposition letter. The Dean of Students' office will send an appeal response letter to the student within (10) ten business days of receipt of the

Appeal Letter to the Dean of Students.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE JUDICIAL PANEL**

**Composition:** The Administrative Judicial Panel (AJP) consists of faculty, staff and student members appointed by the Dean of Students or designee and the Student Government Association to hear and adjudicate cases regarding violations of the Student Code of Conduct. All members will serve throughout the academic school year.

Any three members of the panel constitute the requisite number to adjudicate a case. When the requisite number of members is not available for a hearing, the Director of Student Conduct will select substitute members. When circumstances prevent the Student Conduct Director from convening the requisite members of the Administrative Judicial Panel the cases may be heard by the Administrator's Court. The composition of the panel may be changed as deemed necessary.

**Jurisdiction:** The AJP adjudicates cases that are assigned to it by the Student Conduct Department. Normally, cases that may result in a student's separation from the University will be heard by this body. In addition, other types of cases may be heard at the discretion of the Director of Student Conduct.

**Powers:** The AJP is authorized to determine whether the Student Code of Conduct has been violated. When a student is found to be in violation of the Code, the AJP recommends the appropriate disciplinary action(s). The following sanctions may be imposed: a warning, probation, community service hours, fines, forfeiture or suspension of campus privileges, demand for restitution, suspension from residence halls, permanent suspension from on-campus housing, suspension from the University, suspension held in abeyance, or expulsion. All recommended sanctions are then referred to the Student Conduct Director. Final approval of all-sanctions at this juncture rests with the Director of Student Conduct.

Appeals: Decisions handled by the AJP may be appealed directly to the Dean of Students within (2) two business days of receipt of the disposition letter.

## **PROCEDURES FOR DEPARTMENT OF STUDENT CONDUCT FORMAL HEARINGS**

The formal hearing will begin when the chair of the panel calls the administrative hearing to order. The chair will state the time and date of the formal hearing and the applicable violation(s) against the respondent. The chair will read the respondent's name. The chair will read the names of the members of the panel and all persons present at the formal hearing, including the Director of the Student Conduct Department or designee. The chair will read the name(s) of the witness(es) present to testify for the parties (the respondent and the University) and the name(s) of the parties' legal counselors and/or advisors.

The chair will conduct the hearing as follows:

- a. They will administer the oath to all parties and witnesses ("Do you affirm that the

testimony that you are about to give is the truth?”).

- b. They will ask the respondent if they wish to challenge any of the members of the panel.
- c. They will state the violation(s) contained in the complaint, which will have been communicated to the respondent at the pre-hearing conference.
- d. They will ask the respondent whether they attended the pre-hearing conference.
- e. They will ask the respondent whether they violated the Student Code of Conduct and/or policies of the University.
- f. If the response is “Yes,” the respondent will not be required to submit additional testimony. The respondent may then make a closing statement.
- g. If the response is “No,” the AJP will listen to the parties’ opening statements, testimony from the respondent and the University, and testimony from witnesses for the respondent and the University.
- h. They will allow the panel members, including the Director of Student Conduct, to ask questions.
- i. They will allow the parties to make closing statements.
- j. They will inform the respondent that a written decision regarding the violation(s) will be communicated to them within (3) three business days of the hearing, and that if they are found to be in violation of the Student Code of Conduct they have the right to appeal the findings and the sanction(s) within (2) two business days of receipt of the disposition letter containing the decision and the sanction(s), if any. Information regarding the appeal to the Dean of Students is obtained from the Student Conduct Department.
- k. They will conclude the hearing and state that the AJP will convene without the presence of the parties and/or witnesses.
- l. They will dismiss the respondent from the room.
- m. Members of the AJP may discuss the case against the respondent and each member is to complete a form indicating whether the respondent violated the Student Code of Conduct and the recommended sanction(s). A student is found in violation of the Student Code of Conduct where a majority of the panel members indicate that the student is responsible for the inappropriate conduct.
- n. The chair adjourns the hearing after AJP members render their decision and returns all documentation to the Director of Student Conduct.
- o. The Director of Student Conduct reviews the documentation of the AJP and renders a decision as to accept, reject or modify the findings and proposed sanction(s) of the AJP.

### **Executive Conduct Panel on Discipline**

If an Executive Conduct Panel (ECP) is convened, it will consist of five persons from the vice president/director/department chair level and Student Success and Engagement personnel, (4) four administrators appointed by the Dean of Students, and (1) one student selected by the president of the Student Government Association. Three (3) members constitute a quorum. When the requisite number of members is not available, the chair may select substitutes. The Dean of Students and the Director of Student Conduct serve as ex-officio members.

**Jurisdiction:** The body convenes at the request of the Dean of Students. Its function is to review cases referred by the Dean of Students or referred directly to them by the president or other administrators.

**Powers:** The role of the Executive Conduct Panel (ECP) in the case of appeals shall be limited to the following:

1. The Dean of Students will determine whether a case is to be reviewed by the Executive Conduct Panel. Prior to referring a case to the Executive Conduct Panel, the Dean of Students makes a decision as to whether the student has properly and sufficiently indicated the ground(s) for an appeal.

After reviewing the case and making a decision that the grounds for appeal have been met, the Dean of Students will refer the case to the Executive Conduct Panel. The Executive Conduct Panel will review the written documentation to include supporting materials and take one of the following actions:

- a. Sustain the findings and the sanction or sanctions
- b. Sustain the findings and alter the sanction or sanctions
- c. Reverse the findings and, if necessary, impose a sanction or sanctions
- d. Order a rehearing

In certain instances, this body may serve as the panel of original jurisdiction when certain complex cases are referred directly by the president or provost or any vice president. In such cases, the Executive Conduct Panel shall render decisions on the cases referred to it.

The decisions of the Dean of Students and/or Executive Conduct Panel are final when the case is appealed from the Administrator's Court or the Administrative Judicial Panel. Cases referred directly to the Executive Conduct Panel may be appealed by submitting a written letter of appeal to the Associate Vice President for Student Success and Engagement within (2) two business days of receipt of the disposition letter. After a review of the case the Associate Vice President for Student Success and Engagement may affirm the decision or impose a different sanction(s) (more or less severe than the original sanction). The appeal response letter will be sent to the student within (10) ten business days of receipt of the appeal letter by the Associate Vice President for Student Success and Engagement.

## **CONTENTS OF APPEAL LETTER**

Letters of appeal shall contain a statement or statements of the grounds for the appeal in order to allow a reasonable judgment to be made as to whether to grant the appeal. If an appeal is denied, an appropriate written response will be given to the person making the request.

## **ACTION AND APPEALS**

Once an appeal has been accepted and the Dean of Students or the Executive Conduct Panel reviews the case and evidence, one of the following actions may be taken:

1. Sustain the findings and the sanction or sanctions.
2. Sustain the findings and alter the sanction or sanctions.
3. Reverse the findings and, if necessary, impose a sanction or sanctions.
4. Order a rehearing

## **POSSIBLE SANCTIONS**

Once a finding has been made that the Student Code of Conduct has been violated, the Dean of Students or designee and/or the Vice President for Student Success and Engagement imposes a sanction or sanctions. While they may receive a recommendation(s) regarding sanction(s) from the Administrator's Court, Administrative Judicial Panel and/or the Executive Conduct Panel, they are not bound by those recommendation(s).

Virginia State University has a zero-tolerance policy for drugs, weapons, and fighting to include sexual misconduct. Students may be expelled for violating these policies.

Occasionally, when warranted, expulsion may be imposed for offenses that are not explicitly stated herein as major infractions. Hence, it is not solely reserved for major infractions. Circumstances surrounding the student's conduct and/or the cumulative number of offenses committed by the student may warrant expulsion, the most severe sanction. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. **Warning:** A letter will notify the student that the next offense of any nature shall necessitate a harsher action, up to and including expulsion from the University.
2. **Probation:** A letter will notify the student that they have lost designated privileges for a definite period of time, not to exceed one year. Probation may include loss of such privileges as may be consistent with the offense and is designed to promote rehabilitation of the student. A student may be placed on probation if they are involved in any act of misconduct.



3. **Community Service Hours:** The student will be notified by letter that they will be assigned to perform community service for a specified period of time, to cover no less than two weeks and no more than three hours per day. All community service assignments must be coordinated with the Coordinator of Campus and Community Outreach.
4. **Fines:** The University may impose fines in order to maintain discipline and fairness in the assignment of penalties. Failure to pay an assessed fine will result in a judicial hold being placed against the student, which, while in place, will prevent them from registering for classes or graduating. Where evidence exists that imposing a fine upon a student would pose a financial hardship based upon financial-aid criteria and/or other factors relative to a student's socioeconomic background, alternative sanctions may be imposed. The University reserves the right to fine a student for any violation it deems appropriate.
5. **Forfeiture or Suspension of Campus Privileges:** A student will be notified by letter that certain campus privileges have been revoked or suspended for a specified amount of time. The restriction involved will be clearly identified and may include suspension from all organizations (social, athletic, academic, etc.) on campus as a participating member and suspension from representing the University in any capacity.
6. **Restitution:** A letter will notify the student that they are required to make restitution for an injury to a person or damage to or for misappropriation of property. This may take the form of community service, monetary reimbursement, or other compensation.
7. **Suspension from Residence Halls:** A letter will notify the student that they will not be allowed to reside in or enter any residence hall for a specified period. All residence halls and living areas will be off-limits to the student for this period.
8. **Permanent Suspension from On-Campus Housing:** The student will be notified by letter that they will not be allowed to live in housing on campus for the duration of their matriculation at the University.
9. **Suspension from the University:** A student will be terminated from the University for a specified period. During the term of the student's suspension, they will not be allowed to enter the facilities and environs of the University.
10. **Suspension Held in Abeyance:** The student or student organization(s) will be informed that suspension from the University will be imposed should another violation equal to or greater than the offense in question occur.
11. **Expulsion from the University:** The student will not be eligible for readmission. The student will not be allowed to enter the facilities and environs of the University.
12. **Participation in the University's Substance-Abuse-Prevention Program:** Virginia State University offers On Campus Talking about Alcohol, a primary alcohol-abuse-prevention program for college-aged students.

