

2024 – 2025 SWTJC Student Handbook Changes/Updates

*Cover Page update to 2024

Page 4: Personnel Update

Chief of Staff: Dr. Randa Faseler Schell (830)591-7296

Vice President Student Services: Cruz Mata (830)591-7378

Vice President Eagle Pass: Brenda Hoffman (830)758-4111

Dean of Applied Sciences & Liberal Arts: April Ruhman (830)591-2920

Page 5: Personnel Update

Director of Dual Credit Programs: Savanna Martinez (830)591-7244

Page 13: Student Success Center

The Centers provide:

- Computer access
- Peer tutoring services in all subjects (in-person and virtual)
- Individual Academic Plans (IAPs)
- Equipment and textbook rentals to students (REMOVE)

Add the following:

• Graphing calculators are available for students to borrow.

Page 13/14: Student Resource

Pregnant and Parenting Students

In compliance with HB 1361, the pregnant and parenting student liaison for Southwest Texas Junior College is Teresa Crow. She may be reached at tmcrow@swtjc.edu or (830) 591-2908.

The liaison provides information to students regarding support services and resources such as:

- Resources to access medical and behavioral health coverage and services and public benefit programs, including programs related to food security, affordable housing, and housing subsidies;
- Public benefit program case management assistance and counseling;
- Parenting and child-care resources;
- Employment assistance;

- Financial counseling and tax preparation assistance;
- Transportation assistance;
- Student academic success strategies; and
- Other resources developed by the institution to assist the students.

Title IX prohibits discrimination against a student based on pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery from any of these conditions. It also prohibits a school, college, or university from applying any rule related to a student's parental, family, or marital status that treats students differently based on their gender. When a student returns to school, they must be allowed to return to the same academic and extracurricular status as before their medical leave began.

Under Texas SB 412, pregnant and parenting students cannot be forced out of school, to limit their studies, to attend alternative programs, to change their major, or be forced into or out of a particular course based solely on their pregnancy or parenting status.

Texas SB 459 extends early registration for parenting students if the institution of higher education provides early registration for any group of students in the same manner.

Page 14: Writing Center

Remove:

The Writing Center collaborates with multiple campus services and institutions, including SWTJC's Student Success Center and Sul Ross University – Rio Grande College, to promote this goal.

Remove:

TutorMe paragraph (pg. 14)

Add the following:

Pear Deck Tutor

Pear Deck Tutor is an online tutoring platform that connects students to live tutors, 24 hours a day in over 300 subjects, right from their home. Their network of over 10,000 verified tutors has helped more than half a million students improve their grades, understand difficult concepts, or just get help with simple questions. Students can even have their papers reviewed using Pear Deck's Writing Lab, which provides detailed feedback on their essays or reports in less than 12 hours.

Students at SWTJC will use the link inside their course in Canvas to directly sign into Pear Deck Tutor. For questions or issues, please contact Ana Lisa Conde at analisamartinez@swtjc.edu.

Page 15: Registrar's Office

Add #11 Item: Student refunds for reclassification of residency will only be applicable up to one year from the date of application and approval of reclassification.

Page 19: Business Services

Add the following under Refund of Tuition and Fees:

Student refunds for reclassification of residency will only be applicable up to one year from the date of application and approval of reclassification. The form should be submitted on or before census date of the semester as per the Academic Calendar.

Page 40: IT Department (Security)

SWTJC is in the process of implementing the use of Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) for Microsoft 365, it is anticipated that we will be putting those plans in place over the next few months. In the meantime, please be aware that in order to access your email or use 365 resources, you will be required to have access to Microsoft Authenticator. We are investigating the use of Google Authenticator as well.

Both applications are free to use and available for both the iPhone and Android phones. The apps do not store any information about you as a user or your phone, it just serves as a tool to improve system security for SWTJC. We will publish instructions for loading and using the apps on our web site in the near future.

ADD:

Student Complaints

Guiding Principles

Informal Process

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

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

Informal resolution is encouraged, but deadlines in this policy may not be extended except by mutual written consent.

Formal Process

A student may initiate the formal process described below by timely filing a written complaint form.

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

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

Freedom from Retaliation

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

Notice to Students

The College District shall inform students of this policy through appropriate College District publications.

Complaints

In this policy, the terms "complaint" and "grievance" shall have the same meaning.

