

Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities

Northwest Florida State College serves all persons legally out of grades K-12 without regard to age, disability, marital status, national origin, race, religion, or sex. However, NWFSC reserves the right to deny admission to any program. By applying for admission to NWF State College, the student agrees upon enrollment to abide by college policies and regulations published in its policy statements, current catalog, official manuals, and publications. Students are expected to be committed to the common good of the college and to comply with local, state and federal law.

Each member of the college is expected to participate seriously and purposefully in college life. While the freedom to express ideas and beliefs will be respected, conduct and behavior that result in the defacement of property, intimidation of others, or the disruption of any college activity will not be tolerated or permitted and will be subject to penalty. Instructors explain classroom requirements, and students are expected to assume full responsibility for their actions.

Classroom Activity, Behavior, and Attendance

The college recognizes that a thoughtful and reasoned search for truth can be conducted only in an atmosphere free of intimidation and coercion. Students are expected to respect the rights and welfare of all members of the college and to exercise common sense, good taste, and applied reason when testing their knowledge.

Students are free to take reasonable exception to data and views offered in the classroom and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for satisfying the requirements of any course for which they are enrolled. So long as it is consistent with the goals and established policies of the college, the instructor has final authority in all matters relating to course content, grading practices, and classroom procedures.

Grades

Because the awarding of course grades is the responsibility of the instructor, it is essential that faculty members keep students informed of their progress in each course by providing students regular and timely feedback. A student has a right to a course grade that represents the instructor's professional judgment of the student's performance in the course, without personal prejudice. An instructor has a right to expect that the work presented for evaluation or submitted as classroom projects is that of the student acting alone without benefit of any aids or practices that are generally considered academically dishonest.

Grade Changes/Errors

If a student believes there is an inadvertent error in the recording or the computation of his/her final course grade, the student should contact the instructor or the appropriate department office immediately. If an error has occurred, an adjustment to the student's permanent record (transcript) will be made within approximately ten (10) working days. The student is responsible for reporting such concerns within thirty (30) days of the close of the term in which the grade was awarded.

If a student has documentation of extraordinary or emergency circumstances which warrant recording a course withdrawal ("W") after the usual deadline, he/she must submit a written request for such change to the Office of Instructional Services. If an adjustment is warranted, the change will be made within approximately ten (10) days. The student is responsible for requesting such changes within thirty (30) days of the term in which the original grade was awarded.

Grade Grievances

If a student believes that he/she has not been graded fairly in a course, an appeal may be filed. The grade grievance process applies only to final course grades. Any appeal must be initiated within thirty (30) days of the date the grade was issued by the Office of Enrollment Services. The student should first make an informal appeal to the instructor. If a complaint is not resolved to the student's satisfaction, an appeal without prejudice to the student's position may be made to the department or division chairperson. The next level of appeal is to

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the Senior Vice President who may, if it is deemed advisable, refer the matter to an ad hoc hearing committee to assist in evaluating the appeal. Any further appeal may be made to the President, whose decision shall be final. In the event a hearing is needed, the membership of the hearing panel shall be: two full-time college faculty members appointed by the Senior Vice President, one full-time student services employee appointed by the Senior Vice President, and two students appointed by the Dean of Students in consultation with the SGA President. The faculty members shall be selected from a different department than that of the faculty member who awarded the grade in question. The student members shall not be enrolled in the same program of study or courses as the student filing the grievance. The Dean of Students or his/her designee will serve as the recording secretary and facilitator for the hearing, but shall have no vote. Hearing procedures and time limits parallel those of the Student Services Disciplinary Hearing and Grievance Process.

A student has a right to protection against the improper disclosure of information concerning grades, beliefs, or character which an instructor acquires in the course of the professional association with the student. An instructor has a right to deal with what is perceived to be academic dishonesty and such behavior may result in disciplinary action.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all of their scheduled classes, as class attendance is one of the strongest predictors of student success. The effect of absences upon grades is determined by the instructor who may recommend to the Senior Vice President a withdrawal grade whenever absences become excessive. Three consecutive day class absences, two evening class absences, or three absences in a month, and/or absences in excess of 25% of the class meetings will be reported to the Office of Enrollment Services as excessive absences. Excessive absences for Fast-Track, weekend, blended classes and similar formats are determined on a proportionate basis. Excessive absences for Distance Learning classes may be determined by failure to attend the mandatory orientation, lack of contact with the instructor, or failure to make progress by not completing Distance Learning coursework. Further, each time a student has been tardy three times to a class, it will count as one absence. Certain career/professional programs may have additional attendance requirements based upon accreditation and licensure mandates.