## UNIVERSITY TROJANCARD INFRACTIONS

Unauthorized use of the Trojan Card or any other debit/credit card by anyone other than the owner constitutes fraud and theft of services. Any use of the University's equipment and/or tools to illegally process transactions using an unauthorized Trojan Card or any other debit and/or credit card constitutes fraud and theft of services. Either of the aforementioned are a direct violation of University policy and both state and federal rules and regulations. Anyone violating this procedure will be subject to the following Student Code of Conduct Violations – Preamble & Section 9 (Forgery, Fraud, Theft, Gambling, and Misrepresentation - 9.01, 9.02, 9.03 and 9.04), and Section 17 (Improper use of University Computer Networks or Systems).

- A. Students are to report lost, stolen or misused Trojan Cards to the University's Trojan Card Office immediately, or they may opt to access the University's e-Account Portal to deactivate the card. If found, the student must report to the Trojan Card Office to have the card reactivated.
- B. Students are encouraged to exhaust all search efforts for lost cards before replacing it. Funds for lost cards are non-refundable.
- C. Any unknown transactions on a Trojan Card account are to be reported to the University's Trojan Card Office within 3 days of occurrence. After 3 days, the issue becomes whether the card owner had knowledge of its disappearance/use.
- D. If a student violates the policy, the following sanctions may apply:
  - i. Completion of a specific number of community service hours by a specified date.
  - ii. Placement on probation for a specified amount of time, i.e., one year.
  - iii. Assessment of a University fine.
  - iv. Suspension from the University.
  - v. Restitution of fraudulent funds obtained.
  - vi. Restricted use of the Trojan Card, except for dormitory and meal plan access.
- E. Pending the actions taken by DPPS and the Office of Student Conduct, possible legal sanctions are available under both state and federal law, i.e., prosecution by law enforcement bodies outside of VSU.
- F. Failure to comply with VSU sanction(s), by the requested dates and times, will place the individual in jeopardy of suspension from the University, and holds will not be removed to register for classes, with the exception of probation.

## **Fraudulent Information Technology Use**

All members of the University community are expected to use the University's electronic resources and information-technology systems in a professional manner that demonstrates respect for individuals, data confidentiality, and intellectual-property rights. All uses of electronic resources and systems must be for their intended purpose and must comply with applicable local, state, and federal laws, copyright laws, and University policies. Users of the University's electronic resources and systems also accept personal responsibility for any actions that constitute a violation of this policy or any other policy, regulation, law, or guideline as set forth by local, state, or federal law. Users should not do any of the following:

1. Install personal software on the University's computers (including laptops, personal computers, or workstations) or make or use illegal copies of copyrighted materials or software, store such copies on University systems, or transmit them over the University network
2. Download or transmit fraudulent, threatening, obscene, intimidating, defamatory, harassing, discriminatory, or otherwise unlawful messages or images
3. Send e-mail using another's identity, using an assumed name, or anonymously
4. Engage in any activity that might be purposefully harmful to systems or any information thereon, such as creating or propagating viruses, disrupting services, damaging files, or making unauthorized modification to University data

## **VIOLATIONS AND PENALTIES**

A STUDENT OFFENDER MAY BE CHARGED BY BOTH THE UNIVERSITY AND A COUNTY OR STATE LAW-ENFORCEMENT AGENCY FOR THE SAME OFFENSE.

Any student found to have committed or attempted to commit the following misconduct is subject to disciplinary sanctions including, but not limited to, warning, probation, loss of privileges, fines, demand for restitution, residence-hall suspension, residence-hall expulsion, Virginia State University suspension, and Virginia State University expulsion.

More than one of the sanctions listed above may be imposed for any single violation.

**VIOLATIONS:** Each student at Virginia State University is responsible for their conduct from the time of application through the actual awarding of a degree.

### **Section 1 – Alcoholic Beverages Policies**

Virginia State University expects all students to exhibit behavior compatible with membership in a community of scholars. Students shall conduct themselves in a civil and mature manner, respecting the rights and property. Possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages in public (on campus) or in the residence halls is prohibited. This includes consumption in moving or parked vehicles.

- 1.1 The sale or distribution of alcoholic beverages on campus is prohibited.
- 1.2 Students are not allowed to store or display alcoholic beverage containers.
- 1.3 Students are not allowed to use alcoholic beverages to qualify for membership in any organization.
- 1.4 Public intoxication, drunkenness, or activities related to the consumption or possession of alcoholic beverages that infringe on the rights of others are prohibited.
- 1.5 Students and organizations that give, sell, or buy alcoholic beverages for students under 21 years of age shall be considered to be contributing to the delinquency of a minor of others.

### **Section 2 – Unauthorized Activities in and on Campus Buildings**

Virginia State University does not authorize activities that have the potential to create excessive noise, inflict damage upon University property, or cause physical injury. Students are expected to use good judgment and common sense when riding bicycles, skateboards, longboards, scooters, and rollerblades on campus.

- 2.1 Climbing, rappelling, and related activities are prohibited on campus buildings and structures.
- 2.2 Hall sports (ball playing, bicycling, rollerblading, scooter riding, and skateboarding) are not permitted in any campus-operated buildings.

- 2.3 Skateboards, scooters, and rollerblades may not be ridden in any building.
- 2.4 Use of these modes of transportation for other purposes (e.g., tricks, jumps, rail sliding, etc.) is not permitted on campus.
- 2.5 Skateboards, scooters, and rollerblades may not be ridden in campus roadways or parking lots. Bicycles may be ridden only on roadways, and riders must obey all traffic signs.

### **Section 3 – Coeducational Visitation Policy and Trespassing**

All regulations of the University and the residence halls must be followed. All students are responsible for the conduct of their guests.

- 3.1 Visitation or allowing visitation of a student of the opposite sex to a room, hallway, lobby, or stairwell is permitted at designated times.
- 3.2 Guests who remain in another student's room while illegal visitation is occurring shall be considered a participant and in violation.
- 3.3 Students who entertain family members of the opposite sex without permission from the Area Coordinators shall be considered in violation. All guests are to be entertained in the lobby.
- 3.4 Sexual activity in the residence halls is prohibited.
- 3.5 Students will be responsible for informing their guests, whether students or nonstudents, of University policies and will be held accountable if their guests violate University policy.
- 3.6 Students shall not enter or remain in a private room, office, or restricted area that is under the control of another student, faculty member, or University official except when permitted or invited by the resident party. No unauthorized individual may enter a University building or room that has been locked or is restricted by other means.

### **Section 4 – Dining Hall Regulations**

- 4.1 The removal of trays, tableware, and food from the dining area is prohibited unless authorized.
- 4.2 Students improperly attired (e.g., lacking shirt and shoes or wearing sagging pants, pants that reveal underwear, or pajamas) will not be permitted in the dining area for health and safety reasons. Male students are required to remove their hats upon entering the building.
- 4.3 All students participating in the meal plan must present a valid Virginia State University identification card before entering the dining area.

- 4.4 Food fighting is prohibited. Any student identified as taking part will be in violation of the policy and subject to expulsion. Food fighting includes, but is not limited to, the use of food and/or food items in any manner other than consumption, (e.g., directing food or food items at another person and/or areas surrounding another person). Food fighting is viewed as a major infraction by the University.
- 4.5 All dining patrons must bus their dishes upon completion of their meal.

### **Section 5 – Disorderly Conduct**

Students whose behavior disrupts the regular or normal functions of the University, including those whose behavior breaches the peace or violates the rights of others, are in violation of disorderly conduct provisions.

- 5.1 Students shall not intentionally provide or give false information to a faculty member or to a University staff member acting in the performance of their duties.
- 5.2 Students shall comply with reasonable and lawful requests or directives by residence-hall staff members or other employees acting in the performance of their official duties. This includes presenting a student-identification card or being requested to leave an area designated as off-limits.
- 5.3 Smoking, language, or any behavior deemed by the instructor or University staff to be disruptive to the learning process is prohibited in classrooms and other University buildings. This also refers to gang and drug paraphernalia. Smoking is allowed in designated areas only.
- 5.4 Students shall not throw an object or cause an object to be projected from any point on University property. Any object or substance that has the potential to deface or damage University or private property or cause personal injury or disruption is prohibited.
- 5.5 The possession or use of firearms, guns, BB guns, water guns or weapons of any kind is prohibited at all times. These prohibited items shall include, but are not limited to, firearms, crafted weapons (e.g., baseball bats or pool cues), bowie knives, switchblade knives, daggers, nunchaku, and metallic knuckles. Possession or storage of weapons by students is prohibited on any property owned or controlled by the University, including University- certified housing units.

