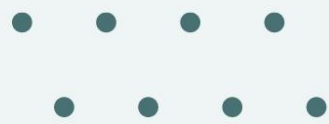


2024 - 2025

Academic Year



'24-'25

# STUDENT HANDBOOK

WELCOME TO RPCC



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## VISION, MISSION, AND CORE VALUES

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### Vision

*As a premier post-secondary learning resource for the River Parishes, River Parishes Community college will be the destination of choice for education.*

### Mission Statement

*River Parishes Community College is an open admission institution that partners with the communities and businesses of the river parishes region of Louisiana to provide workforce training, certificates, diplomas, and Associate Degrees.*

### Core Values

*River Parishes Community College values define the principles and standards that are most important to RPCC employees. RPCC CARES:*

**COLLABORATION:** *We bring together our students, faculty, staff, community leaders, and business & industry partners, and leverage those relationships to build and improve our educational offerings to ensure that our for-credit and workforce training offerings meet the needs of our communities, students, and industries*

**ACCOUNTABILITY:** *We hold ourselves accountable to our students, our business & industry partners, our community leaders, and, most importantly, ourselves, to continually improve and innovate at every level to ensure that our educational offerings are current and pertinent to the student's and/or client's goals.*

**RESPECT:** *We believe that each individual adds value to our college, and we are better positioned to serve our students and communities because of our team's experiences, educational backgrounds, skills, ideas, and perspectives.*

**EXCELLENCE:** *We focus on adding value to achieve intentional results through seeking continual improvement in processes, development of our faculty, staff, and leaders, and operating in a manner that is transparent and rewards integrity and innovation.*

**SUSTAINABILITY:** *We are committed stewards of the human, fiscal, intellectual, and physical resources entrusted to us as we pursue innovations which foster sustainability of our resources allowing for growth of the college and its subsidiaries.*



## RPCC STUDENT HANDBOOK 2024-2025

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**This handbook outlines the policies, procedures, and services which apply to all RPCC students.**

### Student Affairs

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The Office of Student Affairs offers a variety of programs and resources to assist students in achieving their educational and career goals. This Student Handbook will serve as a guide to help you navigate the policies and regulations at RPCC. It provides you with procedures for various processes and highlights resources that will be beneficial to you during your time with us. The Office of Student Affairs is here to meet the needs of our Rougarou Community. Please do not hesitate to contact the student affairs team on your campus if you have any questions about the policies and procedures outlined in this Handbook.

### Diversity Statement

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Each of us is responsible for creating a safer, more inclusive environment. We must treat every individual with respect. We are diverse in many ways, and this diversity is fundamental to building and maintaining an equitable and inclusive campus community. Diversity can refer to multiple ways that we identify ourselves, including but not limited to race, color, national origin, language, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, creed, ancestry, belief, veteran status, or genetic information. Each of these diverse identities, along with many others not mentioned here, shape our perspectives. We recognize that the diversity students, staff, and faculty bring to this campus must be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit to enriching our organizational culture. At RPCC, we expect everyone to work to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion not only because diversity fuels excellence and innovation, but because we want to pursue justice. Acknowledging our imperfections while also fully committing to work, inside and outside of our classrooms, to build and sustain a campus community that increasingly embraces these core values is everyone's responsibility.

### New Student Orientation

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New Student Orientation initiates the integration of newly admitted first year and transfer undergraduate students into the academic, cultural, and social climate of the college. Its purpose is to provide new undergraduate students with a campus wide introduction to college services that are available to support their educational and personal goals. It also allows students to understand the purpose of advising and course selection. This resource is offered in various formats, including face-to-face, live virtual, and an online Canvas course.

## TRIO Student Support Services

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The TRIO SSS Program is designed to increase academic performance, retention, and graduation rates among eligible college students. The Program is funded by the United States Department of Education, Office of Federal TRIO Programs. Students are selected based on guidelines set by the Department of Education relative to income, parents' educational background, and a student's need for academic support.

Some services provided by SSS include academic, personal, and career counseling and advising; tutoring, and financial aid and financial literacy counseling/advising. The program also provides transfer advising to four-year institutions. The program is funded to serve 140 students. For more information, please contact us at (225)743-8514, apply online through RPCC website or in person at the Gonzales campus, Room 244.

## RELEASE OF STUDENT INFORMATION

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River Parishes Community College is in compliance with the Family Rights and Privacy Act (a.k.a. FERPA) of 1974 (P.L. 93-380) as amended by the P.L. 95-568. Only persons who have a legal right in accordance with the law to access this information will be allowed to review such records. Such records are accessible to certain authorized college and administrative personnel who may require review and utilization of such records for educational purposes. The student may request in writing the opportunity to review the material or to have transcripts sent to other educational institutions in accordance with regulations governing students' records. Parents of students may NOT have access to personally identifiable student records without the un-coerced written consent of the student.

RPCC may release directory type information. FERPA defines "Directory Information" as information contained in the education records of a student that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. River Parishes Community College defines directory information as the following: student's name, date of birth, telephone number, RPCC e-mail address, and dates of attendance. Under the provisions of FERPA students have the right to withhold disclosure of such directory information. Students who wish their directory information not to be released must submit a "Request to Prevent Disclosure of Directory Information" form to the Registrar's Office. This form is available in the Office of Student Affairs. The authorization is valid until a written request from the student to rescind is received by the Registrar's Office.

