

**Section 1: Board of Trustees**

## 1.1 Legal Basis

*Adopted: 11/1975*

*Last Revised: 3/2013*

As the policy making group of a public governmental institution, regulated by laws of the State of Illinois, and more precisely by the Illinois Public Community College Act of 1965, as amended, the Board of Trustees is subject to certain restrictions set forth in the aforementioned act under the classifications of Duties and Authority. (110 ILCS 805/3-21 et seq.)

The Board has the powers enumerated in the Public Community College Act. The list of powers set forth in these sections is not exclusive, and the Board may exercise all other powers not inconsistent with the Public Community College Act that may be required and appropriate for the maintenance, operation and development of any College under the jurisdiction of the Board. (110 ILCS 805/31-43)

## **1.2 Entity - Procedural Capacity**

*Adopted: 11/1975*

*Last Revised: 2/2013*

The Board of Trustees of the College District is a body politic and corporate known as the "Board of Trustees of Community College District No. 537, Counties of Macon, Christian, DeWitt, Logan, Moultrie, Piatt, Sangamon, and Shelby, and State of Illinois," and by that name may sue and be sued in all courts and places where judicial proceedings are had. (110 ILCS 805/3-11)

## **1.3 Authority of Board Members**

*Adopted: 11/1975*

*Reviewed: 3/1981*

Members of the Board of Trustees have authority only when acting as a Board in legal session.

No business shall be conducted by the Board except at a regular meeting or reconvened meeting thereof, or at a duly called special meeting.

The Board will not be bound in any manner by any action(s) or statement(s) of an individual Board member or employee, unless such action(s) or statement(s) is pursuant to specific instruction by the Board when legally in session. Action of such member or members must be confirmed by the Board.

## 1.4 Student Trustee

*Adopted: 11/1975*

*Last Revised: 3/2013*

A student trustee serves as a member of the Board of Trustees for a one-year term beginning April 15 of each year, as provided by law. (110 ILCS 805/3-7.24) The student assumes all the rights and responsibilities of a district-elected Board member with the exception of his/her advisory-voting status. The student trustee:

- is admitted to all sessions of the Board;
- receives materials elected Board members do;
- is allowed to make or second motions;
- is allowed to register on advisory vote on all matters brought before the board with the exception of the President's Compensation; and
- cannot make or second a motion on matters of financial obligations.

## **1.5 Election**

*Adopted: 11/1975*

*Last Revised: 3/2013*

Election of members for the Board of Trustees shall conform with the consolidated election law. (10 ILCS 5/1-1, and at 110 ILCS 805/3-7 *et seq.*)

## **1.6 Organization**

*Adopted: 11/1975*

*Last Revised: 3/2013*

Following the election and canvass, the Chairman of the Board shall convene the new Board and conduct the election for chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary. (110 ILCS 805/3-8)

## **1.6.1 Duties of Chairperson**

*Adopted: 11/1975*

*Last Revised: 3/2013*

The Chairperson of the Board shall preside at all meetings and to perform such other duties as are required by law or by action of the Board. (110 ILCS 805/3-10)

## **1.6.2 Duties of Vice-Chairperson**

*Adopted: 11/1975*

*Last Revised: 3/2013*

It is the duty of the Vice-Chairperson to serve in the absence of the Chairperson of the Board. In the absence of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, the Board shall appoint a Chairperson pro tempore. (110 ILCS 805/3-10)

### **1.6.3 Duties of Secretary**

*Adopted: 11/1975*

*Last Revised: 3/2013*

The Secretary of the Board shall perform the duties usually pertaining to the office and such other duties as are imposed by law or by action of the Board. In the absence of the secretary, the Board Chairperson shall appoint a Secretary pro tempore who shall be a member of the Board. (110 ILCS 805/3-10)

## **1.6.4 Committees**

*Adopted: 11/1975*

*Last Revised: 3/2013*

The Chairperson of the Board may appoint ad hoc committees as are deemed necessary by the Board. A committee shall report recommendations to the Board for appropriate action and may be dissolved when its report is complete and accepted by the Board.

Any ad hoc committee of Board members or any committee supported by the Board may be deemed a public body and shall comply with the notice and other requirements of the Illinois Open Meetings Act.

## **1.7 Vacancies on the Board**

*Adopted: 11/1975*

*Last Revised: 3/2013*

Whenever a vacancy occurs, the remaining members shall fill the vacancy through an open process with a call for candidates and in accordance with law. (110 ILCS 805/3-7(d))

The person so appointed shall serve until a successor is elected at the next regular election for members of the Board of Trustees and is certified. (10 ILCS 5/22-17 and 22-18).

The Board will ensure that the replacement subscribes to the Tenets of Trusteeship as provided in Board Policy 1.18.

## **1.8 Role and Relationship Between the Board of Trustees and the Chief Executive Officer**

*Adopted: 11/1975*

*Last Revised: 3/2013*

The policy of the Board of Trustees is to recognize and maintain the distinction between those activities which are appropriate to the Board as the sole statutory legislative governing body of District 537, and those administrative functions and duties which are to be performed by the chief executive officer and his/her staff. The Board views the legislative authority that is vested within itself as a body of the whole rather than as individuals acting unilaterally.

Based upon the premise of mutual respect and trust, the Board encourages a shared governance relationship that is characterized by integrity and by open, honest, two-way flow of continuous communications based upon accurate, reliable information obtained from thorough study and analysis. In that regard, the Board looks toward the chief executive officer to provide recommendations, suggestions, and options relating to both short and long-term goals and objectives of the District. These recommendations will be presented in a manner that allows the Board an adequate period of deliberation, which will ultimately result in the adoption of policies that enhance the well-being of Richland Community College.

The Board recognizes that if the chief executive officer is to be responsible for the prudent management of the district and its resources, likewise, the Board must also be fully informed and recognize its responsibility to be fully supportive of the chief executive officer by granting him/her full authority to carry out and implement the administration of District 537 in accordance with those policies adopted by the Board.

The Board will maintain an understanding and respect for the delineation of policy versus administration and will maintain a self-discipline that will avoid direct interference into the administrative functions of the College District. The Board will encourage and be supportive of an atmosphere that will allow the chief executive officer the flexibility and creativity to successfully exercise his/her administrative style necessary for successfully carrying out the administrative functions of the District.

## **1.9 Board Limitation on New Presidential Agreements**

*Adopted: 12/2016*

*Last Revised: 12/2016*

The Board will comply with the limitations on new presidential employment agreements as set forth in the Public Community College Act. (110 ILCS 805/3-8, and 110 ILCS 805/3-65)

## **1.10 Employment Contract Transparency**

*Adopted: 12/2016*

*Last Revised: 12/2016*

The Board will comply with the employment contract transparency requirements on new presidential employment agreements as set forth in the Public Community College Act. (110 ILCS 805/3-70)

## **1.11 Trustee Training**

*Adopted: 12/2016*

*Last Revised: 12/2016*

The Board will comply with all training provisions of the Open Meetings Act and the Public Community College Act. (5 ILCS 120/1.05, and 110 ILCS 805/3-8.5)

## **1.12 Meetings**

*Adopted: 11/1975*

*Last Revised: 3/2013*

The meetings of the Board shall be held at such times, dates and places as are fixed by the Board at its organizational meeting. (110 ILCS 805/3-8)

All meetings shall be open to the public except as provided by law. (5 ILCS 120/2)

## 1.12.1 Participating in Meetings Remotely

*Adopted: 6/2022*

*Last Revised: 6/2022*

A member of the Board of Trustees may participate electronically by a speaker phone or similar device that is audible to the audience. The following rules apply:

- A quorum of the board must be physically present at the actual location of the meeting. Absent members may not "call in" to make up a quorum
  
- An absent member may be permitted to participate electronically only if he or she is prevented from physically attending the meeting due to:
  - Personal illness or disability;
  - Employment purposes;
  - Business of the public body;
  - A family emergency or other emergency.
  
- A member who wishes to attend electronically must notify the Chairman of the Board before the meeting unless it is "impracticable" to do so.
  
- All meeting minutes must reflect whether a member is present physically or electronically.

## **1.12.2 Quorum**

*Adopted: 11/1975*

*Last Revised: 3/2013*

A majority of the voting members of the Board shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. The student trustee does not constitute a quorum. (110 ILCS 805/3-9, and 5 ILCS 120/2.01)

### **1.12.3 Recording the Proceedings**

*Adopted: 11/1975*

*Last Revised: 3/2013*

Any person may record the proceedings of a public meeting. (5 ILCS 120/2.05)

## **1.12.4 Order of Business for Board Meetings**

*Adopted: 11/1975*

*Last Revised: 3/2013*

The President and his/her Assistant, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, shall be responsible for preparing and transmitting to the members of the Board an agenda for each meeting of the Board.

## **1.12.5 Parliamentary Procedure**

*Adopted: 11/1975*

*Last Revised: 3/2013*

Unless in conflict with these rules of procedure, the laws of the State of Illinois or the rules and regulations of the Illinois Community College Board, Robert's Rules of Order, as revised, shall govern the procedure of all Board meetings.

## **1.12.6 Preparation for Meetings**

*Adopted: 11/1975*

*Last Revised: 3/2013*

In consultation with the president, the Board may establish procedures for the preparation of documents for Board meetings to ensure that there is adequate time for Board members to review and prepare for the business to be conducted.

## **1.13 Minutes of Meetings**

*Adopted: 11/1975*

*Last Revised: 3/1981*

Minutes must be kept for all Board meetings whether open or closed, and for all committee meetings.

## 1.14 Appearance of Citizens Before the Board

*Adopted: 3/1981*

*Last Revised: 2/2015*

It has been and is the intent and purpose of Richland Community College to provide a forum for citizens of the Richland Community College District to express their views, opinions, and concerns about the College to the Board of Trustees.

It is not intended that matters be brought before the Board by employees or individual citizens that can or should be handled through administrative procedures.

To further this intent and purpose, and to provide for an orderly procedure, the following guidelines are hereby established:

1. Appearance may be made only by individual citizens or as a representative of an organization. The citizen shall identify himself or herself and the organization being represented, if any.
2. The Chairperson of the Board of Trustees shall allot a specific time period for citizens to appear and express their views before the Board of Trustees.
3. Each citizen who appears will be limited to five (5) minutes.
4. The Chairman may shorten or lengthen a citizens' opportunity to speak.
5. All citizens are to conduct themselves with respect and civility toward others.
6. The Board of Trustees may respond to any views expressed by any citizen appearing under this procedure. Responses may be provided, in writing, within two business days.

Residents of the College District wishing to address the Board are to contact the Office of the President not later than twenty-four (24) hours prior to the date of the Board meeting setting forth with reasonable particularity the matter or matters to be addressed. Any citizen who desires to appear shall complete a comment card prior the start of the Board meeting.

## 1.15 Resource Specialists to the Board

*Adopted: 11/1975*

*Last Revised: 3/2013*

### **Attorney**

The Board shall employ the services of an attorney(s) to act as its counsel on legal matters by direction of the Board.

### **Auditor**

The Board will employ a public accounting firm to audit the financial records of the Richland District. (110 ILSC 805/3-22.1)

### **Treasurer**

The Board will designate a treasurer to review the financial records of the Richland District. (110 ILSC 805/3-(24))

## **1.16 Amendment or Repeal**

*Adopted: 11/1975*

*Last Revised: 3/2013*

The Policy Manual of the Board may be amended, repealed or added to upon motion made in writing for that purpose by any member of the Board. Any such motion shall not be voted upon until the next regularly scheduled meeting after it has been formally presented to the Board in writing. A quorum of the Board shall be required for the adoption of any amendment, alteration, repeal or addition to these policies.