- 5.6 Snowball throwing on campus is prohibited in all areas except Rogers Stadium.
- 5.7 Students shall not litter or throw debris on University property at any time. Citations for littering are issued by University Police officers.
- 5.8 Unauthorized assembly, demonstrations, or acts of picketing of any kind are not permitted. All assemblies, demonstrations, and similar acts must have prior approval and be registered with the Office of Student Activities or the Office of the Vice President for Student Success and Engagement.
- 5.9 Students shall not play unreasonably loud music on the campus grounds or in the residence halls, classrooms, or buildings. According to the Chesterfield County Code, it shall be unlawful to create any unreasonably loud or disturbing noise in the county. Noise of such character, intensity, and duration as to be detrimental to the life or health of any person or to unreasonably disturb or annoy the quiet, comfort, or repose of any person is hereby prohibited.
- 5.10 Students shall not misuse, damage, or tamper with any emergency phones. Emergency phones can be used only in emergency situations to report criminal activity or to call for assistance.
- 5.11** Virginia State University values freedom of expression as a core principle of the University and recognizes that standards of dress and/or grooming are appropriate in specific circumstances. Virginia State University students are to exercise judgment in endorsing modesty, decency, and a sense of decorum so as to uphold the honor, dignity, and pride of themselves and their institution through their selected attire. **Refer to Section 5.11 for state-law rulings on dress.**
- 5.12 Indecent Exposure: Every person who intentionally makes an obscene display or exposure of his person, or the private parts thereof, in any public place or place where others are present or who procures another to so expose themselves shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. No person shall be deemed to be in violation of this section for breastfeeding a child in any public place or any place where others are present

## **Section 6 – Drugs**

The University seeks to inform all students about drugs and their effects. To this end, it is the policy of this campus to provide education programs and counseling to drug users and those affected by the drug use of others so as to discourage illicit drug use, eliminate the dealing or providing of illegal drugs, and uphold the law in these matters.

Drugs include controlled substances, alcohol, and substances that may be detrimental to health even if they are not subject to state and federal laws.

Students shall not distribute, use, or possess an illegal drug as defined by the Drug Control Act of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Use or possession is prohibited in any building or on any property owned or operated by the University. This includes the use, possession, and sale of marijuana. Any infraction of this provision may subject the student to expulsion from the University.

- 6.1 Use, possession, manufacture, or distribution of illegal drugs or drug-related paraphernalia or the misuse of legal pharmaceutical drugs is prohibited.
- 6.2 Reasonable suspicion of possession or use of narcotics or drugs may subject the student to a search of their person or property by law enforcement or residence life staff.

## **Section 7 – False Alarms, Bomb Threats, Explosives, Weapons, and Misuse of Fire Extinguishers**

(ALL VIOLATIONS OF SECTION 7 MAY RESULT IN IMMEDIATE SUSPENSION FROM THE RESIDENCE HALL.)

- 7.1 Persons who knowingly initiate a false fire alarm by ringing fire bells or giving any other common or recognized fire alarm are accountable for endangering the lives of other people and may be held responsible for damage to the persons and/or equipment responding to such false alarm.
- 7.2 In accordance with the Code of Virginia, any student found guilty of sounding a false alarm or making a bomb threat shall be guilty of a Class 5 felony and subject to 10 years in prison.
- 7.3 Students shall not, without authorization, operate or tamper with any firefighting equipment, except to extinguish a fire.



- 7.4 Inappropriate or dangerous activities involving fires, open flames, candles, matches, or other flammable materials are prohibited in all residence halls and buildings owned or operated by the University.
- 7.5 The use of dangerous chemicals or explosive materials such as fireworks, firecrackers, and gunpowder is prohibited unless under the direction and supervision of a professor for learning purposes.
- 7.6 Blocking or in any way preventing the use of fire-exit doors, residence-hall room doors, and building hallways is prohibited.
- 7.7 Improper use of electrical appliances or wiring that creates a fire hazard is prohibited. Cooking appliances are not allowed in certain residence halls.
- 7.8 It is prohibited to carry or possess firearms, ammunition, gun powder, air rifles, air pistols, paintball guns, guns of any kind, knives, replicas or other weapons, dangerous chemicals, or explosive materials, except as authorized in supervised academic programs, on campus or at group-sponsored events off campus.

### **Section 8 – Fighting, Assault, Threats of Physical Abuse, and Verbal Abuse**

Virginia State University strives to provide an environment where students, faculty, and staff feel welcome, safe, and at peace.

- 8.1 Conduct that threatens or endangers the health or safety of any person within or related to the University community, including physical abuse, threats, intimidation, or harassment, is prohibited.
- 8.2 Students shall not engage in or attempt to engage in any form of violence directed toward another person or group of persons on University property.
- 8.3 Participating in on-campus or off-campus riots or disturbances with the intent to commit or incite actions that present a clear and present danger to others or that damage property is prohibited.

**(NOTE: In instances where self-defense is claimed, the determination of the validity of the claim will rest solely with the appropriate administrative hearing panel.)**

### **Section 9 – Forgery, Fraud, Theft, Gambling, and Misrepresentation**

Any student, who, for purposes of fraud or misrepresentation, falsifies, forges, defaces, alters, or mutilates in any manner any document or representation thereof may be subject to discipline when this action substantially affects the University community's interest. Some examples of documents covered by this regulation include identification cards, program requests, change slips, receipts, transcripts of credits, library documents, and petitions for reclassification of residency status.

- 9.1 Students shall not engage in willful falsification of information on University records or of information given to University officials or to local government officials; the

presentation of false information for the purpose of obtaining services; unauthorized presentation of oneself or one's organization as a representative of the University for the purpose of gaining or attempting to gain privilege, convenience, or goods; possession, manufacture, or distribution of false or altered instruments of identification; or initiating or causing to be initiated any false report, warning, or threat.

- 9.2 Students shall not steal or attempt to steal any money, property, or items of value belonging to the University, members of the University community, or campus visitors.
- 9.3 Students shall not illegally use or appropriate any property belonging to the University.
- 9.4 Students shall not, in any manner, defraud or fail to pay debts that are legally owed to the University or members of the University community. This subsection also includes theft, misuse, abuse, or fraudulent use of telephones or the telephone PIN numbers of other students or University officials.
- 9.5 Students shall not remove, exchange, or alter arrangements of any University property without permission from the appropriate authority.
- 9.6 Students shall not misrepresent other students.

#### **Section 10 – Conduct Infractions**

- 10.1 Students shall not fail to comply with reasonable and lawful requests made by the Director of Student Conduct acting in the performance of their official duties. Failure to comply with such requests (e.g., to attend conferences and/or pre-hearing conferences) may result in additional violations.
- 10.2 Students shall not fail to comply with any disciplinary sanctions imposed upon them by administrative hearing panels or hearing officers in hearings.
- 10.3 Students shall not engage in any activity that disrupts, unfairly influences, or obstructs the administrative hearing process of Virginia State University.
- 10.4 Giving false information to an administrative hearing panel or hearing officer is prohibited. It is a serious offense and may lead to a violation of perjury.
- 10.5 Attempting to influence, intimidate, or threaten any witness, panel member, or other participants in an administrative hearing proceeding is prohibited. Such action may lead to criminal charges.
- 10.6 Students shall not fail to comply with the “No Contact Order”.

#### **Section 11 – Parole or Probation Status of Student**

- 11.1 Any student who is placed on probation or parole by any court must report the same in person to the Director of Student Conduct within 10 days of the court order.

## **Section 12 – Gender Based Violence and Sexual Misconduct (See Title IX Policy**

**Sexual harassment** is a form of discrimination based on sex. It is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other conduct of a sexual nature including: verbal (e.g., specific demands for sexual favors, sexual innuendoes, sexually suggestive comments, jokes of a sexual nature, sexual propositions, or sexual threats); non-verbal (e.g., sexually suggestive emails, other writings, articles or documents, objects or pictures, graphic commentaries, suggestive or insulting sounds or gestures, leering, whistling, or obscene gestures); or physical (e.g., touching, pinching, brushing the body, any unwelcome or coerced sexual activity, including sexual assault). Sexual harassment, including sexual assault, can involve persons of the same or different genders. Sexual harassment may also include sex-based harassment directed toward stereotypical notions of what is female/feminine v. male/masculine or a failure to conform to those gender stereotypes.