To release information to a third party over the phone, an office must ask the third party to verify the following information:

- Student's full name
- Student's hometown and state
- Emergency contact information
- High school attended
- High school graduation year
- Campus attending
- Third party name & relationship to student

## STUDENT PRIVACY POLICY

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River Parishes Community College is in compliance with La. R.S. 44:13 (2002) § 13: Registration records and other records of use maintained by libraries, which protects library users' right to privacy. Only persons who have a legal right in accordance with the law to access this information are allowed to access such records and information. Such records are accessible to certain authorized college and administrative personnel who may require review and utilization of such records. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA, also referred to as the Buckley Amendment) is a federal law regarding the privacy of student records and the obligations of the institution related to the release of and access to such records. Any educational institution that receives funds under any program administered by the U.S. Secretary of Education is bound by FERPA requirements. Institutions that fail to comply with FERPA may have funds which are administered by the Secretary of Education withheld.

### Access To and Review of Student Records

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The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords students certain rights with respect to their educational records. They are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day RPCC receives a request for access. Students should submit to the Registrar a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The Registrar will make arrangements for access and notify the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the student believes are inaccurate or misleading. Students may ask RPCC to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. The student should write the RPCC official responsible for the record, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If RPCC decides not to amend the record as requested by the student, RPCC will notify the student of the decision by phone or email and advise the student of his or her right to an appeal.
3. 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. One exception which permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by RPCC in an administrative, supervisory, academic or research, or support staff position; a person or company with whom RPCC has contracted (such as an attorney, auditor, collection agent, or security or law enforcement personnel); a person serving on the Board of Supervisors; or a student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. RPCC may also disclose records to officials of licensure/

certification agencies. Upon request, RPCC discloses education records without consent to officials of another school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by River Parishes Community College to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office:

U.S Department of Education

400 Maryland Avenue, SW

Washington, DC 20202-5920

## NONDISCRIMINATION AND ADA POLICIES

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RPCC is a member of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS). RPCC is committed to providing equal opportunity and nondiscrimination for all educational and employment applicants, as well as for its students and employed staff, without regard to race, color, religious or political affiliation, gender, sexual orientation or gender identity, citizenship, national origin, age, disability/handicap, marital status or veteran's status, pregnancy, childbirth and related medical conditions, family medical history or genetic information, and the sickle cell trait, in accordance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Executive Order 11246, as amended; the Louisiana Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Sections 503 and 504); the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, as amended; the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Act of 1974; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended; the Civil Rights Act of 1991; the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination ACT of 2008; and any other applicable Federal and Louisiana State laws against discrimination. RPCC does not discriminate on the basis of gender in admission to or employment in its educational programs or activities. The College's Title IX Coordinator, Ms. Shalither Cushenberry, can be reached at [scushenberry@rpcc.edu](mailto:scushenberry@rpcc.edu) or (225) 743-8500. The mailing address is P.O. Box 2367, Gonzales LA 70707.

### Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

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The Office of Accessibility Services coordinates accommodations and services for students with such needs. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other related federal and state laws, the Office of Student Affairs ensures that eligible students receive appropriate classroom modifications and serves as a liaison between faculty and students. Additionally, RPCC strives to prevent discrimination against individuals with accessibility service needs and provide enforceable standards that address discrimination. The Coordinator of Accessibility Services & Student Engagement, Ms. Shalither S. Cushenberry, has been designated as RPCC's 504/ADA Compliance Officer. Any person needing assistance should contact the Coordinator at (225) 743-8500 or report to the Office of Student Services. RPCC is an Equal Opportunity/Equal Access Employer.

Applicants for admission and current students with accessibility services needs that affect academic

functioning may apply for accommodations by submitting current and comprehensive documentation of the need with a completed application to the Accessibility Services Coordinator. Documentation guidelines and the accessibility services application are available in the Handbook for Students with Disabilities, which is on [the College's website](#). Students who submit complete documentation that demonstrates the need for reasonable accommodations will then be directed to schedule a meeting with the Accessibility Services Coordinator to register for services. Students should apply early so that accommodations can be arranged in a timely manner. No accommodations are granted without documentation authorized from the Office of Accessibility Services. For more detailed information about Accessibility Services at RPCC, please review [RPCC's Disabilities Guide](#).

## Discrimination Complaints

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If the complaint appears to involve discrimination on the basis of sex, race, or handicap, the completed form should be routed to the Coordinator for Title IX or Section 504. Upon review of the complaint, the Coordinator will contact the student so that the student's complaint can be discussed. The written statement of complaint, all supporting documents, and discussions will be utilized to reach a determination. The outcome of the discussions and any resolutions or recommendations should be documented in accordance with federal policy.

## Service Animals

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River Parishes Community College is committed to complying with federal, state, and local laws regarding equal access and opportunities for persons with disabilities. This includes allowing service animals on the College's campuses and property, in accordance with these regulations and laws. For more information, please go to [RPCC's webpage on Service and Emotional Support Animals](#).

## Coordinator for Section 504 and ADA

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**Name/Title:** Shalither Cushenberry, Coordinator of Accessibility Services & Student Engagement

**Office Location:** 925 W. Edenborne Parkway, Gonzales, LA 70737, Office of Student Services, Office 101

**Phone/Email:** (225) 743-8526; disabilityservices@rpcc.edu

## TITLE IX COORDINATOR

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**Name/Title:** Shalither Cushenberry, Coordinator of Accessibility Services & Student Engagement

**Office Location:** 925 W. Edenborne Parkway Gonzales, LA 70737, Office of Student Services, Office 104

**Phone/Email:** (225) 743-8526; [scushenberry@rpcc.edu](mailto:scushenberry@rpcc.edu)

## Hazing

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The Board of Supervisors of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) and River Parishes Community College (RPCC) are committed to providing a supportive educational environment free from hazing; one that promotes its students' mental and physical well-being, safety, and respect for oneself and others. In an effort to maintain safety and in accordance with Louisiana Revised Statute 17:1801.1, 14:40.8, 14.502, mandatory Acts 635, 637 and 640, as well as the Board of Regents' Uniform Policy on Hazing Prevention and LCTCS Policy #2.003, hazing in any form is prohibited at RPCC for all students who participate in the institutions' activities and organizations. Please go to the [Anti-Hazing Policy](#) webpage for more information about our policy and reporting procedures.