Other Complaint Processes

Student complaints shall be filed in accordance with this policy, except as required by the policies listed below. Some of these policies require appeals to be submitted in accordance with FLD after the relevant complaint process:

1. Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment based on race, color, sex, gender, national origin, disability, age, or religion. [See [FFDA](#) and [FFDB](#)]
2. Complaints concerning retaliation relating to discrimination and harassment. [See [FFDA](#) and [FFDB](#)]
3. Complaints concerning disciplinary decisions. [See [FMA](#)]
4. Complaints concerning a commissioned peace officer who is an employee of the College District. [See [CHA](#)]
5. Complaints concerning the withdrawal of consent to remain on campus. [See [GDA](#)]

Filing

Complaint forms and appeal notices may be filed by hand-delivery, electronic communication, including email and fax, or U.S. Mail. Hand-delivered filings shall be timely filed if received by the appropriate administrator or designee by the close of business on the deadline. Filings submitted by electronic communication shall be timely filed if they are received by the close of business on the deadline, as indicated by the date/time shown on the electronic communication. Mail filings shall be timely filed if they are postmarked by U.S. Mail on or before the deadline and received by the appropriate administrator or designated representative no more than three days after the deadline.

Scheduling Conferences

The College District shall make reasonable attempts to schedule conferences at a mutually agreeable time. If a student fails to appear at a scheduled conference, the College District may hold the conference and issue a decision in the student's absence.

Response

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

Days

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

Representative

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

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

Consolidating Complaints

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

Untimely Filings

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

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

Costs Incurred

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

Complaint and Appeal Forms

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

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

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

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Student Rights and Responsibilities: STUDENT COMPLAINTS PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to secure at the first possible level prompt and equitable resolution of student complaints related to academic or curricular issues.

EXCEPTIONS

This policy shall not apply to:

1. Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment based on race, color, gender, national origin, disability, or religion. [\[See FFDA\] \(corrected, hyperlink\)](#)
2. Complaints concerning retaliation relating to discrimination and harassment. [\[See FFDB\] \(corrected, hyperlink\)](#)
3. Complaints concerning disciplinary decisions. [\[See FMA\] \(hyperlink\)](#)
4. Complaints concerning a commissioned peace officer who is an employee of the College District. [\[See CHA\] \(hyperlink\)](#)

The bracketed information in 1-4 above refer to policies in the SWTJC Policy Manual. Those policies have been developed for the specified circumstances.

REPRESENTATION

The student may be represented at any level of the complaint.

If the complaint involves a problem with an instructor, the student shall discuss the matter with the instructor before requesting a conference with the department chairman at Level One.

LEVEL ONE

A student who has a complaint shall request a conference with the department chairman or success coach as appropriate, who shall schedule and hold a conference with the student.

LEVEL TWO

If the outcome of the conference with the department chairman or success coach is not to the student's satisfaction, the student has ten workdays to request a conference with the Vice President of Academic Affairs or Vice President of Student Services, as appropriate, or designee(s), who shall schedule and hold a conference. Prior to or at the conference, the student shall submit a written complaint that includes a statement of the complaint and any evidence in its support, the solution sought, the student's signature, and the date of the conference with the department chairman or success coach.

LEVEL THREE

If the outcome of the conference with the Vice President is not to the student's satisfaction, the student has ten workdays to request a conference with the College President or designee, who shall schedule and hold a conference. Prior to or at the conference, the student shall submit the written statements required at Level Two and the date of the conference with the dean.

LEVEL FOUR

If the outcome of the conference with the College President or designee is not to the student's satisfaction, the student may submit to the College President a written request to place the matter on the agenda.

The College President or designee shall inform the student of the date, time, and place of the meeting. The Board President shall establish a reasonable time limit for complaint presentations. The Board shall listen to the student's complaint and take whatever action it deems appropriate.

The Board's consideration shall be based on the complaint records developed at the administrative reviews and no new evidence shall be received by the Board. Each side shall be entitled to make oral arguments based on the complaint record within the time restrictions established by the Board.

CLOSED MEETING

If the complaint involves complaints or charges about an employee, it shall be heard by the Board in closed meeting unless the employee complained about requests it to be public.

DEFINITIONS

Definitions of terms used in this section shall be as follows.

“STUDENT”

A “student” shall mean one who is currently enrolled in the College District. These policies and regulations shall also apply to any prospective or former student who has been accepted for admission or readmission to any component institution while he or she is on the premises of any component institution.