### **Prohibited Acts**

The following acts are prohibited and therefore are policy violations:

1. engaging in sexual assault, stalking, dating or domestic violence or any other act of sexual misconduct;
  2. retaliating in any manner against an individual who reports sexual assault, stalking, dating or domestic violence or any other act of sexual misconduct;
  3. interfering with procedures to investigate or redress a complaint of sexual assault, stalking, dating or domestic violence or any other act of sexual misconduct; and,
  4. making an intentionally false accusation of sexual assault, stalking, dating or domestic violence or any other act of sexual misconduct through the University's procedures.
- 12.1 Students shall not sexually harass any members of the University community or campus visitors.
- 12.2 Sexual acts between consenting or non-consenting persons on University property are forbidden at all times. University property includes buildings, grounds, and parked automobiles.
- 12.3 Students shall not rape, attempt to rape, or sexually assault other persons on or off campus. Charges may be filed through the state code.
- 12.4 Students and student organizations will not engage in sexual misconduct, which includes, but is not limited to, sexual activity forced on another person against their will, either by physical or psychological force;
- 12.5 Students and student organization will not engage in sexual harassment; obscene phone calls; indecent exposure; other electronic means or devices, including pictures, video, electronic messages and social media.
- 12.6 Students are prohibited from stalking any members of the University community or

campus visitors.

- 12.7 Students shall not be involved in dating violence or domestic violence with any members of the University community or campus visitors.
- 12.8 Students are prohibited from being involved in any other actions, including retaliation, interfering with procedures, or making an intentionally false accusation.

### **Section 13 – Pet Policy**

No pets other than fish and properly attended guide dogs are permitted in University buildings and on campus grounds.

- 13.01 Dogs, cats, snakes, and other animals are not permitted on campus grounds. Any animal found unattended or tied to a tree, pole, or any other object on campus is subject to being impounded by the Bureau of Animal Control. All fees and costs associated with impounding will be borne by the owner of the animal. This policy does not apply to guide dogs.

### **Section 14 – Vandalism**

Students and student organizations shall not willfully or carelessly destroy, deface, or tamper with University property or the property of others.

- 14.1 Defacing or vandalizing University property, land, buildings, or equipment is prohibited.
- 14.2 Defacing or vandalizing the property of others is prohibited.

### **Section 15 – Violations of Other University Regulations**

Violation of University regulations contained in official University publications is prohibited.

- 15.01 Violation of other regulations includes, but is not limited to, Residence Life policies, recreational sports, facility policies, and University computing policies.

### **Section 16 – Hazing (See Student Organization Handbook)**

Hazing is an intentional action toward another student, on or off campus, by a student organization or any of its members, that is intended to produce humiliation, physical discomfort, bodily injury, or ridicule. Hazing under Virginia law is defined as activities for initiation or induction into an organization that include calisthenics or other strenuous physical activity; exposure to inclement weather; consumption of any food, liquid, beverage, drug, or other substance; and confinement in any room or compartment. The definition also includes spraying, painting, or pelting with any substance; burying in any substance; burning, branding, or tattooing; or any other activity that may result in physical injury or endangerment to the health or life of the individual being hazed.

- 16.1 Hazing by an individual is prohibited.
- 16.2 Hazing by an organization is prohibited.

- 16.3 Attending an event or activity where hazing is occurring is not permitted.

**Section 17 – Improper Use of University Computers and Computer Networks or Systems**

Virginia State University students and staff should be careful about how much information they post to the personal websites, online journals, blogs, and communities (such as Facebook.com and Twitter.com) they use to communicate and network within and outside the community.

- 17.1 Students shall not abuse or misuse University computer equipment, materials, or systems or networks by: accessing, sending, or displaying obscene materials (as defined under state and federal law); engaging in abusive conduct; damaging computer equipment, networks or systems; violating copyright laws; using false and unauthorized identification or password, or trespassing into another student's work; or using University equipment, supplies, systems or networks for any illegal activities as defined by Virginia statute or federal law.
- 17.2 The use of cell phones or audio or video recording is not permitted in classrooms without the prior approval of the instructor.
- 17.3 Any violation of the University's computer-use policy is prohibited.

## **STANDARDS FOR STUDENT-ORGANIZATION CONDUCT**

The University is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy living and learning environment for students, faculty, and staff. Student-organization behavior that is not consistent with the Student Organization Code of Conduct is addressed through an educational process designed to promote safety and good citizenship and, when necessary, impose appropriate consequences.

### **Student-Organization-Member Responsibilities**

Members of student organizations are expected to be good citizens; to engage in responsible behaviors that reflect well upon their organizations and the University; to be civil to one another and to others within the campus community; and to contribute positively to student and University life.

Virginia State University has established the following Student Organization Code of Conduct to ensure that all student-organization officers and members understand what is expected of them and accept responsibility for their own actions and the actions of their members and guests.

### **Application of This Code**

The Department of Student Conduct will exercise jurisdiction over recognized student organizations, including fraternities and sororities, and the conduct of their members. Action by the Department of Student Conduct does not preclude action by one of the Greek councils or other governing bodies.

Sanctions for conduct listed below may be imposed on student organizations found responsible for violating the Student Organization Code of Conduct. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to, withdrawal of recognition, suspension of recognition for a specified period of time, probation (a warning that might lead to a more severe sanction), restriction of privileges, reprimand, and demand for restitution for losses caused. Conduct that threatens the safety or security of the campus community or that substantially disrupts the functions or operation of the University is within the jurisdiction of this Code, regardless of whether it occurs on or off campus. The Department of Student Conduct is responsible for adjudicating cases based on allegations of misconduct. Ordinarily the University will proceed only with written complaints, but it reserves the right to proceed without a written complaint.

When the Department of Student Activities receives a report of a student organization's alleged misconduct, an investigation will occur. If warranted, the Department of Student Activities will send the president of the student organization and its advisor a letter to schedule an informal conference. The letter will also notify the organization's president of the allegations. The Director of Student Activities or designee will meet with the president of the organization and its advisor to discuss the allegations. If the organization is found responsible for the alleged misconduct, the director will file a formal incident letter with the Department of Student Conduct. The Department of Student Conduct will send a letter to the president of the organization, informing them of the violation(s) and requesting their appearance at a pre-hearing conference. The student will be advised of their rights at the pre-hearing conference. The student then will appear at the formal hearing, which will be taped. It is the president's right to accept or reject any sanction imposed. If the president believes their due process rights have been violated or the sanction imposed was too excessive, they may submit a written request to have the case reviewed by the Dean of Students within (2) two business days of receipt of the notice of sanction(s). The Dean of Students will review the violations and all evidence relating to them and shall have the discretion to further interview the organization's leadership and student members. The Dean of Students' decision shall be final. The president of the organization will be notified of the University's final decision within 10 business days of receipt of the appeal letter to the Dean of Students.

### **Governance**

All student organizations are required to be registered with the University through the process administered by Student Activities. Registered student organizations are subject to University governance and are responsible for the conduct of their members. Governance pertains to University policies and procedures, including local, state, and federal laws, to which student organizations, including fraternities and sororities, are held responsible. Policies and procedures developed by the Greek councils are managed as outlined in their respective constitutions and do not preclude action by the Department of Student Conduct.

### **Unacceptable Student Organization and Member Behavior**

The following defined behaviors are unacceptable and subject to disciplinary sanctions:

#### **1. Aiding and Abetting**

- a. Assisting a group that has lost University recognition or facilitating the existence of a group that does not have University recognition is prohibited.
- b. Encouraging, permitting, or assisting another organization or member to do any act that could subject them to disciplinary action is prohibited.
- c. Aiding and abetting another organization or member in violation of a University policy or procedure or local, state, or federal law is prohibited.

## 2. Use of Alcohol and Other Drugs

Virginia State University is dedicated to providing a productive and challenging educational environment, free from the adverse effects of alcohol and other drugs. The adverse effects of alcohol and other drugs in the University community create a serious threat to the welfare of students, employees and to Virginia's citizens; and it undermines the mission of the University. The purpose of this policy is to protect the health, safety and welfare of members of the University community and the public being served by the University.

The Virginia State University Alcohol and Drug Policy prohibits the unlawful or unauthorized manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of alcohol and illicit drugs, including marijuana, by students and employees on University property, at University sponsored events, and at off-campus activities while representing the University community.

### Policy Enforcement

- a. In accordance with the federal Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988, the federal Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989, and the Commonwealth of Virginia's Policy on Alcohol and Other Drugs, **any employee or student who violates this policy is subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment, expulsion from the University, referral for prosecution, and/or referral for satisfactory participation in an appropriate evaluation or rehabilitation program.** VSU supports an environment free from retaliation. Retaliation against any employee or student who brings forth a good faith concern, asks a clarifying question, or participates in an investigation is prohibited.
- b. Students, faculty, and staff are expected to comply with all federal, state and local alcohol and drug-related laws. Underage drinking is strictly prohibited by Virginia State University.
- c. The use, possession, manufacture, or distribution of illegal drugs or drug-related paraphernalia or the misuse of legal pharmaceutical drugs is prohibited.
- d. Sponsoring or hosting an activity at which the substances noted above are used is prohibited.

### Alcohol and Other Drug Counseling and Treatment Program Resources

A student who experiences a problem with alcohol or other drugs may contact University Counseling Center or Student Health Services for confidential counseling, assessment and referral to community services if needed.

## 3. Damage to Property

Willful or careless destruction of, defacement of, or tampering with University property or the property of others is prohibited.