## Sexual Misconduct

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River Parishes Community College (referred to as RPCC hereafter) is committed to providing a learning and working environment free of sexual discrimination and sexual misconduct. RPCC prohibits sexual discrimination and sexual misconduct, as provided in Title IX and other applicable laws, for all individuals who participate in institutional activities and programs, including online instruction.

Sexual discrimination and sexual misconduct violate an individual's fundamental rights and personal dignity and RPCC considers sexual discrimination and sexual misconduct in any form to be a serious offense. This policy has been developed to reaffirm these principles and to provide recourse for individuals whose rights have been violated. This policy establishes the mechanism for determining when rights have been violated in employment, student life, campus support services, and/or an academic environment. Please go to the [Sexual Misconduct Reporting](#) webpage for more information about our policy and reporting procedures.

## Confidential Advisors

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Confidential Advisors are designated individuals who have been trained to aid a student involved in a sexual misconduct complaint in the resolution process as a confidential resource. As suggested by the term "confidential advisor," confidential communications with the advisor will be kept confidential in all circumstances except where the institution or advisor may be required to disclose the communications under state and federal laws.

The confidential advisor is not obligated to report crimes to the institution or law enforcement in a way that identifies an alleged victim or an accused individual unless otherwise required to do so by law. The

following persons are designated, Confidential Advisors: **\*Please note that confidential advisors are not academic advisors.**

[Confidential Advisors | Title IX \(rpcc.edu\)](#)

## STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

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Students, as members of the River Parishes Community College (RPCC) community, are expected to always conduct themselves in a manner that reflects respect for themselves, the rights of others, and an appreciation of a diverse population.

Behavior that interferes with the learning process, is discriminatory, or is derogatory in nature will not be tolerated. Students should understand and exercise their rights, meet their responsibilities, and allow other students to enjoy the same privileges. The College maintains an academic environment for all without denying opportunities to any and being unfamiliar with RPCC policies and procedures does not excuse a student from acting irresponsibly. In an educational environment, each instructor has the responsibility to maintain a classroom climate conducive to student learning. The instructor also has the authority to temporarily dismiss from class a student who disrupts that climate or interferes with the rights of other members to learn. The instructor does have an obligation to make students aware of rules for the class and to inform students if they are violating any class rules. A disruptive student may be required to attend a session mediated by the Campus Director, Dean of Students, other designee, or be cleared by a medical professional before returning to the class. Extended or permanent exclusion from the classroom can be achieved only through appropriate procedures of the College.

The Chancellor or his designated representative may suspend or expel a student for violation of school rules or for conduct that is disruptive of the educational process. The disciplinary action shall be taken in accordance with the procedure provided for in this section.

### Off-Campus Conduct

When a student is alleged to have violated River Parishes Community College's Code of Student Conduct by an offense committed off the college premises, the College reserves the right to investigate and adjudicate. All students enrolled in RPCC should clearly understand that the college is expressly concerned with student conduct both on and off campus. RPCC expects the behavior of its students, at all times and in all settings, to be guided by the same standards that define acceptable forms of student conduct. To this end, any student enrolled at RPCC who is found in violation of the Code of Student Conduct or state or federal laws, even in an off-campus setting, is subject to administrative disciplinary procedures that could result in one or a combination of several disciplinary sanctions as listed in this section. Based on the reasonable belief that a student has been involved in conduct off campus incompatible with the college's function as an educational institution or with the mission of River Parishes Community College, the Associate Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs, in his/her discretion, may invoke the disciplinary process.

### Standards of Student Conduct

By accepting admission to River Parishes Community College, the student accepts the responsibility to conform to all regulations that the College has established. Any student who fails to meet this responsibility,

whether on or off campus, shall be subject to disciplinary sanction, including, but not limited to, expulsion, suspension, probation, warning, or the imposition of reasonable fines.

Students are responsible for knowing and obeying the college rules, as well as local, state and federal laws. Consistent with U.S. Department of Education Title IX standards, and the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 and the Campus SaVE Act, River Parishes Community College uses a wide array of evidence standards to determine whether a code violation is more likely than not to have occurred.

The Office of Student Affairs will make reasonable efforts to make regulations available, but students are responsible for becoming familiar with such regulations and are held accountable for misconduct even in the absence of such familiarity.