## **1.17 Board Study Retreat**

*Adopted: 11/1975*

*Last Revised: 3/2013*

The Board of Trustees shall conduct a study session for long-range planning annually with the date for the session to be established at a regular meeting of the Board and that the Chairman is authorized to appoint a committee of the Board to work with the president to establish an agenda for the study session.

## **1.18 Policy Dissemination**

*Adopted: 11/1975*

*Last Revised: 3/2013*

The President shall establish and maintain an orderly plan for preserving and making accessible the policies adopted by the Board of Trustees.

Accessibility is to extend at least to all employees of the College, to members of the Board and to persons in the community.

## 1.19 College Mission and Purpose

*Adopted: 11/1975*

*Last Revised: 3/2013*

### **Statement of Purpose**

The primary purpose of Richland Community College is to improve the quality of life in Central Illinois by actively serving the educational needs of the people, organizations, and institutions it serves. The college pledges to provide equal access to education and training for all citizens regardless of race, age, sex, religion, national origin, ethnic background or disability.

### **College Mission**

The mission of Richland Community College is to empower individuals through learning and to forge partnerships that grow communities.

Richland Community College achieves its mission and purpose by offering the following programs:

1. The first two years of a baccalaureate education;
2. Technical courses, certificates, and degrees designed to provide job training, re-training, and upgrading of skills;
3. Basic educational skills designed to prepare students to engage in college level study;
4. Student development programs and services designed to help students identify educational and career goals, set realistic career paths, and develop skills necessary to achieve intellectual and personal growth;
5. Academic programs and services, which provide supplemental support to both teaching and learning;
6. Community education activities and programs which complement, enhance, and contribute to the growth and enrichment of students and the community both inside and outside of the classroom providing opportunities for life-long learning; and
7. Workforce development activities and programs that promote linkages with business, industry, and governmental agencies designed to meet the changing needs of the market place and promote economic growth in the region.

## **1.20 Leadership, Values and Tenets of Community College Trusteeship**

*Adopted: 3/1990*

*Last Revised: 3/2013*

The community college is an egalitarian institution committed to the principle that higher education should be available to every person who can benefit. The purpose of a comprehensive community college is to serve all who then can serve to build a better society.

The primary task of the Board of Trustees is to serve as a regenerative force, always expanding and improving the College's service to people. Given this basic condition, the activities and deliberations of the Board of Trustees will be governed by the following tenets:

### **The Values**

#### **Respect**

Respect is a moral disposition which requires determined consideration of all things, both living and material. Respect is no friend of tolerance. Respect reaches into the thing considered and comes to understand and appreciate its qualities.

#### **Honesty and Integrity**

Honesty and Integrity can survive anything. Honesty is a glass house, no secrets, always open, always engaged. Integrity is the house foundation; it is the stage on which honesty stands.

#### **Compassion**

Compassion is genuine concern and interest in everything – people, things, projects, and activities. Compassion is always working. Compassion cares.

### **The Tenets**

#### **About Allegiance**

Trustees have but one allegiance that is to the institution and its mission. Representing special constituencies dilutes trust and undermines institutional mission.

#### **About Commitment**

To achieve distinction requires commitment, and commitment requires the devotion of time, thought, energy, effort, and ability whenever needed.

#### **About Creating a Culture of Sustainability**

When the Board of Trustees weaves the core values into sustainable concepts with a perspective measured by the Triple Bottom Line (Environment, People, Economics), the College becomes values driven exceeding its mission.

### **About Distinction**

The Board of Trustees has the authority and autonomy to be original, creative, and regenerative; that is its responsibility. If the College is to become an institution of distinction, it will be because the Board demonstrates and requires distinctive service.

### **About Evaluation**

Purpose achieved with distinction does not occur in a vacuum. It occurs because there is a Board desire for distinction and a willingness to measure how well it is achieved.

### **About Power**

Power rests mostly with the Board of Trustees but also extends far beyond it. Trustee power and influence well used will result in staff power and influence well used; students will be served.

### **About Purpose**

The purpose of an educational institution is more than a Board decision. It is a Board responsibility. Defining the institution is a critical task, which requires continuing review.

### **About Service**

All activities in which the College engages -- teaching, serving, and guiding -- must be evaluated by their effect upon students and community. How the College serves its community, how it serves and prepares its students are fundamental criteria by which the College must be measured.

### **About Teamwork**

The Board is made up of individuals with differing values and beliefs, and debate is expected and natural. Although there are individual expressions, there are no individual decisions. Board decisions must be team decisions.

## 1.21 Values and Tenets for Richland Community College Employees

*Adopted: 3/1990*

*Last Revised: 2/2022*

The moral character of an educational organization is reflective of its leadership. Among those involved in the art and science of teaching and service, it is imperative that teachers, leaders, and service providers demonstrate a strong commitment to good principle and ethical behavior.

The fundamental contributions of education to society demand commitment to exemplary values. At Richland Community College, these values are embodied in our Core Values, which were adopted by the Board of Trustees in 2003 and revised in 2022.

These core values and tenets serve as the guiding principles for Richland Community College and its employees:

- **Commitment** - We are dedicated to meeting the needs of the communities we serve.
- **Respect** - We recognize the expertise of all members of the College community and encourage individual contribution.
- **Excellence** - We strive to develop and pursue higher standards.
- **Integrity and Accountability** - We are accountable to the communities we serve and are truthful, sincere, transparent and responsible for our actions.
- **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging (DEIB)** - We foster an environment where diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging are incorporated across all levels of the organization and recognize the importance of eliminating barriers for students, employees, and community members.

## 1.22 Ends Statements

*Adopted: 6/2016*

*Last Revised: 11/2025*

Monitoring reports will be provided to the Board to demonstrate achievement of Board ends as follows:

### **Academic & Community Mission**

- Because of Richland, students who graduate with transfer (A.A. and A.S.) degrees will be prepared to be academically successful at other institutions of higher learning.
- Because of Richland, students who graduate with applied (A.A.S.) degrees will be prepared to be skilled, successful employees in the workplace.
- Because of Richland, students will have opportunities to successfully pursue training and education at and beyond the community college.
- Because of Richland's partnerships with the community, the economic/business climate in our service area will be significantly enhanced.
- Because of Richland, students will acquire the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in and contribute to a diverse and global community and to exercise their rights and responsibilities as citizens.
- Because of Richland, the community will have access to opportunities for cultural enrichment, wellness, and lifelong learning.

### **Fiscal Responsibility**

- Because of Richland's commitment to fiscal responsibility and transparency, the institution will maintain a balanced budget and efficient operations—ensuring that students benefit from stable, well-supported programs and services that promote their academic and career success.
- Because of Richland's strategic financial planning and stewardship, the college will sustain long-term viability- allowing students to continue accessing high-quality education and resources, even amid changing economic conditions.
- Because of Richland's efforts to expand and diversify funding, students will benefit from increased affordability, reduced financial barriers, and enhanced support through scholarships, grants, and community partnerships.

### **Facilities and Grounds**

- Because of Richland's commitment to well-maintained and modern facilities, students will learn in safe, accessible, and technologically equipped environments that enhance their educational experience and success.
- Because of Richland's responsible management of its physical assets, the college will ensure that facilities are efficiently utilized, environmentally sustainable, and supportive of current and future academic, workforce, and community needs.
- Because of Richland's strategic investment in campus infrastructure, the community will benefit from welcoming spaces that promote engagement, collaboration, and lifelong learning.

## 1.23 College Participative Committee Structure

*Adopted: 11/1975*

*Last Revised: 3/2013*

The Board of Trustees authorizes the administration to establish a college-wide, participative committee structure that will develop policies and procedures relative to academic, administrative, operational, and human resource functions. The purpose of the committee structure shall be to recommend policies and procedures that 1) meet student needs, 2) maintain high academic standards, 3) follow regulatory laws, 4) practice and uphold core values, 5) value employees and encourage employees to maximize their knowledge, skills, and abilities, and 6) demonstrate operational accountability and fiscal responsibility.

## 1.24 Board Travel

*Adopted: 8/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/2018*

It is important and necessary for the welfare and governance of the College that members of the Board of Trustees engage in educational and development opportunities as well as serving as advocates for community colleges on local, state, and national levels. Accordingly, it is the policy of the Board of Trustees to encourage Board members, including the student trustee, to travel for purposes of further education and experience when such travel will prove to be of benefit to the College. This benefit shall relate to and support the mission, vision, and goals of the College and more specifically to the governance of the College and to all other duties and responsibilities of Board members. (110 ILCS 805/3-7(e))

The Board of Trustees, however, recognizes that there must be a balance in meeting this need and the need for fiscal responsibility and accountability. Therefore, on an annual basis and in advance of each upcoming fiscal year, the College will establish the priorities for the representational needs of the Board of Trustees.

In the implementation of this policy, the Board of Trustees shall adhere to the travel procedures set forth.

## 1.25 Trustee Emeritus Program

*Adopted: 11/1975*

*Last Revised: 3/2013*

A member of the Board of Trustees who leaves the Board after serving the College a minimum of 10 years may be considered for the title, Trustee Emeritus, based upon the recommendation of a majority of the members of the Board of Trustees.

The privileges of the Trustee Emeritus status will be as follows:

- The Trustee Emeritus will be granted a tuition waiver for credit and non-credit classes as is consistent with other waivers as identified in the Policy Manual of the Board of Trustees,
- The Trustee Emeritus will receive Richland Community College business cards indicating the Trustee Emeritus status, and
- The Trustee Emeritus will remain on the College mailing list and be invited to College functions and activities.

## 1.26 President Emeritus Program

*Adopted: 11/1975*

*Last Revised: 3/2013*

A President of the College who leaves after serving the College a minimum of 10 years may be considered for *the title, President Emeritus*, based upon the recommendation of a majority of the members of the Board of Trustees.

The privileges of the President Emeritus status will be as follows:

- The President Emeritus will be granted a tuition waiver for credit and non-credit classes as is consistent with other waivers as identified in the Policy Manual of the Board of Trustees,
- The President Emeritus will receive Richland Community College business cards indicating the President Emeritus status, and
- The President Emeritus will remain on the College mailing list and be invited to College functions and activities.

## 1.27 Strategic Plan

*Adopted: 1/1990*

*Last Revised: 4/2024*

The Board of Trustees will adopt and maintain a *Strategic Plan* on a regular cycle.

The *Strategic Plan* will be aligned with Higher Learning Commission (HLC) planning principles and Criteria for Accreditation and will be a component in driving the annual budget process. Development of the multi-year Plan with identified Goals and Strategies and regular reporting will be a collaborative effort involving the faculty, staff, and students.

**Section 2: Business Services**

## 2.1: Financial Policies

## **2.1.1 Annual Audit**

*Adopted: 1/1971*

*Last Revised: 9/2017*

As provided in the Public Community College Act (110 ILCS 805/3-22.1, the College shall contract with a certified public accounting firm for the purposes of conducting an independent annual College audit. The audit shall be conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and regulations prescribed by the Illinois Community College Board. The financial statements shall be presented in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and shall be published annually.

## **2.1.2 Payment of Bills**

*Adopted: 1/1972*

*Last Revised: 9/2017*

The Board of Trustees shall authorize the establishment of revolving funds to be used for the purpose of paying the bills of the College. Such revolving funds shall comply with the Illinois Public Community College Act (110 ILCS 805/3-27).

All payments made on behalf of the District shall be presented to the Board of Trustees for ratification at its next regular meeting. Ratification shall be by roll call vote (Ill. Rev. Stat., Ch. 122, Par. 103-27).