## 4. Unlawful Discrimination

Discrimination on the basis of race, religion, color, ancestry, ethnicity, gender, marital status, national origin, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, special



disabled veteran's status, or Vietnam-era or other covered veteran status is prohibited. The prohibition on membership policies that discriminate on the basis of gender does not apply to social fraternities or sororities or to other University living groups.

**5. Disorderly Conduct**

- a. Behavior that disturbs the peaceful campus environment, or undermines public safety is prohibited.
- b. Harassment, threats, bullying, physical abuse, intimidation, and the threat of physical abuse, including bias-related incidents, are prohibited.
- c. Excessive noise that is disruptive to the campus or surrounding community is prohibited.

**6. Endangerment**

Reckless or intentional acts that endanger the welfare of group members or others or compromise the security measures of the campus are prohibited.

**7. Failure to Comply**

- a. Failure to comply with the directives of university officials acting in the performance of their official duties;
- b. Resisting or obstructing University officials acting in the performance of their official duties;
- c. Failure to follow all policies and procedures established by the University pertaining to student organizations, including fraternities<sup>7</sup> and sororities, as outlined in the *Student Organization Handbook*.

**8. False Alarms and Fire Safety**

Initiating false fire alarms or tampering with fire-alarm devices or fire equipment is prohibited.

## **9. Falsification of Information**

- a. Willful falsification of information on University records or of information given to University officials or to local government officials is prohibited.
- b. Willfully providing false information for the purpose of obtaining services is prohibited.
- c. Unauthorized presentation of oneself or one's organization as a representative of the University for the purpose of gaining or attempting to gain privilege, convenience, goods, or services is prohibited.
- d. Possession, manufacture, or distribution of false or altered instruments of identification is prohibited.
- e. Initiating or causing to be initiated any false report, warning, or threat is prohibited.

## **10. Firearms, Fireworks, Weapons, and Explosives**

- a. Possession of firearms, ammunition, gun powder, air rifles, air pistols, paintball guns, guns of any kind, knives, replicas or other weapons, dangerous chemicals, or explosive materials, except as authorized in supervised academic programs, on campus or at group-sponsored events off campus is prohibited.
- b. Possession or use of fireworks on campus or at group-sponsored events off campus is prohibited.

## **11. Guests**

Student organizations are responsible for informing their guest(s) of University policies and procedures and will be held accountable for the behavior of their guest(s).

## **12. Harassment and Abusive Behavior**

Conduct that threatens or endangers the health or safety of any person within or related to the University community, including physical abuse, threats, intimidation, harassment, or sexual misconduct, is prohibited, as defined in this *Student Handbook*.

## **13. Hazing**

Hazing in every form or conspiracy to haze is prohibited. Virginia State University takes a zero-tolerance approach to hazing. Commission of hazing can be considered either a misdemeanor or a felony. Participation in a hazing practice may result in both individual and organizational disciplinary action. The Code of Virginia section 18.2-56 states, "It shall be unlawful to haze so as to cause bodily injury, to any student at any school, college, or university. Any person found guilty thereof shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor." If injuries would be such as to constitute a felony, punishment shall be inflicted as is otherwise provided by law for the punishment of such felony.

Section 18.2-56 further states, “any person receiving bodily injury by hazing shall have a right to sue, civilly, the person or persons guilty thereof, whether adults or infants.”

The following non-exhaustive list of activities meets this criterion, and accordingly, these activities are considered forms of hazing:

- a. Physical activities such as calisthenics, jogging, sit-ups, push-ups, or the carrying of objects such as bricks, stones, blocks, or any other item(s) which serve to create physical hardships, discomfort, and/or distress
- b. Abduction or involuntary transportation of individuals or the abandonment of individuals at off-campus locations, requiring them to find their way home
- c. Physical exposure or abuse such as nudity, paddling, pushing, shoving, hitting, punching, tackling, or throwing any substance at another person; submerging or dunking in water or other substances; marking, branding or tattooing; or any activity which has the potential for the exchange of blood or other bodily fluids
- d. Forced or required consumption of any substance, including food, drugs, alcohol, water, or any beverage, or any items individually or in combination that may or could induce vomiting, psychological abuse, and/or humiliation
- e. Requiring individuals to walk, march, or run in single file against their will
- f. Requiring individuals to dress in revealing, embarrassing, or uncomfortable clothing or any type of uniform
- g. Exposing individuals to extremely uncomfortable or dangerous environments (e.g., environments that are too loud, dark, small, hot, or cold) or blindfolding where there is a potential for danger
- h. Intense interrogation of pledges, name calling, screaming at individuals, prolonged periods of enforced silence, or the use of gags
- i. Requiring individuals to perform any act(s) which are construed to be humiliating or degrading
- j. Prohibiting individuals from talking to members of the opposite gender
- k. Peer pressure to engage in activities against the individual’s will
- l. Requiring pledges or new members to carry or wear any item(s) that set them apart from other members. (it is acceptable for new members to wear a pledge pin; however, members should also wear membership badges or pins simultaneously)
- m. Forced servitude (such as shining shoes or boots; cleaning rooms, apartments, houses, cars, or other property; washing clothes or dishes; running personal errands; or other services or duties not normally shared by initiated members) or requiring individuals to purchase items or services for other members

- n. Requiring activities that are prohibited by law or University policy or procedure, such as trespassing; stealing of any item(s), including personal effects or organizational property (banners, composites, food, paddles, etc.); stealing of any item(s) for scavenger hunts; kidnapping; or lewd, obscene, threatening, intimidating, or harassing behavior
- o. Requiring activities that interfere with academic studies, assignments, or classes, such as awakening individuals in the night for organizational activities, interfering with normal sleep or study schedules, requiring food or sleep deprivation, or assigning take-home assignments that interfere with academic work.

#### **14. Misuse of University Computer Facilities or Resources**

The following behaviors pertaining to misuse of computer facilities or resources are prohibited:

- a. Accessing, sending, or displaying offensive messages or pictures or damaging computer equipment, networks, or systems
- b. Violating copyright laws
- c. Using false and unauthorized identifications or passwords or trespassing into another student's work
- d. Using University equipment, supplies, systems, or networks for illegal activities as defined by Virginia or federal law

#### **15. Obstruction of University Activities**

Behavior that disrupts or interferes with normal University or University-sponsored activities is prohibited. Normal University or University-sponsored activities include, but are not limited to, study, teaching, research, and other authorized activity. They may also include authorized activities performed by officially invited speakers; University administration; public-safety officials; or fire, police, or emergency services. Such behavior includes abridgement of rights to freedom of speech and expression.

#### **16. New Member Intake**

Student organizations that are not in compliance with new-member-education requirements as outlined in their local and national constitutions and/or bylaws or University policy risk disciplinary procedure. Non-Greek organizations shall not engage in intake processes.

#### **17. Theft**

Stealing or attempting to steal any money, property, or item of value belonging to the University, a member of the University community, or a campus visitor is prohibited.

**18. Trespass**

Unlawful entry into a University facility, regardless of its location, is prohibited. The term shall also include the unlawful entry into property not owned by the organization.

**19. Use of the University Name**

Use in graphics, print, media, or advertising of the name or marks (e.g., the logo, seal, or graphics) of the University is prohibited unless specifically authorized in writing by the president of the University or designated representative.

**20. Violation of Student Organization Conduct Procedures and Sanctions**

- a. Falsification, distortion, or misrepresentation of information related to a discipline matter is prohibited.
- b. Disruption or interference with the orderly progress of a student-organization discipline proceeding is prohibited.
- c. Initiation of a student-organization discipline proceeding in bad faith is prohibited.
- d. Attempting to discourage another individual from participating in a student-organization discipline matter is prohibited.
- e. Attempting to influence the impartiality of any participant in a student-organization discipline matter is prohibited.
- f. Verbal or physical harassment or intimidation of any participant in a student-organization discipline matter is prohibited.
- g. Failure to comply with the sanction(s) imposed under a student-organization discipline proceeding may result in further disciplinary action and/or additional sanction(s).

**21. Violations of Civil or Criminal Law**

Student organizations in violation of local, state, or federal law are in violation of the University Code of Conduct. University sanctions for such violations may be imposed independent of and prior to the disposition of any legal proceeding in a civil or criminal justice case.

# APPENDICES

---

## APPENDIX A: INFORMATION TO KNOW

**Academic Enhancement and Support:** The University College offers one-on-one and group academic coaching; facilities with free, up-to-date technology; academic growth plans; and supplemental Math and English instruction.

**AIDS/Condoms:** Information regarding AIDS and condoms may be obtained from Health Services.

**Alcohol/Drug Concerns:** The substance-abuse-prevention program offers free, confidential counseling and a variety of educational information.

**Allergy Injections:** Allergy injections are given by appointment only, and students must provide their own allergy serum. The student's personal physician must administer the first dose of the series and send detailed instructions to the Health Center for subsequent injections. All allergy medication will stay in the clinic and students must come in to get the injection. When going home for extended periods (e.g., Christmas, spring break, and summer), students should take their medications with them.

**Athletic Academic Enhancement:** The staff of the University College works to help athletes manage their time and designates areas of the building for use during team study hours. Counselors also help to ensure that all athletes are aware of the communication they must maintain with their professors about their busy sports schedules.