**Specific examples of misconduct/unacceptable behavior in which students may be subject to disciplinary action include, but are not limited to, the following:**

1. Committing a criminal act under federal, state, or municipal law, or supporting or assisting with the violation of any of those laws on or off campus
2. Violating any college policy, procedure, rule or regulation.
3. Failure to identify oneself to a college official or provide appropriate ID upon request or falsifying one's identity to an officer of the law or college official.
4. Failing to obey, or lying to, a college official or officer of the law who is performing his/her duties.
5. Engaging in plagiarism/academic dishonesty as defined in the RPCC Catalog/Student Handbook.
6. Participating in repetitious offenses and/or failing to fulfill all probationary requirements.
7. Misusing any fire equipment or other life-safety equipment on or off college property.
8. Use or possession of ammunition, firearms or other weapons, including, but not limited to, guns, BB guns, bows, arrows, knives, brass knuckles, or other device used as a weapon or ammunition on college property.
9. Behaving in a manner that significantly endangers the health or safety of other people, including members of the college community and visitors on or off campus. This includes but is not limited to hazing or voluntarily submitting to hazing, or any participation or support thereof.
10. Stealing, destroying, defacing, damaging or misusing college property or property belonging to others and/or participating as an accessory in such activity.
11. Infliction, threat or inciting bodily harm while on or off college property: a. infliction of bodily harm upon any person; b. any act that contributes to the risk of bodily harm to a person, and which includes but is not limited to physical or sexual assaults or threats thereof.
12. Using, possessing, or distributing intoxicating beverages or substances, in any college building or facility, or other public area or supporting or assisting with such possession, including paraphernalia thereof (e.g., empty alcohol containers, empty pill or DXM/liquid containers).
13. Use of any tobacco products or other related devices (e.g., cigarettes, pipes, cigars, electronic cigarettes, vapor devices) is prohibited in college buildings and on college grounds, including parking areas and structures, sidewalks, walkways, or college owned buildings.
14. Gambling in any form including but not limited to on looking or conspiracy on college property.
15. Illegal possession, use, sale, manufacture or distribution of any quantity, whether usable or not, of any drug, narcotic or controlled substance. Drug paraphernalia of any type, including bongs, clips, pipes, residue, seeds, a smoke-filled room or any other items used in the preparation or consumption of

illegal drugs is prohibited. Knowingly remaining within the presence of narcotics, controlled substances, or drug paraphernalia is strictly prohibited; supporting or assisting with such possession is also prohibited.

16. Bribery, forgery, alteration, misuse of college documents, records or identification cards as well as misuse and/or abuse of services such as financial assistance, arranged accommodations/modifications and academic assistance provided by the college.
17. Possession of or setting off any explosive devices, fireworks or flammable liquid or object on college property.
18. Failing to respond to an official summons from an administrative officer of the college within the time indicated.
19. Harassing, bullying, intimidation, or stalking made either in person, or by telephone, writing or computer.
20. Hate crime – Intentionally selects a person against whom the offense is committed or intended to be committed in whole or in substantial part because of a belief or perception regarding the race, color, national origin, ancestry, gender, religion, religious practice, age, disability or sexual orientation of a person, regardless of whether the belief or perception is correct, or intentionally commits the act or acts constituting the offense in whole or in substantial part because of a belief or perception regarding the race, color, national origin, ancestry, gender, religion, religious practice, age, disability or sexual orientation of a person, regardless of whether the belief or perception is correct.
21. Any act that contributes to the sexual harassment, discrimination, or assault of another person on or off campus. This includes intimate partner or domestic/dating violence or harassment.
22. Involvement in any act or statement that provides a terroristic threat made in person, on paper, by phone or through other electronic means that contributes to or suggests endangerment toward a person(s) and/or to the physical property of others, including but not limited to that of River Parishes Community College.
23. Obstructing or disrupting any college activity, including teaching, research, social activities and public service functions.
24. Engaging in any obscene, profane, slanderous, reckless, destructive or unlawful course of conduct.
25. Creating a nuisance with noise through talking, yelling, singing, playing a musical instrument, stereo, radio or through other means in a way that is sufficiently loud enough to disturb other members of the college community.
26. Theft, copyright infringement or other abuse of computer time. This includes but is not limited to:
  1. unauthorized entry into a file, to use, read or change the contents, or for any other purpose
  2. unauthorized transfer of a file, or use of another individual's identification and password
  3. use of computing facilities or equipment to send, receive or transport obscene, abusive or pornographic messages or images.
27. Creating a disturbance or distraction through appearance, physical gestures or by wearing or possessing inappropriate clothing, jewelry, bandannas, body decorations or other items in possession deemed extreme or gang-related, and inappropriate for the educational environment.
28. Obstructing an investigation (e.g., falsifying a report of an incident).
29. Participating in illegal or unsanctioned solicitation on or off the premises of River Parishes Community College.

30. Loitering or participating in any unapproved, unsanctioned physical presence within a facility or property boundaries of which are owned, maintained, operated, or utilized by River Parishes Community College.

## **Student Rights and Responsibilities**

### ***Rights***

1. The right to expect a quality education.
2. The right to develop their potential to the best of their ability.
3. The right to inquire about and to recommend improvements in policies, regulations, and procedures affecting the welfare of students. This right is best exercised using appropriate channels provided by the SGA and campus officials.
4. The right to a fair hearing and appeal when a disciplinary action is applied to them as an individual or as a group member.

### ***Responsibilities***

1. The responsibility to be fully acquainted with regulations published in the College Catalog/Student Handbook, and other publications and to comply with them in the interests of an orderly and productive academic community.
2. The responsibility to know that student conduct reflects not only upon the student involved, but also upon the institution and the faculty, staff, and other students.
3. The responsibility to follow the principles of common decency and behavior expected of any responsible, mature individual.
4. The responsibility to accept fully the consequences of any action which might be detrimental to the student involved, to the institution, faculty, staff, and other students, and to society in general.

## **Violation of the Student Code of Conduct**

A sincere attempt shall be made to resolve all student complaints. RPCC encourages all members of the college community to resolve disputes through discussion among those individuals concerned with the issue whenever possible and appropriate. In the case where this process fails, any faculty member, staff member, or student may file a complaint against another student. A complaint form can be obtained from and must be submitted to Student Affairs.