Except for absences related to college-approved activities (e.g. academic competitions, Forensics, FCAT testing, athletic events, etc.) for which advance announcement of student participants is provided through the appropriate college office or official, this attendance policy is not intended to distinguish between excused and unexcused absences, as flexibility for absence provided in the previous paragraph is designed to accommodate emergencies, illness and other unavoidable reasons for missing class. Individual instructors may provide for additional flexibility in their course policies through make-up exams, alternate assignments, etc.; however, this practice varies by instructor and course. Students should not assume that their absence from class will automatically be accommodated and should stay in contact with their instructors regarding the impact of missing class for any reason.

Behavior

An instructor has the obligation to maintain order in the classroom to preserve the integrity of the learning environment. If the instructor feels that the behavior of a student is disturbing or otherwise interfering with instruction, then the student may be asked to leave the class. The student may be allowed to return to the next class meeting after consultation with the instructor. The instructor may have further consultation with the department chair and the Senior Vice President to determine if dismissal should be recommended. The student may appeal a dismissal decision to the President, whose ruling will be final. Disruptive behavior may result in additional disciplinary action.

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Summary of Reported Crimes on Campus

This information is provided to all students and employees each year beginning with this report, in compliance with The Federal Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act. Questions about this report or Campus Security in general may be directed to the Director of Physical Plant Department or the Dean of Students. On campus crimes reported to Physical Plant Department by major category:

	2006		2007		2008	
	Total Stats	Hate Crime Stats	Total Stats	Hate Crime Stats	Total Stats	Hate Crime Stats
Homicide Offenses	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sex Offenses, Nonforcible	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sex Offenses, Forcible	0	0	0	0	0	0
Robbery	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aggravated Assault	0	0	0	0	0	0
Burglary / Breaking & Entering	0	0	0	0	0	0
Larceny / Theft Offenses	2	0	2	0	3	0
Motor Vehicle Theft	0	0	0	0	0	0
Liquor Law Violations	0	0	0	0	0	0
Drug Abuse Violations	0	0	0	0	0	0
Weapon Possessions	0	0	0	0	0	0

Federal and State law requires a person designated as a “sexual predator or offender” to register with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE). The FDLE then is required to notify the local law enforcement agency where the registrant resides or attends an institution of higher learning. Information regarding sexual predators or offenders attending an institution of higher learning may be obtained from the local law enforcement agency with jurisdiction for the particular NWF State College campus or center, or by calling the FDLE hotline (1-888-FL-PREDATOR) or (1-888-357-7332), or by visiting the FDLE website at www.fdle.state.fl.us.

Student Discipline

Academic and personal behavior of students shall be governed by policies contained in the college catalog, and such other policies as may be approved by the Board of Trustees on recommendation of the President and by pertinent provisions of Florida Statutes and FAC Rules. Any act or behavior by a student which tends to interfere with or otherwise disrupt the orderly conduct, process, functions and/or interests of the college is prohibited. Such acts and behaviors include but are not limited to the following:

1. Cheating in any form, including plagiarism (such behavior may result in academic penalty and/or course failure at the discretion of the instructor, which may be appealed by the student);
2. Gambling;
3. Theft, vandalism or destruction of NWFSC property, or property of members of the college;
4. Falsification of personal or college records;

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5. The use, manufacture, distribution, sale, or possession of alcoholic beverages or illicit drugs on campus or at any NWFSC sponsored event or activity;
6. Violence, including but not limited to sexual assault, robbery, murder or battery against any member or guest of the college;
7. Hazing and Harassment.

Instances of prohibited student behavior, which may include cheating and plagiarism, will be referred to the Dean of Students for resolution.

A member of Student Services will be appointed to make inquiries into the circumstances of the matter to determine if it has been handled through the proper channels. The inquiry will be completed within seven (7) working days of the submission date. This person may recommend that the matter be dismissed, settled informally, or be the subject of formal charges.

All reports of sexual assault and/or harassment are to be treated as confidential. The member of the college staff receiving the complaint should treat the victim with respect and consideration. It is important that confidentiality be extended to the accused as well as the victim. All persons involved in this procedure are directed not to discuss the matter except with college personnel involved in the process, attorneys for the victim and/or the accused, law enforcement personnel and other authorized agencies.