**Automobile Policy—Freshmen:** The vehicle policy does not permit resident freshmen to have motorized vehicles on campus.

**Campus Ministries:** The office endeavors to serve the interpersonal and personal needs of the campus community as they relate to spiritual and religious life. Students of all ethnic, cultural, racial, denominational, and faith traditions are welcome to celebrate diversity and enhancement.

**Career Services:** Career Services is committed to offering a comprehensive array of programs and services that support and facilitate career development for students and alumni. Programs and resources are provided to assist students in developing and identifying career goals, expanding knowledge of career options, understanding effective decision making, and acquiring appropriate strategies and skills to carry out the career-development process.

**Check Cashing:** Personal checks may be cashed at the Virginia State University Credit Union or at banks located near the campus.

**Commuter Student Services:** The Department of Student Activities assists students in obtaining information about transportation services in the area and provides a commuter lounge as a comfortable place to relax before, after, and between classes. The lounge is equipped with a computer, magazines, a microwave, a refrigerator, and information about campus and community resources to support commuter students.

**Counseling Center:** The University Counseling Center provides individual, group, couples/marital, and family therapy as well as case-management, psychiatric, consultation and outreach services.

**Educational Counseling:** The educational counselors of the University College schedule classes for students as well as keep records of a student's progress through the academic year. By staying connected to students throughout their experience at Virginia State University, counselors are able to make accurate suggestions for improvement.

**Financial Aid:** Virginia State University provides financial assistance to students in an attempt to bridge the gap between the actual cost of college and the expected contribution from a student (and/or their family). The four categories of financial aid are scholarships, grants, loans, and employment. Students may receive any combination of these funding types.

**Health Center:** The Student Health Center provides quality health care services and health education programming to all students attending VSU. Our professional staff includes a physician, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, medical assistants, health educator, clinical and administrative assistants.

**Health Education:** Health education includes topics such as stress management, weight control, STD/HIV prevention, alcohol- and drug-abuse prevention, and smoking cessation, along with other wellness issues.

**Health Insurance:** The University does not require students to have health insurance. For those students without health coverage, the Health Center refers students to the Affordable Care Act website at [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov).

**Housing Contract—Cancellation:** The Residence Hall and Food Service Agreement is for a full academic year. This agreement cannot be canceled during or after the Fall semester.

**Identification Card:** The University's Trojan Card is the official identification card for Virginia State University. It is authorized for use only by the person whose name appears on the front of the card and is not transferable. It is the property of Virginia State University, and it may be revoked at any time.

**Meal Card:** The meal card (Trojan Card) may be used only by the owner. The meal card is nontransferable. All residence-hall students are required to participate in the food-service meal plan.

**Medical Excuses:** Students presenting to the Student Health Center are only provided excuses for missed classes upon the discretion of the clinician. Medical excuses are not given during the midterm or final examination periods. The Student Health Center medical excuses are accepted at the discretion of the professor.

**Medical Necessities:** A completed physical examination form (within the past year) along with a valid immunization record must be on file for all full-time students upon entering Virginia State University. Students who fail to meet this requirement will not be permitted to register for classes and a hold will be placed on the student's account.

**Meal Plan for Off-Campus Students:** Students commuting to campus may purchase a meal plan designed for their individual needs.

**Medical Services After 5:00 P.M.:** If a **non-emergency** health need occurs after 5:00 p.m. or on a weekend, students may use Patient First Urgent Care Center, located at 1260 Temple Avenue in Colonial Heights, open from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 PM or Better Med open 8am to 8pm 4600 Puddleduck Road Prince George, VA. Our local hospitals are available for 24 hour emergency care at Southside Regional Medical Center, 200 Medical Park Boulevard in Petersburg or John Randolph Medical Center, 411 West Randolph Road Hopewell, VA. Medical transport services are available through AAA Transportation Services for students without transportation. Transportation vouchers are available in each residence hall and may be obtained from the resident coordinator or residence life staff. The voucher must be completed and given to the driver, and the trip cost will be charged to the student's account. One copy of the voucher must be sent to the Health Center. No money is required from students at the time of service to utilize AAA Transport. *This transportation service is only for medically related conditions and is not intended for personal use.*

**Name Change:** Any student who marries while matriculation at the University and who wants a name change entered on University records must submit a written request to the Registrar's Office. A copy of the marriage certificate must accompany the request.

**National Student Exchange Program:** The National Student Exchange (NSE) program is designed to provide Virginia State University students an opportunity to attend a college or university in another state without having to pay the high cost of out-of-state tuition. Payment of tuition is made in one of two ways. Using Plan A, students pay their tuition and fees to the host institution. In Plan B, students pay their tuition and fees to Virginia State University. They do not pay room and board to Virginia State University. Room and board fees are the responsibility of the students and are paid directly to the host institution. Virginia State University only uses Plan B. Virginia State University students who participate in the NSE program remain registered students at Virginia State University. Any financial aid that is normally available can be applied to the exchange obligation. Because NSE is an officially approved program of the University, all



courses with their respective credit hours and earned grades will be recorded on the Virginia State University transcript and will be calculated into the GPA.

**Nontraditional Students:** Educational counselors work to assist students who are not of the traditional college age. The staff of the University College understands that these students often live independently and may have jobs, children, and other responsibilities that could potentially interfere with their academic success if the proper planning does not occur early on. Through appropriate counseling, students will learn techniques that will help them adjust to a college-level curriculum while simultaneously meeting the most important obligations of their daily lives.

**Overnight Guests:** Permission for relatives or friends to stay overnight in the residence halls is granted by the Office of Residence Life and the residence coordinator in your building. Contact these individuals for information.

**Peer Mediation:** Peer mediation at Virginia State University offers students the chance to meet with student mediators who have been trained in the mediation process. Peer mediators do not impose solutions; rather, they are trained to encourage communication and help the parties examine possible solutions. Students seeking resolution of conflict through mediation or who are interested in becoming peer mediators should contact the Office of Student Conduct at (804) 524-2391.

**Posting Policy:** All posters and flyers must be submitted to the Office of Student Activities for review before they are posted. Approved posters should be placed only on bulletin boards. Posters or other displays shall not be placed on the outside of buildings or on interior walls, floors, or furniture or in windows. Posters may not be placed on trees on the campus at any time. Flyers are to be posted in Jones Dining Hall and residence halls only with prior permission from the director of food services and the individual residence educators, respectively. Flyers for on-campus activities can be posted in academic buildings with prior permission from each individual school dean's office. Students who fail to follow this policy will be subject to disciplinary action.

**Sexual Assault:** If you are sexually assaulted, contact the University Police or a university official immediately.

**Solicitation in the Residence Halls:** Solicitation in the residence halls for the benefit of individuals is strictly prohibited. Contact the Office of Residence Life for additional information.

**Stolen Personal Property:** The University does not assume liability, directly or indirectly, for personal items belonging to a student. It is suggested that the student contract for their own insurance coverage.

**Substance Abuse:** Counseling Services offers treatment and/or assistance to students with substance-abuse related problems or issues. The Virginia State University Alcohol and Drug Policy prohibits the possession, use, manufacture, distribution, sale, or consumption of alcohol

and/or illicit drugs anywhere on campus. The policy pertains to the activities of all students on University property and the activities of students at University-sponsored events or at off-campus activities while representing the University community. Students, faculty, and staff are expected to comply with all federal, state, and local alcohol- and drug-related laws. Virginia's Alcohol Beverage Control Act contains laws governing possession, use, and consumption of alcoholic beverages. It is illegal for anyone under age 21 to purchase, possess, or consume any alcoholic beverage. It is illegal for any person to sell alcoholic beverages to persons under the age of 21. It is illegal for any person to purchase or provide alcoholic beverages for another when, at the time of the purchase, the provider knows or has reason to know that the recipient is under 21 years of age. It is illegal for any underage person to use a forged or otherwise deceptive driver's license to obtain beer or any other alcoholic beverage. It is illegal to manufacture, sell, give, distribute, or use a controlled substance or illegal drug. It is illegal to possess with intent to manufacture, sell, give, or distribute a controlled substance or illegal drug. It is illegal to possess or sell drug paraphernalia.

**Technology Services:** Technology Services is committed to the delivery of reliable information-technology solutions and services to support the educational mission of Virginia State University.

**Telephone Services:** To initiate service, contact Verizon. Students may secure a personal telephone for use in their room. While the University pays for local service, students are responsible for securing a long-distance carrier.

**Transition Students:** The Academic Center for Excellence recognizes the unique needs of students who are transferring into Virginia State University and of members of military families. A staff member will work with the transfer office to guarantee that all possible transfer credits meet graduation requirements, to offer guidance in contacting appropriate financial-assistance offices on campus, and to give personal support to those whose families may be unavailable due to distance.

**Unreasonably Loud Music:** A student may receive a fine for playing unreasonably loud music on the campus grounds or in residence halls, classroom, or buildings. This includes unreasonably loud music in automobiles.

**Vehicle Regulations:** All Virginia State University students must register with the Cashier's Office any vehicle they wish to park on campus. Students will be issued one permit per registered vehicle. Freshmen are prohibited from operating a motor vehicle on campus unless an exception is authorized by the Director of Student Conduct. Exceptions may be granted on a case-by-case basis.