A student charged with a violation of the Code of Conduct will retain all college rights until due process is completed, unless there is evidence that the student:

- has been convicted of a felony;
- has been formally charged with the commission of a felony of such nature that the student's presence on campus is potentially dangerous to the health and safety of the college;
- has engaged in any activity of such nature that their presence on campus is potentially dangerous to the health and safety of the college, whether or not civil charges have been made, or penalties imposed.

**In the above situations, the student may be temporarily barred from the campus until due process is completed.**

The Dean of Students, or his/her designee, will review the complaint, investigate, and gather evidence. If a

violation is determined, any of the following sanctions may be applied:

- **Reprimand** - Official warning in writing that continuation or repetition of violation or inappropriate behavior may result in a more severe sanction.
- **Loss of Privilege** - This sanction prohibits the student from using certain college facilities (i.e., Library and/or Labs).
- **Restitution** - Requirement to reimburse or otherwise compensate another for damage or loss of property
  - resulting from a student's misconduct.
- **Probation** - Formal written warning that the student's conduct is in violation of RPCC policies and the student's standing as a student is in jeopardy.
- **Suspension** - Termination of student status at RPCC for not less than the remainder of the semester.
- **Dismissal** - Termination of student status at RPCC permanently or for an indefinite period of time.

**The above sanctions do not preclude other disciplinary actions that may be deemed warranted by the college.**

If the student disagrees with the final decision, and/or sanctions imposed by the Dean of Students, the student has the right to appeal to the Associate Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs. The appeal must be submitted to the Associate Vice Chancellor's Office within 3 business days of being informed of the decision.

## STUDENT DRESS AND APPEARANCE CODE

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The primary purpose of River Parishes Community College is to provide students with an education. College officials consider this activity second to none in its importance and believe it should be so regarded by the students. Thus, a mature attitude should be demonstrated by the dress and appearance of the students while attending classes or engaging in other programs or functions on the campus. The student is expected to maintain the same standards of dress and personal grooming on campus that would ordinarily be maintained by those engaged in other serious activities and employment. Obvious violations of these standards may be subject to disciplinary action.

## CAMPUS SECURITY

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The ultimate responsibility for personal safety rests with each student. Each student should be aware of potential risks to safety. The student is encouraged to:

- Walk with friends in lighted areas.
- Know building evacuation procedures in case of emergency.
- Know how to contact local authorities.
- Take reasonable actions to protect self and property.

In accordance with the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security and Campus Crime Statistics Act, as well as the Higher Education Opportunity Act (2010), RPCC annually publishes a Security and Fire Safety Report. This report can be viewed here: [2020-Annual-Campus-Safety-Report-Accessible.pdf \(rpcc.edu\)](https://rpcc.edu/2020-Annual-Campus-Safety-Report-Accessible.pdf)

## **FIREARMS AND WEAPONS POLICY**

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River Parishes Community College is a weapons and firearm-free zone. Except for law enforcement officers, as defined in Louisiana law R.S. 14:2 no student or non-student, while on campus property, or attending college-sponsored functions, shall store or carry a weapon. A weapon is defined as a manufactured device designed to injure or kill another being, or a device designed to look like a weapon. Examples of weapons include, but are not limited to, firearms, explosives (including fireworks), air guns, pellet guns, BB guns, crossbows, long bows, swords, martial arts weapons, prohibited blades, hunting or fishing knives, brass knuckles, replica or imitation firearms, or any instrument that can be used to inflict or threaten bodily injury. Violators shall be subject to criminal charges and campus discipline.

Carrying a firearm or dangerous weapon is unlawful and shall be defined as possession of any firearm or dangerous weapon on one's person at any time while on a college campus, in college transportation, or at any college-sponsored function in a specific designated area including but not limited to athletic competitions, dances, parties, or any extracurricular activities, or within 1,000 feet of any college campus. A zero-tolerance policy applies.

1. Whoever commits the crime of carrying a firearm, whether by a student or non-student, on school property or in a firearm-free zone shall be imprisoned at hard labor for not more than five years.
2. Lack of knowledge that the prohibited act occurred on or within 1,000 feet of school shall not be a defense.
3. School officials shall notify all students and parents of the impact of this legislation and shall post notices of the impact of this section at each major point of entry to the school. These notices shall be maintained as permanent notices.
4. If a student is detained by the Campus Administration or other school official for violation of this section or the Campus Administration or other school official confiscates or seizes a firearm or concealed weapon from a student while upon school property, school function, or on a school bus, the Campus Administration or other school official in charge at the time of the detention or seizure shall immediately report the detention or seizure to the police department or sheriff's department where the school is located and shall deliver any firearm or weapon seized to that agency.
5. It is unlawful for any person to cover, remove, deface, alter, or destroy any sign or other marking identifying a firearm-free zone as provided in this section.

## **STUDENT GRIEVANCE POLICY & PROCEDURE**

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The purpose of this grievance process is to provide an orderly and efficient method by which students may air and resolve their non-academic complaints about the conditions and policies at RPCC. The College defines a legitimate grievance as a circumstance that can be substantiated through documentation or witnesses and is regarded by the student as a just cause for complaint. A grievance can be relevant to any incident involving another student, classroom instructor, faculty advisor, internship supervisor, administrator, or faculty member in the College. A grievance may deal with circumstances involving alleged unfair or irresponsible behavior including violations of department or college policies. However, students enrolled in specialized programs may also be subject to other external standards. Lastly, all issues regarding final grades should be addressed through our Grade Appeal process.