Informal settlement will be at the discretion of the Dean of Students who may do one or more of the following: give oral or written warning and/or admonition; require restitution or counseling. The informal settlement will take place within seven (7) working days of the recommendation. Formal charges, in writing, will be prepared by the Dean of Students within five (5) working days and presented to the accused student. The charges will include:

1. The accused student's name, address, and the student's college ID number.
2. A description of the alleged violation that includes dates, times, and places.
3. The names of any witnesses and a description of any physical or written evidence that was known at the time that formal charges were prepared.

At the time of notification of formal charges, the Dean of Students will offer the student his/her choice of hearing settings:

1. An administrative hearing which will be conducted by the Dean of Students who will decide guilt or innocence and the appropriate action or sanction: dismissal of the charges, placing the student on disciplinary probation, or recommending to the President suspension or dismissal.
2. A Student Conduct Committee hearing which will decide guilt or innocence. The committee will be comprised of the Dean of Students (Chair), two other members of Student Services, two faculty members appointed by the Senior Vice President and two students appointed by the Dean of Students upon recommendation of the Student Government Association president. After the presentation of evidence (against and in defense of the student), if the committee decides that there is clear and convincing evidence that the student is guilty, it will recommend the action or sanction to be taken. If the committee decides that the student is not guilty, it will recommend that the charges be dismissed. The Dean of Students will make the final decision and recommendation, then inform the student of the decision, the procedures of review and the grounds for appeal.

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In both hearing settings the following will apply:

1. The accuser and the accused are entitled to have the same opportunities to have others present.
2. Both the accuser and the accused will be informed of the outcome of any disciplinary hearing or an appeal of the findings.
3. Persons serving as legal counsel may not participate in disciplinary hearings.
4. Adult students may not seek advice from any person while a disciplinary hearing is in progress.
5. The participation of a parent or legal guardian of the accuser or of the accused student who is a minor may be limited by the Dean of Students, at his/her discretion.
6. All other rules of procedure for the hearing will be outlined at the beginning of the hearing by the Dean of Students.

Seven (7) days after the student has been notified of the findings and recommendations, the Senior Vice President will review the records, evidence and findings of all hearings before the recommendation for suspension or dismissal goes forward to the President. If the Senior Vice President decides that published disciplinary procedures were not followed, the matter will be returned to the Dean of Students for rehearing.

Students who are found guilty in either hearing setting may, within seven (7) days of notification of the findings and recommendations, appeal in writing to the Senior Vice President on the basis of one of the following:

1. The discovery of new evidence.
2. The recommended penalty would impose unusual and severe hardship on the student.
3. Published disciplinary procedures were not followed.

The Senior Vice President will hear the appeal and do one of the following:

1. Uphold the original hearing findings, and forward to the President:
 - a. the recommendation to suspend or dismiss, or
 - b. recommendation to impose a lesser sanction.
2. Based upon new evidence, dismiss the charges, or
3. Return the matter to the original hearing setting for rehearing if published disciplinary procedures were not followed.

A student may appeal the decision of the Senior Vice President to uphold the original findings and recommendations only on the basis of new evidence. This appeal must be submitted to the President, in writing, within seven (7) days after notification to the student of the Senior Vice President's decision.

No student shall be suspended or dismissed from NWF State College without approval by the President. The President shall have the authority to temporarily suspend, while awaiting the disciplinary procedures outcome,

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any student whose behavior is judged by him to be detrimental, or potentially detrimental, to the college.

Upon recommendation, and after implementation of the hearing process, a student may be suspended or dismissed by the President for behavior which is prohibited or otherwise unacceptable. The Board of Trustees shall be advised of dismissal actions at its next regular meeting following such actions.

Disciplinary probation requires compliance with the following restrictions and obligations:

1. Conformance with all NWFSC policies, rules, and regulations pertaining to student behavior as specified in the current college catalog, or any other official college publication.
2. Avoidance of involvement in actions or activities which could be considered disruptive to the education process or detrimental to the health, welfare, and safety of any member of the college.
3. No participation in any student extracurricular organized activity.
4. Reporting on a scheduled basis for appropriate counseling sessions with an assigned NWFSC counselor.
5. Remaining in full compliance with the conditions of applicable court imposed probation/parole.
6. Reporting on a scheduled basis to the Dean of Students for review of compliance with the terms of disciplinary probation.

Disciplinary suspension terminates a student's enrollment at NWF State College for a specified period.

Dismissal separates a student from the college for an indefinite period with readmission subject to the recommendation of the Admissions Committee and the approval of the President.

Students who become ineligible for enrollment because of disciplinary action may not continue their education through any programs, activities, or offerings of NWF State College until such time as they may be readmitted to the college.