**Veteran Student Advisement:** The Veteran Affairs advisor serves veterans and their dependents by keeping them abreast of their allowances, awards, rights, privileges, and responsibilities in

accordance with the codes and the contract made between the University, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and the U.S. Department of Education.

**Violation of Public Laws:** Whenever a student violates a public law outside the physical bounds of the campus, the student is to report all infractions of public law with which they are involved or charged to the Department of Student Success and Engagement (804) 524-5504 or the Office of Student Activities at (804) 524-5701. This does not refer to traffic infractions.

**Wellness Center:** The Wellness Center educates and enlightens students about healthy lifestyles. It provides opportunities to improve overall personal mental and physical wellness to the Virginia State University community. It provides a healthy place for students, faculty, and staff to interact and work out.

## **APPENDIX B: DEFINITIONS**

**Academic Grievance:** A dispute between a student and a faculty or staff member about teaching and learning activities as they relate to or affect the student in an academic environment.

**Accused Student:** A Virginia State University student charged with violating University policies and notified of a complaint filed with the Office of Student Conduct.

**Adjudication:** A hearing process that includes the evaluation of possible violations of the Virginia State University Student Code of Conduct. This process also includes the administration of sanctions as appropriate.

**Administrator's Court:** A formal student hearing that is heard solely by the Director of Student Conduct or designee approved by the Dean of Students in response to alleged minor violations of student misconduct.

**Allegation:** A statement asserting that a violation of University policy or the Student Code of Conduct has occurred.

**Complaint/Charge:** A written statement submitted to the Office of Student Conduct regarding violations of University policy.

**Dating Violence:** Violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim. A social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature means a relationship which is characterized by the expectation of affection or sexual involvement between the parties. The existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the length of the relationship, the type of relationship, and the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship. Dating violence can be a single event or a pattern of behavior that includes, but is not limited to, sexual or physical abuse. Dating violence does not include acts covered under the definition of domestic violence.

**Domestic Violence:** A pattern of behavior, including acts or threatened acts, that includes-asserted violent misdemeanor and felony offenses committed by (i) by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim; (ii) by a person with whom the victim shares a child in common; (iii) by a person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner; (iv) by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia; or (v) by any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person's acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction in which the crime of violence occurred.

**Due Process:** Basic rights afforded to all Virginia State University students charged with violating University policies. Basic rights that constitute a fair hearing include the receipt of a hearing notice that outlines alleged violations of University policy and the right to be heard by a disciplinary hearing panel.

**Formal Complaint:** A written concern or formal charge of dissatisfaction with a person, service, or process that requires clarification, investigation, and/or resolution.

**Formal Hearing:** An official student hearing that is very structured and is administratively managed by the Office of Student Conduct. A formal hearing is convened in response to allegations of student misconduct and is scheduled at the discretion of the Director of Student Conduct.

**Hazing:** Hazing in every form or conspiracy to haze is prohibited. Commission of hazing can be considered either a misdemeanor or a felony. Participation in a hazing practice may result in both individual and organizational disciplinary action. The Code of Virginia section 18.2-56 states, “It shall be unlawful to haze so as to cause bodily injury, any student at any school, college, or university. Any person found guilty thereof shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.” If injuries would be such as to constitute a felony, punishment shall be inflicted as is otherwise provided by law for the punishment of such felony. Section 18.2-56 further states, “any person receiving bodily injury by hazing shall have a right to sue, civilly, the person or persons guilty thereof, whether adults or infants.”

**Hold:** A restriction preventing a student from enrolling in classes, receiving a refund, obtaining academic transcripts.

**Integrity:** Steadfast adherence to a strict ethical code; completeness; soundness.

**Investigation:** A process of gathering and reviewing information following the receipt of a disciplinary complaint.

**Nonacademic Grievance:** A dispute between a student and a staff member, administrator, faculty member, or another Virginia State University student concerning the application of any University-wide policies or procedures or the policies or procedures of an academic or administrative unit. This may include issues related to co-curricular or extracurricular activities, student issues, personal conduct or decorum, student governance, or other administrative decisions and/or actions perceived by the complainant to be unfair, arbitrary, and/or capricious.

**Not Responsible:** A hearing outcome in which a determination is made that the student’s conduct did not violate the Student Code of Conduct.

**Representative:** An individual who may attend hearings as silent support for the accused student or witness throughout the hearing process. The representative may not directly question

therespondent/student(s) or witness (es) or address the hearing body for any reason.

**Responsible:** A hearing outcome in which a student is found to be in violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

**Sanction:** A developmental consequence imposed by the administrative hearing officer (Director of Student Conduct) or after a student is found responsible for violating Virginia State University's Student Code of Conduct and/or other university policies.

**Sexual Assault:** Non-consensual contact of a sexual nature. It includes any sexual contact when the victim does not or is unable to consent through the use of force, fear, intimidation, physical helplessness, ruse, impairment or incapacity (including impairment or incapacitation as a result of the use of drugs or alcohol, knowingly or unknowingly); intentional and non-consensual touching of, or coercing, forcing, or attempting to coerce or force another to touch, a person's genital area, groin, inner thigh, buttock or breast; and non-consensual sexual intercourse, defined as anal, oral, or vaginal penetration with any object. Some types of sexual acts which fall under the category of sexual assault include: rape, attempted rape and fondling.

**Sexual Misconduct:** Sexual contact without consent. Includes intentional touching of the victim or forcing of the victim to touch, directly or through clothing, another person's genitals, breasts, thighs, or buttocks; rape (sexual intercourse without consent, whether by an acquaintance or a stranger); attempted rape; sodomy (oral sex or anal intercourse) without consent; or sexual penetration with an object without consent. To constitute lack of consent, the acts must be committed by force, intimidation, or through the victim's mental incapacity or physical helplessness. Rape refers to those actions defined as (but is not limited to) the following behaviors (or any behavior that is prohibited by the Virginia Penal Code) that are committed by either an acquaintance or stranger: sexual intercourse against a person's will, accomplished by force or threats of bodily injury, and sexual intercourse when the person is incapable of giving consent or is prevented from resisting, including instances when the complainant cannot resist because of alcohol or drugs administered by or with the knowledge of the accused. Intoxication of the assailant does not diminish the assailant's responsibility for sexual assault.

**Stalking:** A course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to: (i) fear for their or others' safety, or (ii) suffer substantial emotional distress, meaning significant mental suffering or anguish that may, but does not necessarily, require medical or other professional treatment or counseling. A "course of conduct" means two or more acts, including, but not limited to, acts which the stalker directly, indirectly, or through third parties, by any action, method, device, or means follows, monitors, observes, surveils, threatens, or communicates to or about, a person, or interferes with a person's property.

**Student:** A person officially registered and enrolled at Virginia State University during any academic term in which an incident and subsequent grievance occurs.

**Unauthorized:** Not officially approved by the University.

**Violation:** An action that is inconsistent with University policies and which necessitates the imposition of a sanction or consequence.

**Witness:** An individual who may attend a hearing as support for the respondent/student and who provides a written statement and/or oral testimony to the members of the panel, to include the Director of Student Conduct. The witness's testimony must consist of firsthand evidence. All witnesses are expected to arrive to the hearing with a written, signed, and dated statement.

## APPENDIX C: DIRECTORY INFORMATION

FOR	WEB ADDRESS	PHONE
Absences (with Academic Excuses)	Professor's Department	
Academic Advising	Academic Advisor's Department	
Activities	<a href="http://vsu.edu/student-life/student-activities/index.php">http://vsu.edu/student-life/student-activities/index.php</a>	(804) 524-5692 Foster Hall Recpt Desk
Adding/Dropping Courses	Academic Advisor's Department	
Admissions (Undergraduates/Transfers)	<a href="http://www.vsu.edu/admissions">http://www.vsu.edu/admissions</a>	(804)524-5901 (804)524-5888
Automobile Registration	<a href="http://www.vsu.edu/student-accounts/cashiers-office.php">http://www.vsu.edu/student-accounts/cashiers-office.php</a> cashier@vsu.edu for info	(804) 524-5150
Band, Marching	<a href="http://www.sola.vsu.edu/departments/music/student-activities.php">http://www.sola.vsu.edu/departments/music/student-activities.php</a>	(804) 524-5311
Bookstore	<a href="http://www.vsushop.com">http://www.vsushop.com</a>	(804) 524-5691
Campus/Student Organizations	<a href="http://vsu.edu/student-life/student-activities/index.php">http://vsu.edu/student-life/student-activities/index.php</a>	(804) 524-5517
Career Services	<a href="http://www.vsu.edu/career-services">http://www.vsu.edu/career-services</a> careerservices@vsu.edu	(804) 524-5211
Cashier's Office	<a href="mailto:cashier@vsu.edu">cashier@vsu.edu</a>	(804) 524-5150
Choirs	<a href="http://www.sola.vsu.edu/departments/music/student-activities.php">http://www.sola.vsu.edu/departments/music/student-activities.php</a>	(804) 524-5311