## 2.1.3 Proper Execution of Transactions and Events

*Adopted: 1/1972*

*Last Revised: 9/2017*

No employee shall engage in financial transactions on behalf of the College without proper authorization and the approval of the appropriate supervisor or budget manager in advance and in accordance with established procedures. This prohibition includes but is not limited to the following transactions:

- conducting sales
- direct invoicing
- receiving payments
- ordering or purchasing supplies and materials
- renewing or initiating subscriptions or memberships
- making travel registrations or reservations

## 2.2 Funds

## **2.2.1 Bond and Interest Fund**

*Adopted: 1/1972*

*Last Revised: 9/2017*

The Bond and Interest Fund is used for the purpose of payment of principal, interest and related charges on any outstanding general obligation bonds or other similar debt instrument.

Any surplus of funds remaining after a debt has been defeased may be used for purposes similar to the debt obligation.

## **2.2.2 Working Cash Fund**

*Adopted: 1/1972*

*Last Revised: 9/2017*

The Working Cash Fund may be established by resolution of the Board of Trustees for the purpose of enabling the Board to have on hand at all times sufficient cash to meet the demands for ordinary and necessary expenditures.

In accordance with the Illinois Public Community College Act (110 ILCS 805/3-33.2-33.3, bonds may be issued in an amount or amounts not to exceed at any one time 75% of the total taxes from the authorized maximum rates for the Educational Fund and the Operations and Maintenance Fund combined, plus 75% of the last known entitlement of the College to taxes imposed to replace revenue lost as a result of the abolition of ad valorem personal property taxes as provided by law. These bonds may be issued by resolution of the Board of Trustees without voter approval.

## 2.3 Banking and Investments

## 2.3.1 Investment Instruments

*Adopted: 11/2011*

*Last Revised: 9/2017*

The College may invest in any type of security allowed by the Public Funds Investment Act (30 ILCS 235/2) of the State of Illinois and may be amended from time to time.

The College has chosen to limit its allowable investments to those instruments listed below:

- Commercial paper meeting the following requirements:
  - The corporation must be organized in the United States.
  - The corporation's assets must exceed \$500,000,000.
  - The obligations at the time of purchase must be rated within the two highest classifications by a recognized rating service.

Investments may be made only in banks, which are insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

Investment products that are considered derivatives are specifically excluded from approved investments.

## **2.3.2 Diversification**

*Adopted: 1/1972*

*Last Revised: 9/2017*

It is the policy of the College to diversify its investment portfolio. Investments shall be diversified to reduce to a minimum the risk of loss resulting in over-concentration in a specific maturity, issuer, class of securities, and third-party intermediary. Not more than 75% of the funds available for investment may be placed in a single allowable investment instrument or with a single investment entity (Bank, Illinois Funds, and Intermediary.)

### **2.3.3 Qualified Financial Institutions and Intermediaries**

*Adopted: 1/1972*

*Last Revised: 9/2017*

Any financial intermediary selected to be eligible for the College's competitive investment program must meet the following requirements.

- Shall provide wire transfer, automated clearinghouse, and deposit safekeeping services.
- Shall be a member of a recognized U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission Self-Regulatory Organization such as the New York Stock Exchange, National Association of Securities Dealers, Municipal Securities Rule Making Board, etc.

## 2.3.4 Management of Program

*Adopted: 1/1972*

*Last Revised: 9/2017*

The following individuals are authorized to purchase and sell investments, authorize wire transfers, authorize the release of pledged collateral, and execute any documents required under this procedure:

- College Treasurer
- Controller
- Director of Human Resources

These documents include:

- Wire transfer agreement

## **2.3.5 Reporting**

*Adopted: 1/1972*

*Last Revised: 9/2017*

The Treasurer shall submit to the Board of Trustees, at least quarterly, an investment report, which shall include information regarding securities.

## 2.4 Risk Management

## 2.4.1 Safety and Security

*Adopted: 9/2017*

*Last Revised: 9/2017*

The College will comply with federal and state laws and mandates regarding safety and security. To carry out the appropriate safety and security measures, the Board may authorize College safety personnel to use the powers established in The Public Community College Act (110 ILCS 805 Section 3-42.1).

The President or designee is authorized to establish procedures for security operations to include the assignment of responsibilities regarding the following:

- Safety and security of students, employees and visitors
- Student Right to Know Law/Campus Security Act
- Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA)
- Civil emergency/disaster assistance
- Cleary Act
- Violence Against Women Act

## 2.5.1 Travel Definitions

*Adopted: 1/1972*

*Last Revised: 9/2017*

“Travel” means any expenditure directly incident to official College business travel by Board members, administrators, officers or employees of the College involving reimbursement to travelers or direct payment to private agencies providing transportation or related services.

“Entertainment” includes but is not limited to, shows, amusements, theaters, circuses, sporting events, or any other place of public or private entertainment or amusement, unless ancillary to the purpose of the program or event.

## 2.5.2 Reimbursable Rates

*Adopted: 1/1972*

*Last Revised: 9/2017*

The Board shall annually approve a schedule of maximum allowable travel expenses for the upcoming calendar year no later than December 31 of each year.

The College shall reimburse permitted travel expenses as set forth below:

### Maximum Reimbursable Rates for Transportation

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Air Travel	Lowest reasonable rate
Auto	IRS Standard Mileage Rate at time of reimbursement
Rental Car	Lowest reasonable rate
Rail or Bus	Lowest reasonable rate
Taxi, Shuttle, Rideshare or Public Transportation	Actual reasonable rate

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### Maximum Reimbursable Rates for Meals

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Breakfast	\$18.00
Lunch	\$25.00
Dinner	\$40.00

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### Maximum Reimbursable Rates for Lodging

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Major Metropolitan Areas	\$350.00
Other Locations	\$200.00

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### **2.5.3 Reimbursement Request Form**

*Adopted: 1/1972*

*Last Revised: 9/2017*

The College shall only approve reimbursement of expenses upon submission of the College's Reimbursement Request Form. All documents and information submitted are public records subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, unless otherwise protected under that Act.

## **2.5.4 Entertainment Expenses**

*Adopted: 1/1972*

*Last Revised: 9/2017*

The College shall not reimburse any Board member, administrator, officer or employee of the College for entertainment expense unless such expense is ancillary to the purpose of the program or event.

## **2.5.5 Board Approval of Certain Reimbursable Expenses**

*Adopted: 1/1972*

*Last Revised: 9/2017*

The following expenses for travel, meals, and lodging may only be approved by a roll call vote at an open meeting of the Board of Trustees of the College:

- Any reimbursable expense of a College administrator, officer or employee that exceeds the maximum allowed under the regulations adopted under section 2.5.2 of this policy.
- Any reimbursable expense of a member of the Board of Trustees of the College.
- Any other reimbursable expenses because of emergency or other extraordinary circumstances.

## 2.5.6 Moving Expenses

*Adopted: 1/1972*

*Last Revised: 9/2017*

Newly employed full-time administrators and full-time faculty members may be partially reimbursed for actual expenses incurred when moving into the Richland Community College District.

The College will reimburse an employee for actual moving costs incurred up to a maximum of \$1,500.00. Reimbursement will be allowed up to 1 year of initial employment with the College. Relocation expenses for a newly employed chief executive officer will be determined by the Board of Trustees.

Relocation expenses for chief operating officers/vice presidents will be determined by the College President in consultation with the Board of Trustees, but in no case, shall exceed the actual cost of moving plus \$750 in mileage and lodging expense incurred while selecting a residence in Community College District 537.

## 2.5.7 Meetings and Official Functions

*Adopted: 1/1972*

*Last Revised: 9/2017*

Expenditures for meetings, events, or other official functions may be paid for with College funds provided that those functions support the purposes and mission of the College. The College President or the Vice Presidents shall, in advance, approve all expenditures for these purposes. Authorized expenditures are categorized as follows:

- Official Institutional (In House) Committees and Advisory Groups
  - Working luncheons and dinners, for a restricted number of staff members, internal committees, and advisory groups who are required to attend essential meetings during a meal period or outside of normal duty hours.
- Official External Committees, Advisory Groups, and Guests
  - Meals for unpaid educational advisory groups from area business, industry and the private sector, and appropriate staff members who are required to attend advisory meetings.
  - Meals, lodging, and transportation for state officials, representatives of accrediting agencies, official guests of the College and appropriate staff members when required to attend these functions.

In no case will Official Function Expenditures be permitted for:

- Expenses for employees related to membership in local clubs, social or private community organizations. Although the College does support participation of the faculty and staff in charitable and service organizations, the membership expense is an individual responsibility.
- Dues for individual employees to professional organizations. However, when the College may receive the same benefits through an individual membership for an employee, the expense may be approved as a College expense.
- Meals and other expenses for meetings and/or events that are personal in nature that will result in little or no value to the institution.

## 2.5.8 Student Assumption of Risks during College Travel

*Adopted: 1/1972*

*Last Revised: 9/2017*

Students are authorized to travel on approved College-sponsored trips. Each student participating shall indemnify the College against any and all claims for loss, damage, or injury that may result from such participation. The Office of Finance and Administration is assigned responsibility for developing and maintaining appropriate procedures. College-approved trips would include activities such as the following:

- Student and Class Field Trips
- Student Senate Leadership Conferences
- Study Abroad
- College sponsored trips

## 2.6 Purchasing

## 2.6.1 Purchase of Supplies, Materials, and Equipment

*Adopted: 1/1972*

*Last Revised: 9/2017*

The College will provide needed supplies, materials, equipment and contracts for work to support the educational programs of the College District through the use of sound, efficient, and effective purchasing procedures that are in compliance with The Public Community College Act and Administrative Rules of the Illinois Community College Board.

All purchases and other procurements of equipment or services shall be processed through the College's central purchasing system. All decisions in awarding contracts or purchases shall be made without prejudice or favoritism. Awards shall be made on the objectively determined merits of each acquisition action such as vendor compliance with specifications, compatibility of the item, price, delivery deadline, service, and other terms and conditions. No employee shall knowingly commit the College to any purchase or agreement that would result in a conflict of interest. Accordingly, no purchase contract or order shall be executed with a person or entity having influence over the purchase or procurement decision.

The Board authorizes the College President or appropriate Vice President to award contracts in accordance with the Illinois Public Community College Act (110 ILCS 805/3-27.1-2). The Board charges the Administration with the responsibility and delegates the Administration the authority to develop appropriate guidelines, regulations and procedures to implement this policy.

## **2.6.2 Use of College Credit Cards**

*Adopted: 1/1972*

*Last Revised: 9/2017*

Credit cards that obligate the College may be issued, upon approval, to College employees in accordance with the Illinois Public Community College Act (110 ILCS 805/27 (b)). College credit cards may be used only for purchases that are consistent with the College's purchasing policies and procedures. In particular, credit cards may not be used to circumvent College purchasing procedures and may not be used for personal expenditures. The Office of Finance and Administration is responsible for developing the appropriate procedures for the use of College Credit Cards.

## 2.6.3 Contract Approval

*Adopted: 1/1972*

*Last Revised: 1/1990*

The Board of Trustees has ultimate responsibility and authority for all fiscal affairs and contractual obligations of the College District. On some matters, the Board of Trustees reserves final authority; however, certain, clearly defined, contractual matters are delegated to the College President or designee(s) only for review, evaluation, and execution in the interest of efficient operations.

Contracts of less than five (5) years' duration or not requiring a sealed bid per the Illinois Public Community College Act may be processed and executed administratively without individual approval by the Board of Trustees. All contracts in excess of five (5) years' duration or requiring a sealed bid process will be presented for approval by the Board of Trustees.