## THE GRIEVANCE PROCESS

**Step 1: Informal Processes** – Within Five (5) Working Days of Occurrence - The College encourages students to make every effort to resolve their problems and concerns directly and informally with the faculty or other parties involved. Discussions among the parties involved (including the Division Dean when appropriate) constitute the first step in the informal process. In some cases, the students may wish to discuss the problem initially with the Director of Student Services. *(Note: The General Grievance Form is accessible on the [Student Forms webpage](#))*

**Step 2: Formal Procedures** – Appeal to Grievance Committee - If, after utilizing the procedures outlined in Step 1, the students' problems are not resolved, they have a right to appeal in writing within 10 working days following the decision rendered by the Division Dean. The Grievance Committee will consist of five members, two students, one staff member, one faculty, and the Dean of Students as chair. The chair of the Grievance Committee will conduct the hearing according to the Guidelines for the Conduct of Student Grievance Hearings. After hearing the student testimony, the Committee will meet in closed session to determine its recommendations. The recommendations of the Grievance Committee will be forwarded to the Associate Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs. The committee chair or designee will inform the student of the decision by email on file.

### GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING FORMAL STUDENT GRIEVANCE HEARINGS AT THE COLLEGE LEVEL:

- A digital copy of the Student Grievance Form filed by the student will be forwarded to the department(s) and parties involved.
- Within five (5) days of receipt of the student's grievance form, the department(s)/relevant parties will submit any prior responses to the student's complaint, a list of any witnesses it anticipates involving in the hearing, and copies of any documents to be used at the hearing. Similarly, within ten (10) class days of filing the grievance form, the student will submit a list of any witnesses and copies of any documents the student anticipates involving in the hearing to the Dean of Students. Each party will receive a copy of the materials and list of witnesses submitted by the other party.
- The department(s)/relevant parties and the student will be notified of the Grievance Committee membership by the Dean of Students within five (5) working days of receipt of the student's grievance form. Either party has five (5) class days to request that panel member(s) be disqualified for bias. The Dean of Students will consider such requests and make a final decision regarding membership of the panel.
- The Dean of Students will forward all materials to the hearing panel and will schedule an evidentiary hearing within ten (10) working days of receipt of all written information. All parties involved will be notified as to date, time, and location of the hearing by email.
- The Grievance Committee Chair will serve as hearing officer and conduct the hearing utilizing the following format:
  1. The petitioner and the respondent will each provide a brief opening statement.
  2. Each party will make a presentation of position and evidence, beginning with the petitioner. Witnesses may be called at this time. Questioning will be restricted to members of the hearing panel and the hearing officer. Questions by the involved parties to the witnesses will be addressed through the

hearing officer.

3. Each party will have the opportunity for rebuttal during which additional evidence may be introduced to refute points made by the other party.

4. Each party will make a brief summary statement.

- Attendance at evidentiary hearings is limited to the hearing officer, panel members, the petitioner, the respondent, and their respective witnesses. Witnesses may be present only during their own testimony.
- After the hearing the panel will meet in closed session to determine its recommendations that will be forwarded to the Associate Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs. The written recommendations will include a finding of facts regarding the incident. The Dean of Students will inform all parties of a decision within five (5) class days after the hearing.

**Step 3: Student Appeal to the Associate Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs** – If the grievant or the party or parties against whom the grievance is addressed desire to appeal a decision of a Student Grievance Committee, he or she must deliver a written request for such appeal to the Associate Vice Chancellor within three (3) working days of receipt of the Committee's decision. A request should describe in detail all reasons or bases upon which the grievant or the party contends the decision of the Student Grievance Committee. The Associate Vice Chancellor shall have the authority to affirm, remand, modify, or reverse the decision or the findings of the Committee. Within approximately ten (10) working days of receiving the written request, the Associate Vice Chancellor shall review submitted information and send the grievant and the party/parties against whom the grievance has been filed his/her decision by email.

**Step 4: Student Appeal to the Chancellor** – If the grievant or the party or parties against whom the grievance is addressed desire to appeal a decision of the Associate Vice Chancellor, he or she must deliver a written request for such appeal to the Chancellor within three (3) working days of receipt of the Associate Vice Chancellor decision. A request should describe in detail all reasons or bases upon which the grievant or the party contends the decision of the Associate Vice Chancellor. The Chancellor shall have the authority to affirm, remand, modify, or reverse the decision or the findings of the Committee. Within approximately ten (14) working days of receiving the written request, the Chancellor shall send the grievant and the party or parties against whom the grievance has been filed his/her decision by certified mail, return receipt requested. The decision of the Chancellor is final as to all student appeals, except those in which the grievant is alleging discrimination on the basis of age, sex, race, national origin, religion, or disability. In the event the grievant is alleging discrimination on the basis of age, sex, race, national origin, religion, or disability, the full Board of Supervisors will serve as the College's final appellate authority.

**Step 5: Student – Appeal to the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) Board of Supervisors**- To initiate this final step of the grievance process, a grievant or the party or parties against whom the grievance has been filed who is not satisfied with the determination made by the Chancellor may appeal the ruling to the full Board of Supervisors. To be considered, the appeal must be made in writing within fifteen (15) working days after the date the Chancellor's determination is mailed to the grievant or the party or parties against whom the grievance has been filed and be addressed to:

Executive Assistant to the President Board of Supervisors  
265 South Foster Drive,

The Board of Supervisors shall render a written disposition of the grievance appeal within twenty (20) school days from the date of the appeal hearing unless all parties agree to an extension.