*Appendix C: Directory Information*

Commencement	<a href="http://www.vsu.edu/registrar/graduation-information/index.php">http://www.vsu.edu/registrar/graduation-information/index.php</a>	(804) 524-5654
Counseling Services	<a href="http://www.vsu.edu/counseling">http://www.vsu.edu/counseling</a>	(804) 524-5939
Credit Union	<a href="http://www.vsufcu.org">http://www.vsufcu.org</a> <a href="mailto:info@vsufcu.org">info@vsufcu.org</a>	(804) 526-6708
Dining Services	<a href="http://www.vsu.edu/conference-services/plan/catering.php">http://www.vsu.edu/conference-services/plan/catering.php</a>	(804) 524-5797
Equal Employment Opportunity	<a href="http://www.vsu.edu/files/docs/policies/1000/equal%20employment%20opportunity.pdf">http://www.vsu.edu/files/docs/policies/1000/equal%20employment%20opportunity.pdf</a> and <a href="http://www.vsu.edu/files/docs/policies/1000/prohibition%20of%20workplace%20harassment%20policy.pdf">http://www.vsu.edu/files/docs/policies/1000/prohibition%20of%20workplace%20harassment%20policy.pdf</a>	(804) 524-1007
Finance	<a href="http://www.vsu.edu/about/administrative-offices/finance/index.php">http://www.vsu.edu/about/administrative-offices/finance/index.php</a>	(804) 524-5995
Financial Aid	<a href="http://www.vsu.edu/financial-aid">http://www.vsu.edu/financial-aid</a> <a href="mailto:finaid@vsu.edu">finaid@vsu.edu</a>	(804) 524-5990
Grade Appeals (Academic Credits and Petitions Procedures Manual) Policy and Committee	<a href="http://vsu.edu/faculty-and-staff/faculty/acc-policies-procedures.php">http://vsu.edu/faculty-and-staff/faculty/acc-policies-procedures.php</a>	(804) 524-5997
Health Services	<a href="http://www.vsu.edu/student-life/support-and-resources/health-services/index.php">http://www.vsu.edu/student-life/support-and-resources/health-services/index.php</a>	(804) 524-5711
Housing	<a href="http://vsu.edu/student-life/residential-living/index.php">http://vsu.edu/student-life/residential-living/index.php</a>	(804) 524-5862
Refunds	<a href="http://www.vsu.edu/student-accounts">http://www.vsu.edu/student-accounts</a>	(804) 524-5506

*Appendix C: Directory Information*

Registration	<a href="http://vsu.edu/academics/registrar/index.php">http://vsu.edu/academics/registrar/index.php</a>	(804) 524-5275
Religious Affairs	<a href="http://www.vsu.edu/student-life/student-activities/campus-ministry/index.php">http://www.vsu.edu/student-life/student-activities/campus-ministry/index.php</a>	(804) 524-5214
Residence Life	<a href="http://www.vsu.edu/reslife">http://www.vsu.edu/reslife</a>	(804) 524-5862
Room Reservations	<a href="http://www.vsu.edu/student-life/student-activities/need-meeting-space.php">http://www.vsu.edu/student-life/student-activities/need-meeting-space.php</a>	(804) 524-5692 (804) 524-6794
ROTC	<a href="http://www.sola.vsu.edu/departments/military-science/trojan-warrior-battalion-rotc/index.php">http://www.sola.vsu.edu/departments/military-science/trojan-warrior-battalion-rotc/index.php</a>	(804) 524-5216
Scholarships	<a href="http://www.vsu.edu/financial-aid">http://www.vsu.edu/financial-aid</a> <a href="mailto:finaid@vsu.edu">finaid@vsu.edu</a>	(804) 524-6854
Sexual Harassment	<a href="http://www.vsu.edu/files/docs/policies/1000/prohibition%20of%20workplace%20harassment%20policy.pdf">http://www.vsu.edu/files/docs/policies/1000/prohibition%20of%20workplace%20harassment%20policy.pdf</a>	(804) 524-1007
Student Accounts	<a href="http://www.vsu.edu/student-accounts">http://www.vsu.edu/student-accounts</a>	(804) 524-5506
Student Conduct	<a href="http://www.vsu.edu/student-life/student-conduct-and-greek-life/index.php">http://www.vsu.edu/student-life/student-conduct-and-greek-life/index.php</a>	(804) 524-5504
Student Government Association	<a href="http://www.vsu.edu/student-life/student-activities/student-government/index.php">http://www.vsu.edu/student-life/student-activities/student-government/index.php</a>	(804) 524-5154
Student Trips (Approval)	Vice President for Student Success and Engagement Memorial Hall, Room 307	(804) 524-5350
Students with Disabilities	<a href="http://www.vsu.edu/counseling">http://www.vsu.edu/counseling</a>	(804) 524-5061
Technology Help Desk	<a href="http://www.vsu.edu/technology-services/">http://www.vsu.edu/technology-services/</a>	(804) 524-5210

*Appendix C: Directory Information*

Testing Services Freshman Application Process	<a href="http://vsu.edu/admissions/apply/freshman-apply/index.php">http://vsu.edu/admissions/apply/freshman-apply/index.php</a>	(804) 524-5902
Tutoring Academic Support Center	<a href="http://vsu.edu/files/docs/stay-in-step/tutoring.pdf">http://vsu.edu/files/docs/stay-in-step/tutoring.pdf</a>	(804) 524-5916
University Catalog	<a href="http://vsu.edu/academics/academic-catalog.php">http://vsu.edu/academics/academic-catalog.php</a>	\
University Police	<a href="http://www.vsu.edu/police/">http://www.vsu.edu/police/</a>	(804)524-5360 Non Emergency (804)524-5411 Emergency
Wellness Center	<a href="http://www.vsu.edu/student-life/support-and-resources/wellness-fitness-center.php">http://www.vsu.edu/student-life/support-and-resources/wellness-fitness-center.php</a>	(804) 524-5728
Work Study	<a href="http://www.vsu.edu/finacial-aid/types-of-aid/work-study.php">http://www.vsu.edu/finacial-aid/types-of-aid/work-study.php</a>	(804) 524-5329
Virginia Statesman	<a href="http://vsu.edu/student-life/student-activities/index.php">http://vsu.edu/student-life/student-activities/index.php</a>	(804) 524-5692
Yearbook	<a href="http://www.vsu.edu/student-life/student-activities/yearbook.php">http://www.vsu.edu/student-life/student-activities/yearbook.php</a>	(804) 524-5692

## **APPENDIX D: GRADE APPEAL PROCEDURES**

College Grade Appeal Committees consisting of at least one faculty member from each department shall deliberate requests for grade appeals and recommend an action to the college dean. The dean shall review the recommendation and make a decision on the outcome of the appeal. The dean shall serve as the final arbiter on the matter. Only if circumstances warrant further deliberation should a grade appeal be referred to the Academic Credits Committee (ACC). At the end of each semester, the dean shall submit to the Academic Credits Committee a summary report of the dispositions of grade appeals handled at the college level. The Chair of the Academic Credits Committee shall provide the Provost with a written acknowledgement of the deans' reports on grade appeals in their respective colleges.

The appeal procedure for a student with a complaint about grading requires initial contact with the instructor involved and further contact with the instructor's department chairperson if the matter is not resolved between the instructor and student. If the matter is not resolved at the departmental level, a grade appeal should be submitted to the dean of the college in which the instructor teaches. The dean shall then forward the request to the grade appeal committee for deliberation.

Normally, students may appeal final grades based upon documented evidence that a grade was incorrectly awarded. Grade appeals must be requested within ONE YEAR of the semester in which the grade was awarded. Typically, grade changes are warranted based upon the following:

- The Professor did not have information or documentation at the time the grade was awarded;

- The Professor made an error of calculation (or other error) or entry of a grade;
- A grade of “I” (incomplete) was entered and the student completed the necessary work for the course.

Grade changes involving the “N” grade should be referred to either the Academic Credits Committee for undergraduate issues or the Policies and Petitions Committee for graduate related issues as appropriate.

The student will follow the steps below:

1. Make their case (with documentation 5) to the faculty member who awarded the grade. (If the faculty member is no longer employed by the University, the student may approach the Department Chairperson for the unit through which the course was offered.)
2. If the student is not satisfied with the disposition of the faculty member, they may repeat this process with the Department Chairperson
3. If the student remains dissatisfied, they may appeal to the college grade appeal committee via a letter which states the student’s case with supporting documentation appended.
4. After deliberation, the college grade appeal committee makes a positive or negative recommendation to the dean.
5. Privacy concerns may limit reviewers’ access to sensitive and personal documents submitted by the student.

The dean will consider the appeal, entering one of two dispositions:

- The appeal has no merit and the faculty member’s grade stands as entered;
- The appeal has merit and is remanded to the department chairperson and faculty member for reconsideration. Remove Repeat In these cases, the disposition of the faculty member is reported to the dean and if the appeal procedure for a student with a grading grievance requires

the student to first contact the instructor involved. If the matter is not resolved between the instructor and student, the instructor's department chair should be contacted. If the matter is not resolved at the department level, contact should be made with the dean of the college in which the instructor teaches. If the situation is not resolved at the dean's level, the student should submit a written request, containing the signatures of the department chair and college dean, to the Academic Credits Committee.