Weapons and/or Firearms at College Locations and Activities

Students are expected to be committed to the common good of the college and to comply with local, state and federal law. Possession or use of firearms or other dangerous weapons at any college location or activity except by authorized law enforcement officers in the performance of their duties is prohibited behavior and will subject the offender to the disciplinary procedures of the college as well as appropriate action by civil authorities.

Student Grievance Procedures

Northwest Florida State College student grievance procedures are designed to provide effective means for resolving legitimate issues that are subject to the grievance process. State Board Rules and College Policies are not grievable; only the application or interpretation of rules or policies may be grieved. (Also see "Grade Grievances" on page 28.)

Resolution of Grievances

Any student who believes that he/she has been done an injustice through the action of another student, a college employee, or other person acting for the college may initiate a grievance under these procedures.

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Student grievance procedures apply to all complaints on the part of students which may arise in matters of instruction and general student services when they involve rights provided for under the college's Equal Access/Equal Opportunity Plan and the Florida Educational Equity Act and when they directly affect the personal interests and well-being of individual students.

Complaints which do not directly affect the personal interests and well-being of individual students and which are not otherwise covered by these procedures shall ordinarily be referred to the Dean of Students for resolution.

The President of the college shall be the final arbiter where a dispute exists as to whether a particular matter is subject to coverage by these procedures. In making a decision, the President will interpret the coverage of these procedures liberally, denying their application only when the matter in question clearly concerns issues of rule or policy in which the complaining party has no direct interest, where there is good reason to believe that a grievance has been brought in bad faith for political or similarly inappropriate reasons, or for circumstances in which use of these procedures would clearly endanger their effectiveness as an instrument for the redress of grievances.

Informal Grievance Procedures

The college's informal student grievance procedures shall be implemented in the following sequence:

1. The aggrieved student shall first discuss his/her complaint with the instructor or faculty advisor concerned for resolution.
2. If the grievance remains unresolved, the student should refer it to the appropriate department or organizational unit head for resolution.
3. If the circumstances of the grievance preclude the use of steps 1 and 2, or if the department or organizational unit head does not resolve the grievance within ten (10) working days, the student should discuss the grievance with the Dean of Students, who will bring the matter to the attention of the President of the college.

If the grievance resulted from violation of college policies, the College Equity Plan, or FAC Rules, the President shall take, or cause to be taken, appropriate measures to ensure compliance with the policies, statutes or rules, and resolve the grievance.

If the grievance involves a question of judgment or opinion not covered by college policies, by the College Equity Plan, or the FAC Rules, the President or his designee shall counsel with the student, the faculty advisor, or the department or organizational unit head, and the appropriate principal administrator, in an endeavor to resolve the grievance.

Formal Grievance Procedures

If a grievance is not resolved by the informal procedure, the aggrieved student should submit a request, in writing, to the President of the college via the Dean of Students for a formal student grievance hearing. It shall set forth the nature of the grievance, the person(s) involved, and the resolution desired. It shall also include the nomination of one disinterested SGA Senator who is willing and available to serve as a member of the student grievance hearing committee.

If the request for a hearing is disapproved, the President shall state the reasons in writing. If approved, he shall appoint a student grievance hearing committee composed of the following members:

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1. The SGA Senator named in the original request for the hearing or a substitute satisfactory to the grievant.
2. A college employee nominated by the Dean of Students.
3. An additional NWFSC employee who shall be nominated by mutual agreement of the other two members, who is a regular, full-time employee, and who, with the approval of the President, shall be designated chairperson. If the two members cannot agree on a nominee for chairperson, the chairperson will be appointed by the President.
4. The Dean of Students or his/her designee will serve as recording secretary to the committee but shall have no vote. If the grievance involves an equity issue, the College Equity Coordinator shall appoint a representative to serve as an advisor to the committee.

The committee shall, within seven (7) days of being constituted, meet to hear the grievance and interview such witnesses as it deems pertinent to the matter.

The committee shall report its findings and recommendations for resolution of the matter, in writing, to the President within four (4) working days of the close of the hearing.

The President shall advise all pertinent parties of his action on the grievance within three (3) working days after receipt of the committee's report.

The action by the President is final, except for cases of student expulsion, which may be appealed by the aggrieved student, in writing, to the Board of Trustees within three (3) working days of receipt of the decision. The decision of the Board in such matters is final.

Grievance Time Limits

A grievance must be filed in a timely fashion. If a student is filing a grievance, it must involve a specific event or incident occurring within thirty (30) days of filing the grievance.

Nothing in this procedure is intended to create any due process rights nor does it entitle the individual to seek redress in any court or administrative proceeding.