The guidelines regulating the processing of contracts are based upon the requirements of the Illinois Public Community College Act (110 ILCS 805/3-27.1 and 3.38) dealing with leases and related contractual matters and with bidding requirements.

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## 2.7 Physical Plant and Facilities

## 2.7.1 Property Control

*Adopted: 1/1972*

*Last Revised: 9/2017*

A current and accurate accounting of all inventoried assets shall be maintained by the Office of Finance and Administration. Periodic audits of this inventory shall be conducted. Each division, department, or individual custodian of College equipment or other assets is responsible for safeguarding and certifying inventory balances and will maintain accountability for such items.

College assets shall be used for College activities unless specific prior approval is given by the President or designee.

Approved employee use of College assets or equipment shall be taxable to the employee in accordance with IRS rules and regulations.

The Board of Trustees authorizes the College President or designee to dispose of any excess District personal property with an estimated market value of less than \$5,000, and not needed for community college purposes, in accordance with the requirements set forth in the Illinois Public Community College Act (110 ILCS 805/3-41) and Richland Community College procedures.

Excess property may also be given to other public entities or not-for-profit organizations within District 537, if deemed by the College President or designee that said property has little or no value to the institution and could provide additional educational-related services for District 537.

The sale of any real property is solely at the discretion of the Board of Trustees. The Board authorizes the College President or designee to approve the disposal of College personal property through a trade-in when the value of the personal property will be used to reduce the purchase price of a replacement item. However, if the item has a trade-in allowance in excess of \$5,000, the Board shall give prior approval authorizing the trade-in. Trade-in arrangements may be made only with and through authorized dealers, remanufacturers, agents, or entities regularly engaged in the business of accepting used equipment. Items to be disposed of shall be processed through the College's central purchasing system under appropriate procedures, guidelines, and statutory requirements.

The Board charges the Administration with the responsibility and delegates the necessary authority to develop these procedures and guidelines.

## Section 3: Personnel

### 3.1 Employment of Personnel

### **3.1.1 “At Will” Employment**

*Adopted: 8/1990*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

Unless specified otherwise by written contract or State law, all employees have an “at will” employment relationship with Richland Community College. Thus, both the College and the employee have the right to terminate employment at any time, with or without cause or advance notice. The College’s personnel policies are intended to provide guidance as to the College’s ordinary approach to the topics discussed and not to promise that the College will act at all times in accordance with the policies. Specific circumstances may warrant exceptions. The purpose of the policies of the Board of Trustees is to establish clear expectations for all employees in regard to the terms, conditions, and benefits of employment.

### **3.1.1.1 Nondiscrimination**

*Adopted: 8/1990*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

Richland Community College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ancestry, religion, national origin, sex, disability, age, military status, marital status, order of protection status, sexual orientation, genetic information, citizenship, gender identity or expression, parental status, pregnancy, unfavorable discharge from military service, family responsibilities or other legally protected characteristic in its programs. The following positions have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Title IX Coordinator, Deputy Title IX Coordinator and - Section 504 Coordinator.

### **3.1.2 Union Represented Faculty**

*Adopted: 8/1990*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

Richland Community College is committed to honoring its collective bargaining agreements. In the event that there is any discrepancy between the information contained in this Policy Manual and matters contained in a collective bargaining agreement for union employees, the provisions of the collective bargaining agreement will take precedence.

### 3.1.2.1 “Just Cause” Standard for Tenured Faculty

*Adopted: 8/1990*

*Last Revised: 2/2007*

The Public Community College Act (110 ILCS 805/3B-1 et seq.) provides that tenured faculty members may be dismissed for “just cause.” For this purpose, “just cause” includes, but is not limited to:

- incompetence, cruelty, negligence, immorality or when the faculty member is not qualified to perform the services for which that faculty member is employed;
- failure of faculty to attend to his or her duties or to implement, perform or adhere to directives or orders;
- any action by faculty involving willful misconduct or malfeasance or gross negligence in the performance of his duties;
- conduct of a criminal nature which may have an adverse impact on the College’s reputation and standing in the community;
- conviction of a crime involving moral turpitude, including fraud, theft or embezzlement;
- any fraudulent conduct in connection with the business affairs of the College; or
- any other conduct that is substantially harmful to students, other employees or the College itself.

### **3.1.3 Authority to Hire**

*Adopted: 11/2008*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

The Board of Trustees shall approve the employment of people in the following classifications and positions: Full-Time Faculty, Dean or above.

The Board of Trustees delegates to the President of the College, or the President's designee, the authority to employ people in all other categories and positions.

### **3.1.3.1 Faculty Qualifications**

*Adopted: 10/2023*

*Last Revised: 10/2023*

Richland Community College follows the guidelines outlined by the Illinois Community College Board and the Higher Learning Commission to hire faculty.

### **3.1.3.2 Academic Rank – Initial Placement**

*Adopted: 3/1976*

*Last Revised: 10/2023*

As an organization that inherently places value on educational background and related experience, Richland Community College supports placement of newly hired faculty at levels that are commensurate with education and experience. Initial placement can be at any of the following four ranks: Instructor, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor. The Board of Trustees authorizes the College administration to determine criteria and procedures for initial placement.

### **3.1.4 Background Checks**

*Adopted: 8/1990*

*Last Revised: 2/2007*

As a condition of employment, employees may be subject to one or more of the following:

- Criminal background checks
- Personal background checks
- Credit Reports
- Drug screening
- Non-compete contract
- Driving record review (IDOT)

### **3.1.5 Personal Relationships**

*Adopted: 8/1990*

*Last Revised: 2/2007*

Richland Community College is committed to providing a workplace and educational environment for all employees and students that is free of potential conflict regarding personal relationships and nepotism. The following policies are in place to mitigate the effects of such relationships.

### **3.1.5.1 Employment of Relatives**

*Adopted: 8/1990*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

The College has no general prohibition against hiring relatives of other employees. Restrictions have been established to avoid compromising the integrity of the College's management structure.

While the College will accept and consider applications for employment from relatives of current employees or from individuals with close personal relationships with employees, these individuals will not be hired or transferred into positions where they directly or indirectly supervise or are supervised by another relative or intimate regularly residing in the same household. Relatives or intimates will not be placed in positions where they work with or have access to sensitive information regarding relatives or close family members or if there is an actual or apparent conflict of interest.

### **3.1.5.2 Faculty-Employee/Student Relationships**

*Adopted: 8/1990*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

The College strongly discourages sexual and/or romantic relationships between its employees and students in all contexts. In light of the potential for misunderstanding, morale problems, or abuse arising from consensual romantic or sexual relationships, it is the policy of the College that faculty members and other employees may not have evaluative, supervisory, or other authority over a student with whom the employee is having or has had a romantic or sexual relationship. To avoid the appearance of impropriety, Richland employees are prohibited from teaching members of their household, spouse, children, parents, or any other individual with whom he/she has or has had, a personal, non-professional relationship, including romantic or sexual relationships.

### **3.1.6 Probation**

*Adopted: 8/1990*

*Last Revised: 2/2007*

All employees not covered by contract are considered probationary employees during their initial one hundred twenty (120) days of employment with the College. The discharge of an initial probationary employee shall not be subject to the grievance steps. The probationary period may be extended for an additional sixty (60) days upon the mutual agreement of the College and the employee.

### **3.1.7 Grievance**

*Adopted: 8/1990*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

The College welcomes the opportunity to address employee concerns or complaints about College policies, procedures, personnel actions, or other matters over which the College has control. Employees are assured that there will be no retaliation for initiating a grievance. Employees covered under a collective bargaining agreement will follow the grievance procedures. All other employees shall follow the procedures established by the College.

### **3.1.8 Return to Work SURS Annuitants**

*Adopted: 8/1990*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

The College will not employ, re-employ, hire, offer an employment contract, or otherwise create an employment relationship for any individual defined as an “Affected Annuitant”, under 40 ILCS 5/15-139.5. It shall be the individual’s duty and responsibility to inform the College prior to hiring that they are receiving an annuity as the result of employment by a SURS or SURS reciprocal covered employer. Failure to notify the College of this information will be grounds for immediate termination.

Failure to notify the College of any SURS earnings limitations or Affected Annuitant status that creates a financial obligation to the College will become the responsibility of the individual.

## **3.2 Classification of Personnel**

*Adopted: 8/1990*

*Last Revised: 11/2008*

In order to provide standardized classifications of employment for individuals employed at Richland Community College, the following employment descriptors will be used to define staff groups. The following definitions are prescribed:

### **3.2.1 Executive Staff**

*Adopted: 8/1990*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

Executive staff shall be those individuals who are the officers and senior managers of the College who direct and oversee the programs, staff, and operations of the Board of Trustees.

### **3.2.2 Administrative Staff**

*Adopted: 8/1990*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

Administrators shall be those individuals who manage, administer, and support the operations of the College, and who are not covered by a collective bargaining agreement.

### **3.2.3 Professional/Technical Staff**

*Adopted: 8/1990*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

Professional/Technical staff shall be those individuals who provide specialized supporting services of a professional or technical level that does not include teaching and providing instruction to students.

### **3.2.4 Supporting Staff**

*Adopted: 8/1990*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

Supporting staff shall be those individuals who provide clerical and maintenance supporting services to the College.

### **3.2.5 Faculty**

*Adopted: 8/1990*

*Last Revised: 11/2008*

Faculty are individuals who spend more than one half (50%) of their workload in the activity of teaching and providing instruction to students.

### **3.2.5.1 Full-time Tenure-Track Faculty**

*Adopted: 8/1990*

*Last Revised: 11/2008*

Full-time teaching faculty members shall teach twenty-four (24) to thirty (30) equated credit hours per academic year and shall adhere to the provisions of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between Richland Community College District Board of Trustees and the Richland Community College Federation of Teachers Local 4262.

### **3.2.5.2 Full-time Tenure-Track Librarians**

*Adopted: 8/1990*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

Individuals in this classification are limited to librarians who spend more than one half (50%) of their time providing service directly to students and shall adhere to the provisions of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between Richland Community College District Board of Trustees and the Richland Community College Federation of Teachers Local 4262.

### **3.2.5.3 Adjunct Faculty**

*Adopted: 8/1990*

*Last Revised: 11/2008*

Adjunct (Part-time) teaching faculty are those individuals who teach less than twelve (12) equated hours per semester.

### **3.2.5.4 Temporary Full-Time Faculty**

*Adopted: 8/1990*

*Last Revised: 11/2008*

Temporary full-time teaching faculty members shall teach twelve (12) or greater equated credit hours per semester. No employees shall remain in this classification greater than two (2) consecutive years. These individuals also must adhere to the provisions of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between Richland Community College District Board of Trustees and the Richland Community College Federation of Teachers Local 4262.

### **3.2.6 Other Staff**

*Adopted: 8/1990*

*Last Revised: 11/2008*

Other staff is that group of employees not included in the above classifications.

### **3.2.6.1 Adult Education Instructors**

*Adopted: 8/1990*

*Last Revised: 11/2008*

Adult Education Instructors are employees who teach Adult Education open entry, open exit courses. Instructors are contracted to provide services for sixty (60)-minute contact hours as assigned.

### **3.2.6.2 MCLETC Instructors**

*Adopted: 8/2017*

*Last Revised: 8/2017*

MCLETC Instructors are employees who teach courses for the Law Enforcement Training Center. These instructors are hired to teach specific courses pertaining to law enforcement on a part-time, intermittent basis.