## **REGULATIONS GOVERNING STUDENT BEHAVIOR**

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### **Campus and Classroom Behavior**

1. Students are expected to demonstrate respect for the rights and property of other individuals on campus and in the classroom.
2. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated.
3. Drinking and eating in the classroom is not allowed.
4. Copyright infringement, including illegal file sharing and/or plagiarism will not be tolerated.

### **Littering**

To maintain the campus buildings and grounds, littering is prohibited. Trash receptacles are available for the disposal of refuse.

### **Smoking and Tobacco Use**

River Parishes Community College is a tobacco and vape-free institution. The use of any tobacco products, including electronic cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products, is always prohibited anywhere on campus. There are no designated smoking areas on campus in compliance with State Law. Violation of this policy may result in fines and/or disciplinary action.

### **Property Abuse**

All students are expected to observe all rules that govern the use of RPCC property. Confirmed abuse of property shall result in civil and/or disciplinary action.

### **Facilities Use**

All students are expected to observe the rules related to the use of campus classrooms and facilities. Use of classrooms for student activities must be approved by the Associate Vice Chancellor of Student Services. Under no circumstances may a student enter a locked office or classroom without proper authorization. Violation of this policy shall result in disciplinary and/or civil action. Food and drinks are prohibited in the RPCC library and labs.

### **Parking**

Parking for all students is restricted to the areas identified on the campus grounds. Each student must obtain an RPCC parking sticker from the Office of Student Services and display it on the rear glass of your vehicle. Students violating parking regulations will be subject to fines.

## DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY

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This policy will apply to all RPCC students.

1. All students are strictly prohibited from the unlawful possession, manufacture, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol on RPCC property or as part of any RPCC activity, whether on or off the campus. This policy will extend to any other sites which RPCC might operate.
2. The following conduct is prohibited:
  - a. The use, consumption, possession, manufacture, furnishing, sale, and/or distribution of illicit drugs, narcotics, or other controlled substances, including marijuana, except as expressly permitted by law.
  - b. The use, possession, manufacture, purchase, sale, furnishing, and/or distribution of drug paraphernalia.
  - c. The use, consumption, possession, manufacture, purchase, sale, furnishing, and/or distribution of alcoholic beverages on RPCC property, or at any of its activities (whether on or off-campus), except as expressly permitted by RPCC regulations and the law.
  - d. The use, consumption, possession, and/or purchase of alcoholic beverages by persons under twenty- one (21) years of age.
  - e. Operating or attempting to operate a motor vehicle while intoxicated.
  - f. Public intoxication on RPCC property.
  - g. Furnishing, serving, and/or otherwise providing alcoholic beverages to persons under twenty- one (21) years of age.

## Legal Sanctions

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In Louisiana, the production, manufacture, distribution, dispensing, or possession of illegal drugs is punishable by law. The most common illegal drugs on college campuses are marijuana, opium derivatives, hallucinogens, depressants, cocaine derivatives, and amphetamines. The criminal code of Louisiana carries specific penalties for the possession and use of illegal drugs. Students who violate the provisions of this policy will be subject to sanctions which could include criminal prosecution, suspension, termination, and or expulsion.

## CONVICTION OF A FELONY

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Students convicted of committing a felony while enrolled at RPCC are subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

## FALSIFICATION OF RECORDS/INFORMATION

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Each student is expected to complete all college records with accuracy and honesty. Falsification of records will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

## SALES AND SOLICITATION

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Solicitation of students, faculty, or staff for the purpose of selling merchandise or services or obtaining contributions on campus is allowed only with expressed permission from RPCC administration. On campus: Recognized college organizations must obtain clearance for on campus sales from the Associate Vice Chancellor of Student Services when scheduling their events. In general, no off-campus merchants or organizations may set up displays or sell merchandise on campus. However, the Chancellor or Vice Chancellors may make exceptions.

## IDENTIFICATION CARDS

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River Parishes Community College students will be issued a College identification card. New students will be given information about obtaining their identification card from the Office of Student Services during pre-registration or orientation activities. The card will permit students to use college facilities. Cards are mandatory; must be provided when requested by RPCC staff and faculty and should be prominently worn while on all RPCC campuses, doing so helps better ensure your safety and the safety of others. Identification cards are non-transferable and students who misuse these cards are subject to disciplinary action. A fee may be assessed for replacement of lost/stolen cards.

## CHILDREN OF STUDENTS

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For safety, children brought to RPCC must have adult supervision at all times. Children are not allowed in the classroom. RPCC personnel are not responsible for the supervision of children.

## LOLA ACCESS

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LoLA: Log on Louisiana, is a powerful and online tool that will allow you to completely manage your college activities. LoLA will be your 24/7, one stop resource allowing you to do the following:

- Monitor your financial aid application
- Pay student fees/balances
- Register for classes
- Review your class schedule
- Check on important upcoming dates
- Catch up on campus news and announcements
- Check grades and GPA

### Logging into LoLA?

Already know your Login Information? If you already have your user ID and password, you can log into LoLA now! Need your User ID and Password?

[LOLA Login Page](#) -or- <https://my.lctcs.edu/>

User Name: first name (+) last name (all in lowercase; no spaces)

Example: “janedoe” (may be different if multiple students have the same name).

Initial Password: first initial (+) last initial (+) date of birth MMDDYY (+) P@ss

Example: Jane Doe, DOB 12-01-92 = jd120192P@ss

## CANVAS ACCESS

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All classes and grades are posted in the [CANVAS Learning Management Platform](#). Use your LoLA Username and Password to log into Canvas. All password changes must be made in LOLA.