### **3.2.6.3 Temporary Part-Time Employees**

*Adopted: 8/1990*

*Last Revised: 11/2008*

Temporary part-time personnel are employed in positions for a semester or less than five-month duration. With this classification there is no anticipation of continuing employment.

An employee classified as Temporary Part-Time may be placed into an on-going part-time position upon approval by the College President. However, the temporary part-time status of an individual shall not continue beyond four months

### **3.2.6.4 Temporary Full-Time Employees**

*Adopted: 8/1990*

*Last Revised: 11/2008*

Temporary full-time personnel are employed in positions for a semester or less than four-month duration. With this classification, there is no anticipation of continuing employment. This position may be eligible for benefits.

### **3.2.6.5 Student Worker**

*Adopted: 8/1990*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

Student workers are enrolled as students at Richland Community College for at least 6 credit hours and are in “good academic standing” as defined by the College’s Academic Standard Policy.

A student worker who demonstrates financial need may participate in the Federal Work Study program, a federal financial aid program designed to provide subsidized part-time employment for eligible students.

### **3.2.6.6 Contract Employees**

*Adopted: 8/1990*

*Last Revised: 11/2008*

Contractual employees are employees hired for a specific period of time by Richland Community College to perform specific functions and duties designated by a contract.

For the purposes of type of employee, part-time employees will be considered the same as contractual employees, hired for a specific period of time, with no guarantee of the number of hours worked or further employment.

### **3.2.6.7 Grant-Funded Employees**

*Adopted: 8/1990*

*Last Revised: 11/2008*

Individuals who are employed through federal or state grants to perform functions and duties designated by the grant. Employment generally extends only through the length of the grant, with no guarantee of further employment by the College.

### 3.3 Definition of Employment Workweek/Workload

### 3.3.1 Non-Faculty

### **3.3.1.1 Full-Time Employment**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

All full-time employment is based on a forty (40)-hour workweek. Employees will be given meal breaks and short breaks per applicable law.

### **3.3.1.2 Part-Time Employment**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

All part-time employment is based on a workweek of less than twenty-eight (28) hours. Employees will be given meal breaks and short breaks per applicable law.

### **3.3.1.3 Student Employment**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

Student employment is limited to twenty (20) hours per week while classes are in session and thirty (30) hours per week during a semester break (fall and/or spring) and is based on eligibility. Employees will be given meal breaks and short breaks per applicable law.

### **3.4 Employee Assessment/Appraisal**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/1990*

The objectives of employee assessment/appraisal are to foster a commitment to the employee's job performance and a commitment to continuing employee self-development and achievement. All employees will be required to participate in this annual program.

When circumstances warrant, an employee's supervisor may conduct an employee assessment/appraisal at any time.

The Board of Trustees authorizes and delegates to the President of the College the authority to develop a Faculty Evaluation Program and a Tenure Review Procedure which is consistent with the statutory required procedures of granting tenure as required by the Illinois Compiled Statutes (110 ILCS 805/3B et. seq.).

### 3.4.1 Faculty Promotion in Rank

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/1990*

Richland Community College is dedicated to supporting the professional growth and success of its faculty. Progression in academic rank is awarded to faculty members who achieve excellence in work that directly benefits students.

Promotion in rank will be granted to full-time faculty members who achieve levels of excellence described in the “Criteria for Promotion” and who are approved by the Board of Trustees.

Integral elements of the promotion system include the following: faculty initiative, a broadly-based process of recommendation that relies on significant input from students, faculty, and administrators, a final decision by the Board of Trustees, and the right to appeal at various points in the process.

The progression of academic ranks (from lowest to highest) in the promotion system is as follows:

- Instructor
- Assistant Professor
- Associate Professor
- Professor

(Per the policy regarding Initial Placement, note that initial placement can be at any of the listed ranks.)

The process of faculty promotion will be consistent among divisions and other units of the College. Promotion signifies the faculty member’s movement from one rank to the immediately succeeding rank. The faculty member is eligible for the next succeeding rank only. Promotion will not occur until the faculty member has achieved tenure at Richland Community College. The Board of Trustees authorizes and delegates to the President of the College the authority to develop procedures to administer this program.

## 3.5 General Employment

### 3.5.1 Chronic Communicable Disease

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/1990*

Richland Community College is dedicated to promoting and maintaining a healthy environment for students and employees. The College places a high priority on the need to prevent the spread of communicable diseases on its campus. Communicable Diseases include those diseases and conditions which have been declared by the Center for Disease Control or the Illinois Department of Public Health to be contagious, infectious, or communicable, and may be dangerous to the public health. The College is committed to educating students, employees, and the community-at-large about chronic communicable diseases.

Employees with Communicable Diseases who know that they have a Communicable Disease have the obligation to inform the Director of Human Resources of their condition. Employees with identified communicable diseases shall retain their positions whenever, through reasonable accommodation of the employee's physical condition and without undue hardship to the employer, there is no reasonable risk of transmission of the disease to others. Such employees shall remain subject to the Board's employment policies, including but not limited to current collective bargaining agreements in effect, sick leave, physical examinations, temporary and permanent disability and termination.

Employment decisions will be made utilizing the general legal standard in conjunction with current, available public health department guidelines concerning the particular disease in question. Individual cases will not be prejudged. Decisions will be made based upon the facts of the particular case. The determination of an employee's continued employment status will be made in accordance with procedures implemented by the College. The College shall respect the right to privacy of any employee who has a Communicable Disease. The employee's medical condition shall be disclosed only to the extent necessary to minimize the health risks to the employee and others. The number of personnel aware of the employee's medical condition will be kept at the minimum needed to detect situations in which the potential for transmission may increase. Persons deemed to have a "direct need to know" will be provided with the appropriate information; however, these persons shall not further disclose such information. The Director of Human Resources may establish additional rules and regulations designed to implement this policy.

### **3.5.2 Drug-Free Workplace**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/1990*

The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in and on Richland Community College owned or controlled property and during work time.

No employee will report to work while under the influence of a controlled substance. Violation of these rules by an employee will be reason for mandatory evaluation/treatment for a substance use disorder or for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

The use of alcohol while on Richland Community College owned or controlled grounds, including meal periods and breaks, is absolutely prohibited except when authorized by the College President for approved college functions.

Any work-related accident will be subject to a drug screen within 24 hours of the accident.

Any employee will be subject to reasonable suspicion drug screening.

The College will require employees to submit to a substance abuse screen where the College has reasonable suspicion that the employee is under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol. Refusal to submit to such a screen will be considered a violation of this policy.

Any Richland Community College employee determined to have violated this policy, including any related College policies, will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination and immediate removal from College facilities.

### **3.5.3**

Harassment-Free Workplace

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Superseded by policy 5.3*

*Removed: 12/2009*

## 3.5.4 Whistleblower Protection

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/1990*

The College is committed to promoting compliance with the laws, rules, and regulations that govern its business operations and encouraging its employees to report unlawful conduct. Employees may report complaints or concerns about any fraudulent, illegal or unethical conduct within the College.

Employees are often the first to become aware of unethical behavior or business improprieties, but may not express their concerns for fear of retaliation. The College will not tolerate harassment, retaliation or reprisals of any time against any employee who has, in good faith, protested or raised a complaint against some policy or practice of the College or any of its employees.

The College is committed to protecting employees from retaliation for having made a protected disclosure. This policy is derived from 740 ILCS 174/1 et.al Whistleblower Protection Act. Pursuant to this Act, a College employee may not retaliate against an employee who discloses information to a government or law enforcement agency where the employee reasonably believes that the information disclosed is a violation of State or Federal law, rule, or regulation. It is the intention of the College to take whatever action may be needed to prevent and correct activities that violate this policy.

### Scope

This policy applies to complaints of retaliation filed by employees who have made or attempted to make a protected disclosure ("whistleblowers").

### Definitions

- **Improper Governmental Activity:** Any activity undertaken by the College or by an employee that is undertaken in the performance of the employee's official duties, whether or not that action is within the scope of his or her employment, and that is in violation of any State or Federal law, rule or regulation including, but not limited to, corruption, bribery, theft of College property, fraudulent claims, fraud, coercion, conversion, misuse of College property and facilities, or willful omission to perform duty.
- **Protected Disclosure:** Any good faith communication that discloses or demonstrates an intention to disclose information that may evidence an improper governmental activity.
- **Retaliation Complaint:** Any written complaint by an employee that alleges retaliation for having made a protected disclosure, together with a sworn statement, made under penalty of perjury that the contents of the complaint are true or are believed by the complainant to be true.
- **Locally Designated Official:** A Locally Designated Official (LDO) shall be appointed by the President to receive retaliation complaints and administer local implementing procedures. The LDO may be the same official designated to administer local procedures for investigating whistleblower complaints.
- **Retaliation Complaint Officer:** The Retaliation Complaint Officer (RCO) oversees the investigation of complaints filed by employees alleging retaliation for making a protected disclosure. The RCO may be appointed by the LDO or President.

### Corrective Action of a College Employee

Upon conclusion of the investigation by the RCO, the President through the appropriate channel shall determine the appropriate corrective action, if any, that will be initiated against a College employee who is found to have retaliated against an employee's right to make a protected disclosure. Such action shall be in accordance with the applicable personnel policy or collective bargaining agreement.

**Complaint against the President, the LDO, or the LDO's Supervisor**

With regard to complaints in which it is alleged that the President, the LDO, or the LDO's supervisor took retaliatory action, the findings of the investigation shall be presented for a decision to the Senior Vice President of Operations & Technology, and one other Vice President.

### **3.5.5 Personnel Records**

*Adopted: 9/1990*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

All information contained in personnel files is the property of Richland Community College and is considered confidential. Employees have the right to review and make copies of their respective personnel files at their own expense pursuant to the Personnel Records Review Act (820 ILCS 40/1 - 40/13 as amended).

## 3.5.6 Code of Ethics

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/1990*

In order to ensure public confidence in the College, Board members and employees must perform their duties in a proper and ethical manner and avoid even the appearance of impropriety. Thus, in the best interests of the College, the Board and College employees shall subscribe to the following Code of Ethics:

### **General Provisions:**

#### **Definitions**

**The following terms shall be given the definitions as set forth in 5 ILCS 430/1-5:**

- Campaign for elective office
- Candidate
- Collective bargaining
- Compensated time
- Compensatory time off
- Contribution
- Gift
- Leave of absence
- Political activity
- Political organization
- Prohibited political activity
- Prohibited source

For the purposes of this policy, "officer" shall mean any member of the Board of Trustees and "employee" shall mean any person employed by the Board, whether on a full-time or part-time basis, or pursuant to a contract, whose duties are subject to the direction and control of the Board and/or its administrative employees with regard to the material details of the work performed. The term "employee" does not include a volunteer or an independent contractor. "Employer" shall mean the Board of Trustees (sometimes referred to herein as the "Board").

#### **Prohibited political activities**

No officer or employee shall intentionally perform any prohibited political activity during any compensated time. No officer or employee shall intentionally use any property or resources of the Board in connection with any prohibited political activity.

At no time shall any officer or employee intentionally require any other officer or employee to perform any prohibited political activity as part of that officer's or employee's duties, as a condition of employment, or during any compensated time off (including holidays, vacations, and personal time off).

No officer or employee shall be required at any time to participate in any prohibited political activity in consideration of that officer or employee being awarded additional compensation or any benefit, whether in the form of a salary adjustment, bonus, compensatory time off, continued employment, or otherwise, nor shall any officer or employee be awarded additional compensation or any benefit in consideration of the employee's participation in any prohibited political activity.

Nothing in this section shall prohibit activities that are permissible for an officer or employee to engage in as part of such employee's official duties or activities.

### **Gift Ban**

Subject to the exceptions set forth herein, no officer or employee and no spouse or immediate family member living with any officer or employee (collectively referred to herein as "Recipient") shall intentionally solicit or accept any gift from any prohibited source or which is otherwise prohibited by law. No prohibited source shall intentionally offer or make a gift that violates this provision. The following exceptions shall apply to this section:

- Opportunities, benefits, and services that are available on the same conditions as for the general public.
- Anything for which the Recipient pays the market value.
- Any contribution that is lawfully made under the Election Code or activities associated with a fund-raising event in support of a political organization or candidate.
- Educational materials and missions.
- Travel expenses in connection with any meeting for business purposes.
- Any gift from the following relatives of the Recipient: father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister (including corresponding in-laws, step-relations, and half-relations), uncle, aunt, great-aunt, great-uncle, first cousin, nephew, niece, spouse, fiancée, grandparent, grandchild.
- Any gift from an individual on the basis of a personal friendship unless the Recipient has reason to believe that, under the circumstances, the gift was provided because of the official position or employment of the Recipient and not because of the personal friendship. In determining whether a gift is provided on the basis of personal friendship, the Recipient shall consider the circumstances under which the gift was offered (such as the history of the relationship between the parties, including any previous exchange of gifts, whether, to the actual knowledge of the Recipient, the individual who gave the gift personally paid for the gift or sought a tax deduction or business reimbursement for the gift, and whether, to the actual knowledge of the Recipient, the individual who gave the gift also gave the same or similar gift to other Recipients).
- Food or refreshments not exceeding \$75 per person in value during a single day, provided that the food or refreshments are consumed on the premises where they were purchased or prepared or catered.
- Food, refreshments, lodging, transportation, and other benefits resulting from outside business or employment activities if the benefits have not been offered or enhanced because of the official position or employment of the officer or employee and are customarily provided to others in similar circumstances.
- Intragovernmental and intergovernmental gifts. For the purposes of this section, "intragovernmental gift" means any gift given to an officer or employee from another officer or employee and "intergovernmental gift" means any gift given to an officer or employee by an officer or employee of another governmental entity.
- Bequests, inheritances, and other transfers at death.
- Any item or items from any one prohibited source during any calendar year having a cumulative total value of less than \$100.

### **Ethics Advisor**

The President may appoint an Ethics Advisor for the College and in such event shall advise the Board of such appointment. In the absence of such appointment, the attorney serving as general counsel to the College shall serve as Ethics Advisor. The Ethics Advisor shall provide interpretation and guidance to officers and employees of the College concerning compliance with this policy and the Act, and shall perform such other investigative and reporting requirements as the President and/or Board shall authorize from time to time.

### **Ethics Commission**

The Board may from time to time appoint and constitute no less than three of its members to serve as an Ethics Commission to investigate any complaints arising under this policy. Such Commission shall discharge its duties in accordance with this policy and shall make recommendations to the full Board as it shall deem appropriate.

Board members and employees shall keep in confidence information that has been obtained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure is required by law or is otherwise authorized by the Board.

Board members and employees shall not use College facilities, equipment, or property for personal financial gain.

Board members and employees shall not seek to unduly influence personnel decisions.

Board members and employees shall not seek to influence the purchase of products or services by the College when such influence may result in personal gain.

Board members shall not be interested directly or indirectly in any contract, work, or business of the College except as provided by law.

Employees owe their first responsibility to fulfilling the terms of their contracts or employment obligations to the College. Employees may not obligate themselves for additional services inside or outside the College if such obligations would interfere with fulfilling their primary responsibilities to the College.

In the deliberation of any matter to come before it, the Board encourages Trustees to express individual and differing points of view. Once a decision is reached, however, Trustees shall accept such decision as the official Board position on the matter.

### **3.5.7 Conflict Of Interest**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/1990*

Richland Community College's Board of Trustees, Faculty and Staff are subject to all provisions of the Illinois Public Community College Act, including 110 ILCS 805/3-48. Richland Community College employees must be sensitive to personal situations that could raise questions of potential or apparent conflicts between personal interests and the College's interests. College personnel should consider themselves as persons in a position of trust and employees should conduct themselves accordingly. Employees must be particularly aware of situations where there exists conflict between the private interests of a person and the official responsibilities of a person. A College Trustee, employee, officer, or agent shall not use his/her position for personal gain at the loss of the College. Any employee found in violation may be subject to disciplinary action, which may include suspension and/or termination.

No Trustee, employee, officer, or agent of the College may participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract between the College and another entity if the individual has a real or apparent conflict of interest. The individual is prohibited from receiving any tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for a contract with the College.

Each employee, officer, or agent shall disclose in writing to the President of the College any personal interests that he/she may have with the entity being considered for a contract. Each Trustee shall disclose in writing to the Chairman of the Board of Trustees any personal interests that he/she may have with the entity being considered for a contract. Prior to any discussion or decision, the Trustee, employee, officer, or agent shall publically disclose the nature of their personal interest in the contract or contracting entity and shall refrain from the decision on such matter.

Any employee found in violation of this policy or other related College policies may be subject to disciplinary action, which may include suspension and/or termination.

### **3.5.8 Employee Safety and Risk Management**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/1990*

Richland Community College maintains a comprehensive Risk Management Plan. As part of that plan:

- All employees are expected to be alert to the safety risks they may see while performing their job responsibilities and to report such risks.
- Certain employees are required to monitor and report specific safety risks and are expected to familiarize themselves with these duties and to fulfill all assigned duties.

### **3.5.9 Dismissal of Non Tenured Faculty**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/1990*

In accordance with 110 ILCS 805/3B-3, it is the policy of the Board that the decision not to rehire (dismiss) a non tenured faculty member for the ensuing school year or term will be made by the Board upon the recommendation of the College President. The Board shall make the decision not to rehire the non-tenured faculty member and shall notify that faculty member of its decision no later than sixty (60) calendar days before the end of the school year or term. The specific reasons for the dismissal will be kept confidential but will be issued to the faculty member upon the faculty member's request.

Full time, non tenured faculty who will be rehired for the next school year or term are to be notified of such a decision no less than sixty (60) calendar days before the end of the academic year or term.

### **3.5.10 Corrective/Disciplinary Action**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

When an employee engages in misconduct, the supervisor may take corrective disciplinary actions as determined by the supervisor. Depending on the nature and

severity of the situation, appropriate correction/disciplinary action may include verbal counseling, verbal warning, written reprimand, suspension without pay, or termination. Suspensions without pay may be imposed only by the President for up to 10 work days after a disciplinary hearing. Discipline may be appealed through the College's grievance procedure, subject to any collective bargaining agreements stating otherwise.

The President may place an employee on paid Administrative Leave during an investigation determining subsequent corrective action.

### **3.5.11 Resignation**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

The Board directs the President or their designee to accept employee resignations and report the action to the Board. Resignations include an employee's written notice of retirement.

### **3.5.12 Abandonment of Position**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

Any employee who leaves a position without proper approval of the immediate supervisor for three (3) consecutive work days will be declared to have abandoned the position and forfeited his/her employment.

### **3.5.13 Flexible Work**

*Adopted: 1/2023*

*Last Revised: 1/2023*

Richland Community College recognizes that there may be situations where flexible work arrangements are appropriate. Flexible work arrangements offer alternative approaches to getting work done through non-traditional work-hours, locations, and/or job structures. They offer full-time employees (excluding full-time faculty members) creative approaches for completing work, while promoting balance between work and personal commitments. Any flexible work arrangement must ensure the College can continue to offer students a high level of service, while simultaneously supporting and maintaining a cohesive workplace.

Typical flexible work options include flextime (i.e., flexible start, stop, and lunch times), flexplace (i.e., work away from the office, typically at home), compressed work schedule (i.e., condensing standard workweek hours into fewer days), and part-time and job-sharing assignments (i.e., less than full-time work, either for a reduced assignment or a shared one). These arrangements must support the department's goals and must be approved by the supervisor.

While on a flexible work arrangement, employees remain obligated to comply with all college rules, policies, procedures, terms of the flexible work arrangement. If, for any reason, the flexible work arrangement is terminated, and an employee decides not to return to their former traditional work schedule/arrangement and leave the position, the employee will be considered as having resigned and will be terminated

## 3.6 Salary and Wage System

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 11/2008*

The Board of Trustees authorizes Richland Community College to establish and maintain a fair and equitable wage and salary system based upon a number of factors including but not limited to the following:

- **Employee Classification and Job Duties:** Each position in the College will fit into a classification system, and within the classifications, there will be a job description for each employee or group of employees performing like duties.
- **Job Description:** The job description will be reflective of the position and job duties to be performed by each employee.
- **Competitiveness:** It is the College's intent to maintain total compensation that is competitive on a local, regional, state, or national basis. Competitive factors considered will be based on the nature of the job, responsibilities of the job, job position in the market place, and value of the job to the institution.
- **Equity:** Wage rate compression and equity will be addressed regularly.
- **Ability to Pay:** All salary schedules and adjustments or changes to salary schedules will be based upon the College's ability to pay in both the current year and in future years.
- **Total Compensation:** Total compensation will include wage and benefit package.

Employees from non-faculty classifications may be assigned to teach credit or non-credit courses. In these instances, the employee may be eligible for additional pay for instruction and related time, as established by the College and accepted by the employee. The College will establish guidelines that specify which classification of employees will be eligible for additional compensation for teaching such courses. The guidelines will also specify when the employees will be allowed to teach for additional compensation.

### **3.6.1 Salaried Status**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

Employees working in non-teaching jobs found to be exempt from coverage under the Fair Labor Standards Act may be paid on a salaried basis. Salaries are typically paid on a bi-weekly method and are generally not changed due to increases or decreases in work load.

Circumstances where deductions from salaried pay are appropriate include full days of sick and personal time and/or PTLA days not covered by paid time-off benefits, unpaid Family and Medical Leave absences, a partial first week of employment, or a partial final week of employment.

It is policy to comply with the salary basis requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Therefore, supervisors are prohibited from making improper deductions from the salaries of exempt employees. The College does not allow deductions that violate the Fair Labor Standards Act and wants employees to be aware of this policy.

## 3.6.2 Overtime Pay

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/1990*

Certain employees, referred to as “non-exempt” employees, are eligible for overtime pay.

Other employees, referred to as “exempt,” are not entitled to additional compensation for working overtime. Rather, their compensation packages are intended to compensate them for all hours worked, including any overtime hours.

An employee may be required to work overtime.

Non-exempt employees who have earned overtime pay will be paid at the rate of one and one-half times their hourly pay rate for all hours worked over forty (40) per week.

Compensatory time may be granted to a non-exempt employee in lieu of overtime at a time and one-half rate if:

- Prior written approval by the supervisor is obtained; and
- The employee knowingly consents in writing to receive compensatory time in lieu of overtime payment prior to any overtime work being performed; and
- The employee is made aware that the compensatory time off received may be used, preserved, or cashed out as provided by the law; and
- The compensatory time earned must not exceed forty (40) hours. The employee should work with the supervisor to establish an appropriate schedule of use

Non-exempt employees requested by the administration, and who consent to work on a paid holiday, are paid at the rate of one and one-half times their hourly base pay rate.

Non-exempt employees who are considered essential (Information Technology, Maintenance, and Food Service workers) and are requested by the administration to work on a day in which the College is officially closed and non-essential staff are not required to report to work will be compensated for all hours worked at their regular rate of pay. They will also receive pay for hours they are normally scheduled to work on that day at their current rate of hourly pay.