Your preferred email address in Canvas is linked to your preferred email address in LoLA. You can update it by following these steps. It may take 15 to 30 minutes to sync the change from LoLA to Canvas.

- Log in to LoLA.
- Click on the hyperlink for “River Parishes Community College”.
- Click on “Personal Information”.
- Click on “Update E-mail Addresses”

## EMERGENCY CLOSURE PLAN

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**The Emergency Closure Plan for River Parishes Community College outlines the procedures to be followed in the event of class cancellation and campus closure.**

1. In the event of a situation that threatens the well-being of students, faculty, staff, administration, or the community at large, all decisions shall be made with a priority for human safety. The Chancellor of the College or the appropriate administrative officer will determine whether the situation requires that classes be canceled or that students, faculty and staff be dismissed. If external conditions are such that dismissal would threaten human safety, appropriate arrangements for human shelter will be implemented.
2. RPCC has initiated an emergency notification system with [Smart Notice](#) to ensure that the campus community receives alerts within minutes of an accident or urgent announcement. In the event of an emergency, [Smart Notice](#) will notify students and staff in the following ways, giving specific instructions on the current event: cell or home phone, text message, and/or email. Students should register upon admission to the College.
3. Every effort will be made to broadcast decisions pertaining to college closure via television, radio announcements, and the RPCC website. The Chancellor will delegate responsibility to notify the radio and television broadcast systems of the status of college operations. *Students, faculty, and staff are not expected to endanger their safety in order to attend class or work.*

## Text Messaging

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As a courtesy, all students with cell phone numbers on file are automatically added to our text messaging platform. This resource is used to notify you of important campus updates, RPCC events, and announce giveaways, games, or other student activities. You may also receive important information from other RPCC departments.

## STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

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### Student Government Association (SGA)

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The Student Government Association represents the students' voices while supporting the academic mission of the College. The goal of this organization is to build school pride, increase awareness and student body involvement by advocating for student rights and providing programs that enrich their college experience. Membership in SGA is automatic for all currently enrolled students at RPCC. To ensure the needs of the student body are successfully met, students are strongly encouraged and expected to attend meetings, offer relevant feedback, and participate in the activities of the SGA.

### Intervarsity

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The purpose of the club is to introduce students to Christianity and to increase student activity on campus. Through this organization, the members hope to build fellowship with Christians who attend RPCC. Membership is available to all currently enrolled students at RPCC. The goal is to bring students together on campus and create an environment where students feel free to talk and intermingle with those of like faith.

### LGBTQIA+

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The purpose of this club is to provide a supportive environment for LGBTQIA+ students, faculty, and staff, as well as for those questioning these aspects of their identity, have LGBTQIA+ family or friends, or are straight allies who care about LGBTQIA+ issues.

### Marine and Environmental Biology Club

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The general purpose of this organization is to inspire Louisiana students by providing them access to a supportive environment that encourages their intellectual development in the marine sciences, explore STEM careers related to marine science, network and collaborate with other students and professionals in the field, and involve students in environmental concerns and solutions here in Louisiana.

### PHI THETA KAPPA Honor Society (PTK)

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Phi Theta Kappa is an international, co-educational honorary society for students attending two-year colleges. Benefits of membership in PTK include scholarship opportunities, recognition for academic achievement,

leadership opportunities, and academic and career resources. Membership in PTK is by invitation only. Qualifications for membership are as follows: 3.5 RPCC grade point average; and 12 or more college-level (1000-level and above) credit hours earned at RPCC. To remain a member, students must maintain a 3.0 RPCC cumulative grade point average.

## SIGMA KAPPA DELTA

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Sigma Kappa Delta is the English honor society for community colleges. The purpose of the society is to confer distinction upon those students who have an interest in English literature and language. Membership in RPCC's Kappa Epsilon Chapter is based on an applicant having a "B" average in English and a satisfactory recommendation from a faculty member. Students are invited to apply for membership in the spring.

## SkillsUSA

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SkillsUSA is a partnership of students, teachers, and industry working together to ensure a skilled and highly trained workforce. The focus is on students, both developing their job-ready skills, while at the same time, helping them excel in life.

## Establishing New Student Organizations

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River Parishes Community College (RPCC) encourages students to form groups and organizations for the benefit of the student body, the College, and the community and to foster awareness and belonging. There are no limitations on the size of a group or organization; however:

- There must be at least ten (5) prospective members to form a club/organization.
- There must be a full-time Faculty or Staff Advisor.
- All registered groups and organizations must abide by the rules and regulations outlined in the policy for establishing new student organizations.

All groups and organizations' purposes must align with the College's mission and goals and Louisiana Community and Technical College System Policy#2.005. Student organizations, activities of student organizations which are incompatible with this purpose are prohibited. According to Louisiana Community and Technical College System Policy #2.005, Student Organizations are classified as follows: Honor, Leadership and Recognition Societies; Political Organizations; Governmental Organizations; Divisional Organizations; and Specialty Organizations.

\*Please note all recognized and affiliated student organizations are unable to use the RPCC name in the title of the organization (example: RPCC Chess Club); rather, organizations wishing to acknowledge recognition from the university may do so by referencing where the organization is chartered (example: Chess Club at RPCC)

Any students who wish to organize a group or organization may do so provided they follow the necessary steps. Students are encouraged to meet with the Associate Vice Chancellor of Student Services prior to submitting any registration paperwork to discuss their ideas and plans regarding the potential group or

organization. Groups and organizations are strictly prohibited from discriminating or refusing membership on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, political beliefs or marital status. Visit the Office of Student Services for more information.