Hours compensated but not actually worked, such as paid time off, paid holidays and paid emergency days are not considered work time for the computation of overtime. Overtime-eligible employees that are required to work during paid leave time are exempt from this provision.

### **3.6.3 Flex Scheduling**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

Flex scheduling is the adjustment of an employee's regular work day schedule to accommodate the needs of the College. Flex scheduling, at the request of the employee, cannot result in a schedule that creates overtime.

### **3.6.4 Payroll**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

Richland Community College non-faculty employees are paid on a bi-weekly basis. A payroll period is a two-week (80 hours) period beginning on Sunday and ending on a Saturday. A standard workweek for non-exempt employees is 40 hours. All bi-weekly employees who are full time and are exempt from Fair Labor Standards Act requirements (“exempt”) ordinarily are scheduled to be paid for eighty (80) hours per bi-weekly period, unless they move into an unpaid leave or disciplinary status in accordance with College policy. Accurate and contemporaneous reporting of nonexempt employee time and attendance is the responsibility of the employee and his/her immediate supervisor. Employees and/or supervisors found improperly reporting time and attendance information are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Faculty, including adjunct faculty, non-credit, MCLETC instructors, and adult education instructors will be paid on a semi-monthly basis typically on the 15th of the month and the last day of the month, per the terms of their contract. Overload, extra-duty, and other non-scheduled pay will be paid on a semi-monthly basis typically on the 15th and last day of the month. Upon separation from the College, employee earned and unused vacation and compensatory time will be paid out during the next regularly scheduled payroll period after the employee’s termination date.

An employee’s termination date shall be established by the College.

### **3.6.4.1 Salary Overpayment and Corrections**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/1990*

The College will follow the provisions of the Illinois Wage Payment and Collections Act. In the event of a salary overpayment employees must repay all amounts paid in excess, consistent with the provisions of that Act. For employees who leave the College before full repayment has been made, the College is authorized to pursue repayment after termination, in accordance with the provisions of the Wage Payment and Collections Act.

### 3.6.5.1 Holidays

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

The College recognizes the following 9 customary holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Labor Day
- Martin Luther King's Birthday
- Thanksgiving Day and day after
- Memorial Day
- Christmas Day
- Independence Day
- Juneteenth National Freedom Day

The College also recognizes four College-designated holidays annually. These days will be determined annually at the beginning of each year.

Customary holidays will be observed on the calendar days on which they fall. However, holidays occurring on either Saturday or Sunday may be observed on the preceding day that the College is in operation or the following Monday.

Full-time, non-contractual employees will be compensated at their normal rate of pay for the holidays noted above. Part-time employees who normally would have been scheduled to work on the day the holiday falls will be paid for the hours they normally would have worked. Paid holiday hours are not included in the calculation of overtime.

Due to operational needs, some employees will be required to work on College holidays

To be eligible for holiday pay, an eligible staff member must

- be actively employed by the College both before and after the campus holiday or bonus day, and
- have worked or been on approved paid leave (e.g. vacation leave) during the pay period in which the campus holiday occurs.

### **3.6.5.2 Family and Medical Leave (FMLA)**

*Adopted: 12/2006*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

Employees of Richland Community College are eligible for family and medical leave if they have at least 12 months of service, have worked at least 1,250 hours within the preceding 12-month period, and work at a worksite where there are at least 50 employees within a 75-mile radius. The President or the President's designee must approve all FMLA leaves.

If eligible, an employee may be able to take up to 12 work weeks of medical leave during a 12-month period for one or more of the following reasons:

- The birth of a child or to care for a child within the first 12 months after birth;
- The placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care and to bond with and care for the child (within the first 12 months after placement);
- To care for the employee's spouse, child (who is under 18 years of age or incapable of self-care due to a physical or mental disability), or parent (not a parent-in-law) who has a serious health condition;
- For a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the functions of his/her position; or
- If the employee experiences a qualifying exigency that arises out of the fact that a spouse, parent, or child is on (or has been notified of an impending call to) covered active duty in the Armed Forces to a foreign country. Members of the U.S. National Guard and Reserves are on covered active duty when they are under call or order to active duty and are deployed with the Armed Forces to a foreign country.

#### **Military Caregiver Leave**

An employee who is the spouse, parent, child, or next of kin of a current member or veteran of a covered service member (including members of the Armed Forces, National Guard, or Reserves, and covered veterans) with a serious illness or injury may be eligible for up to a total of 26 weeks of FMLA leave in a 12-month period to provide care for that individual.

#### **Notice of Leave**

If an employee needs to take time off for reasons that the employee believes qualify for FMLA leave, the employee must comply with all applicable absence reporting policies and procedures.

Failure to comply with the College's absence reporting policies or to provide documentation or information requested by the College may result in leave being delayed or denied.

#### **Intermittent Leave**

When medically necessary, eligible employees may take FMLA leave intermittently or on a reduced schedule basis for their own serious health condition, the serious health condition of a family member, or for military caregiver leave. Qualifying exigency leave may be taken intermittently without regard to medical necessity or disruption of college operations.

Leave because of the birth of a healthy child or placement for adoption or foster care of a healthy child (i.e., bonding time) may not be taken intermittently and must be completed within the 12-month period beginning on the date of birth or placement of the child.

### **Medical and other Certifications**

Employees will be required to provide a medical certification if the leave request is: 1) for the employee's own serious health condition, 2) to care for a family member's serious health condition, or 3) military caregiver leave. Failure to provide the requested certification in a timely manner may result in denial of the leave until it is provided. If an employee refuses to provide a certification, his/her leave request may be denied and the employee may be subject to discipline pursuant to the College's attendance policies.

Richland Community College, at its expense, may require a medical examination by a health care provider of its own choosing if it has reason to doubt the validity of the medical certification provided by the employee., Richland Community College also may contact the health care provider directly to clarify or authenticate a medical certification, including certifications for military caregiver leave, as provided by applicable law. Second opinions will not be sought in instances of military caregiver leave.

Separate certification may also be required regarding the nature of the family member's military service and/or the existence of a qualifying exigency.

### **Fitness for Duty Certifications**

Because Richland Community College wishes to ensure the well-being of all employees, any employee returning from FMLA leave for his/her own serious health condition will need to provide a Fitness for Duty certification signed by his/her health care provider. An employee who fails to provide a Fitness for Duty certification will be prohibited from returning to work until it is provided. An employee who fails to provide a Fitness for Duty certification may be disciplined or terminated.

Fitness for Duty certifications may be required when an employee returns from intermittent FMLA leave if serious concerns exist regarding the employee's ability to resume his/her duties safely based on the serious health condition for which the employee took such leave.

### **Maintenance of Benefits**

If approved, the College will maintain the employee's individual insurance coverage (medical, life, AD&D, and LTD) for six months, or through the final date of approved FMLA leave, whichever is later. Thereafter, employees wishing to insure themselves and/or their dependents may continue the coverage by submitting their share of the premium to the College on a monthly basis for transmittal to the insurance company. Health insurance will be provided under the conditions coverage that would have been provided if the employee had been continuously and actively employed.

Richland may recover the premium it has paid for maintaining the insurance coverage if the employee does not return to work after the leave has expired, consistent with applicable law. The College requires the employee to use, concurrently with the FMLA leave, available accumulated benefit time. If the employee's benefit time is exhausted and the employee is in an unpaid status, the employee will not accrue benefit time, including holidays.

### **Concurrent Leave**

Whenever an employee qualifies for paid leave and unpaid FMLA Leave on the same absence, both shall be utilized concurrently. Employees must use any accumulated sick leave, vacation time, personal or paid leave time off to the extent available during FMLA leave. Paid leave time off may also be applied to waiting days under the College's Worker's Compensation program. Absences in excess of these accumulated days will be treated as FMLA leave without pay.

### **Married Couples Who Work for Richland Community College**

If an employee and his/her spouse both work for Richland Community College, they may be limited to a combined total of 12 weeks of FMLA leave in a 12-month period if the leave is taken for:

- The birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child;
- To care for and bond with such child who does not suffer from a serious health condition;
- To care for a parent with a serious health condition; or
- A combination of the above.
- For military caregiver leave, the employee and employee spouse may be limited to a combined total of 26 weeks of leave in a 12-month period, including the types of leave listed above in this subsection

### **Return from Leave**

Upon return from leave, the employee will be restored to his/her original or an equivalent position with equivalent pay and benefits. An employee who fails to return at the end of FMLA leave will in most cases be considered to have voluntarily resigned his/her position with Richland Community College. Employees who do not return to work at the end of their leave may be terminated.

### **State and Local Laws**

When state and local laws offer more protection or benefits, the protection or benefits provided by those laws will apply.

### 3.6.5.3 Medical (Including Maternity) Leave

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

The following conditions apply to a medical leave of absence not expressly provided for elsewhere in this manual.

A medical leave of absence may be granted to an employee where a health care provider certifies that an employee is unable to work for more than five (5) consecutive calendar days due to illness, injury, accident, or other qualified condition (including pregnancy and childbirth).

In order to apply for such a leave, the employee and the employee's health care provider must submit proper documentation. Medical leaves must be approved by the President, who reserves discretion to determine whether to grant a medical leave, unless such leave is required by applicable law. The College may require further certification of the employee's inability to work from a health care provider at any time during the leave and may also require the employee to be examined by another health care provider selected by the College. Policies for maintenance of benefits and payment of medical insurance premiums shall follow the policies as outlined in the FMLA policy, as will the procedures for recovery of premiums in cases where the employee fails to return from leave. Employees on medical leave generally may not be permitted to return to work until they have submitted a written release to return to work from the employee's health care provider.

Leaves will generally not be extended beyond twelve (12) months from the actual start date of the leave. Employees on a leave who do not return to work on or before the expiration of the twelvemonth period will be terminated from employment with the College, unless a moderate extension of this period constitutes a reasonable accommodation of a disability as defined by applicable law, or unless otherwise required by law.

Employees terminated under this provision can reapply for employment with the College at a future date if they wish, but future employment with the College is not guaranteed. Employees who fail to return from leave on the date approved by College without applying for an extension of leave will be regarded as having voluntarily resigned their employment with the College effective as of the last day actually worked. Employees who return from a leave on the date approved by College may be restored to their former job, or to a comparable job, if available. If the employee's former job or comparable job is no longer available, the employee may be assigned to any other job, provided there is an open position and the employee has the skill and ability to perform the job. If the College determines that conditions do not allow the reinstatement of the employee to any position, then the employee will be terminated.

Sick, personal, vacation and/or PTLA time will run concurrently with medical leave. Thus, after all of an employee's paid time off leave has been exhausted, the remaining term of his or her eligible medical leave will be unpaid.

### **3.6.5.4 Eligibility for Leave**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/1990*

Only full-time employees are eligible for personal, sick, bereavement, and vacation leave.

### **3.6.5.4.1 Paid Leave for All Workers Act**

*Adopted: 12/2023*

*Last Revised: 12/2023*

In compliance with 820 ILCS 192-Paid Leave for All Workers Act effective January 1, 2024, Richland Community College will offer a minimum of 40 hours paid leave during each 12-month period to all eligible employees.

The paid leave may be used by the employee for any purpose as long as the paid leave is taken in accordance with the provisions of this Act.

### **3.6.5.5 Personal Leave**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

Employees are awarded personal time if stated in their contract.

### **3.6.5.6 Sick Leave**

*Adopted: 9/2008*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

Twelve (12) paid sick leave days per fiscal year will be granted to each twelve-month full-time employee. An unlimited number of sick leave time may be accumulated.

Sick leave may be used only for absences due to an illness, injury, or medical appointment for personal and/or immediate family illnesses and personal disability, unless otherwise required to be exhausted under the College's policies or pursuant to applicable law. Immediate family is defined as parent, sister, brother, spouse, party to a civil union, child, parent-in-law, grandchild, grandparent, step-parent or anyone regularly residing with the employee.

### **3.6.5.7 Bereavement Leave**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

Each full-time employee will be granted up to a five (5) days paid bereavement leave for the death of a member of the immediate family and corresponding “step” relationships, defined as parent, parent-in-law, sibling, spouse, party to a civil union, any child, son- or daughter in-law, or someone regularly residing as a member of the household.

Each full-time employee will be granted up to three (3) days paid bereavement leave for the death of a member’s related brother-in-law, sister-in-law, grandparent, and grandchild and corresponding “step” relationships.

Each full-time employee will be granted one (1) day paid bereavement leave for the death of a member’s related aunt or uncle, first cousin, nephew or niece and corresponding “step” relationships.

Employees absent due to bereavement leave will be paid for the hours they normally would have worked.

### 3.6.5.7.1 Bereavement Leave for All Employees

*Adopted: 1/2017*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

In accordance with Illinois Family Bereavement Leave Act (FBLA), all eligible employees are entitled to take up to a total of ten (10) working days **unpaid** leave time for the death of a covered family member, stillbirth, miscarriage, unsuccessful reproductive procedure, failed adoption match or unfinalized adoption agreement, failed surrogacy agreement, or diagnosis that negatively impacts pregnancy or fertility. Employees are entitled to up to 6 weeks of unpaid leave in the event of the death of more than one covered family member in a 12-month period. FBLA leave time may be used to:

- Attend the funeral or alternative to a funeral of a covered family member; or
- Make arrangements necessitated by the death; or
- Grieve the death of the covered family member

Family Bereavement leave must be completed within 60 days after the employee receives notice of the event.

### **3.6.5.8 Vacation Leave**

*Adopted: 3/1976*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

Full-time employees classified as exempt, twelve (12)-month administrative, professional/technical and executive staff will receive twenty (20) working days of vacation per year. Employees in these classifications may accumulate up to sixty (60) days (480 hours).

Full-time employees classified as non-exempt, twelve (12)-month support staff will receive ten (10) working days paid vacation for the first year of service, adding one (1) day for each additional year of continuous service up to a maximum of twenty (20) working days. Full-time Nonexempt support staff may accumulate a maximum of forty (40) days during the first ten (10) consecutive years of service. After ten (10) consecutive years of service, full-time Non-exempt administrative staff may accumulate up to sixty (60) days (480 hours).

### **3.6.5.9 Military Leave**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 11/2011*

Each employee may be granted military leave based upon the provisions of the United States code, the Federal Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA), the Illinois Military Leave of Absence Act, or other federal and state rules and regulations. Military leave shall be without pay, unless otherwise required by law. Personal and/or sick leave may be applied to military leave.

Under the Illinois Family Military Leave Act, an eligible employee who is the spouse, party to a civil union, or parent of a person called to state or federal military service lasting longer than thirty days are eligible for leave up to 30 days.

An employee is eligible for the Illinois Family Military Leave Act if he or she has worked at least twelve months and at least 1,250 hours in the twelve months immediately preceding the requested leave. Furthermore, an employee must first exhaust all of his or her accrued vacation, personal and compensatory leave (except sick and/or medical leave) before he or she is eligible for family military leave under the Act.

### **3.6.5.10 Jury Duty**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/1990*

Full-time employees called for jury duty will be granted leave. The College will continue the employee's regular compensation while he or she serves as a juror. The employee will be required to remit to the College all per diem fees, exclusive of mileage reimbursements, received from the court.

The employee is expected to maintain communication with his or her supervisor and is expected to report for work, at the discretion of the supervisor, at such times during the term of the jury service when dismissed by the court from further service for a particular day (days) or portion thereof.

### **3.6.5.11 Leave to Vote**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/1990*

Illinois law provides all employees, upon at least one day's notice, up to two paid hours during the work day in order to vote. The leave is applicable to all scheduled and special elections, including primaries. To be eligible for this paid leave, an employee's working hours must begin less than two hours after the opening of the polls and end less than two hours before the closing of the polls.

### **3.6.5.12 Professional Leave**

*Adopted: 9/1990*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

Professional leave is defined as released time from duties for the purpose of increasing a staff member's professional efficiency and usefulness to the College.

Paid (fully or partially) or unpaid professional leaves may be granted for a year or less by the Board of Trustees for the purpose of study, research, or such other reasons as might contribute to the professional growth of staff members and improve the programs and operations of the College.

A specific amount of money may be approved in the annual budget by the Board of Trustees to fund paid professional leaves.

Staff members are eligible for a professional leave after six (6) years of full-time employment at the College. No more than two (2) faculty and two (2) staff members may be granted a professional leave in any one (1) year. Staff members granted such a leave will be eligible again after three (3) additional years of full-time employment at the College.

Paid or unpaid professional leaves may be recommended for a period of one (1) month to one (1) year in duration. A paid leave of six (6) months or less will be compensated at one hundred percent (100%) and a paid leave for a period in excess of six (6) months will be compensated at fifty percent (50%). Paid leaves will not preclude the acceptance of other monies that support the purpose of the leave, subject to the approval of the Leave Committee appointed by the President.

Individuals granted a paid professional leave shall retain all benefits as if they were in regular service at the College.

Requests for expenditures of monies from the fund shall be administered by a Leave Committee representing the administrative, professional/technical, and secretarial/clerical personnel appointed by the President.

A staff member taking a professional leave must agree in writing to return to regular full-time employment at the College for a minimum of two (2) years following the leave period. If the person taking the leave fails to meet this condition, he or she must repay all compensation received from the College during the leave period unless waived by the Board of Trustees.

### **3.6.5.13 School Visitation**

*Adopted: 5/2018*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

In compliance with the State of Illinois School Visitation Rights Act, Richland Community College provides unpaid leave time for employees who are parents or legal guardians to attend school conferences or classroom activities related to the employees' child if the conference or classroom activities cannot be scheduled during nonwork hours.

Employees must have exhausted all accrued vacation, personal leave, and compensatory time before being eligible for school visitation leave as it is defined in the Act.

Richland Community College will grant up to a total of eight (8) hours of unpaid leave, during any school year, for employees to attend school conferences or other classroom activities related to their child if these functions cannot be scheduled during non-working hours.

The term "child" is expansively defined to include "biological, adopted or foster child, stepchild, or legal ward" of the employee.

### **3.6.5.14 Illinois Victims' Economic Security and Safety (VESSA) Act**

*Adopted: 1/2018*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

The Illinois Victims' Economic Security and Safety Act, ("VESSA"), provides unpaid leave and certain other benefits to eligible employees who are, or whose family or household members are, victims of domestic or sexual violence. It is the policy of the College to comply fully with VESSA.

The College permits employees who are, or whose family or household members are, victims of domestic or sexual violence (as defined below) to take up to 12 work weeks of unpaid leave during a rolling 12-month period, measured backward from the date on which any leave is taken.

Specifically, an employee may take VESSA leave to:

- Seek medical attention for, or recovery from, physical or psychological injuries caused by domestic or sexual violence to the employee or employee's family or household member; or
- Obtain victim services for the employee's or employee's family or household member; or
- Obtain psychological or other counseling for the employee or the employee's family or household member; or
- Participate in safety planning, including temporary or permanent relocation or other actions to increase the safety of the victim from future domestic or sexual violence; or
- Seek legal assistance to ensure the health and safety of the victim, including participating in court proceedings related to the violence

#### **Requesting VESSA Leave**

Employees who wish to take VESSA leave must follow the College's usual notice requirements for reporting an absence, unless such notice is not practicable.

#### **Pay and Benefits During VESSA Leave**

VESSA leave is unpaid. However, employees may elect to use accrued, unused paid leave benefits concurrently with VESSA leave to receive pay for the leave period, subject to the terms and conditions under the applicable paid leave policies.

### **3.6.5.15 Other Leaves**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

An employee may request a leave without pay in special circumstances that are not covered by the College's other leave policies. The leave must be approved by the College President. The leave may not exceed a period of one year.

### **3.6.5.16 Layoff Status**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/1990*

An employee may be assigned to layoff status due to a reduction in force of temporary or indeterminate nature. Benefits outlined in Policy 3.7 shall terminate on the last day of the month in which the individual's last day of work occurred. Layoff and termination of tenured and non-tenured faculty shall be administered in accordance with the applicable provisions of the Illinois Public Community College Act.

### **3.6.5.17 Employee Service Incentive Program**

*Adopted: 8/2024*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

The Employee Service Incentive Program provides an opportunity for employees to provide service to the College, college colleagues, and the community. The President, or their designee, shall implement procedures and determine employee benefits for this program.

### **3.6.6 Attendance**

*Adopted: 8/2024*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

Punctual and regular attendance is an essential responsibility of each employee at Richland Community College. Employees are expected to report to work as scheduled, on time, and prepared to start working. Employees are also expected to remain at work for their entire work schedule. Late arrival, early departure, or other absences from scheduled hours are disruptive and must be avoided.

*This policy does not apply to absences covered by the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) or leave provided as a reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).*

## 3.7 Benefits

### **3.7.1 Health, Dental, Life, AD&D, and Disability Insurance Benefits**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 8/2018*

Richland Community College will make available employee health, dental, life, AD&D, disability and supplemental (optional) insurance, an employee assistance program (EAP), which contribute to the health and well-being of eligible employees of the College. The extent of coverage and carrier(s) will be determined by the Board of Trustees.

The Board of Trustees authorizes and delegates to the President of the College the authority to administer eligibility rules to ensure compliance with the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

**3.7.2 Tuition/Fees Waivers**

### 3.7.2.1 Full-Time Employees

### **3.7.2.1.1 Credit Classes**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 11/2011*

The College will waive tuition only for credit classes for full-time employees and their immediate family defined as the employee's spouse, party to a civil union, and the employee's unmarried children (26 years of age and under). Individuals in 'temporary' classifications are not eligible. If the employee dies and the spouse, party to a civil union, and/or unmarried children are currently enrolled, tuition for credit classes will be waived for an additional semester.

The courses for which this waiver is sought must have sufficient enrollments to run without the additional students enrolled as a result of this policy.

### **3.7.2.1.2 Fitness Center**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/1990*

Fees associated with the use of the College's Fitness Center will be waived for all full-time employees. This waiver does not extend to a full-time employee's immediate family.

### **3.7.2.1.3 Non-Credit Classes**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

Richland Community College will waive fees for non-credit classes for full-time employees, their spouses (if the individual is residing with the employee, party to a civil union (if the individual is residing with the employee), and dependent children (as qualified under the Internal Revenue Code), if all the following conditions are met:

- The non-credit course must be exclusively sponsored by Richland Community College, and there can be no shared revenues with third-party organizations or institutions; and
- Enrollment of paid students in the course must be sufficient to cover all costs including the instructor's salary, advertising costs, materials, supplies, etc.

Full-time employees will be required to pay for textbooks, handouts, or supplies associated with the courses which are not included in the course's tuition.

Commercial Driver's License (CDL) classes are exempt from employee tuition waivers.

### 3.7.2.2 Part-Time Employees

### **3.7.2.2.1 Credit Classes**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/1990*

Part-time employees who are employed for at least 15 hours per week on a continuous basis are eligible for a tuition waiver of two credit courses per semester. Individuals in 'temporary' and 'Student Employment' classifications are not eligible. This waiver does not extend to a part-time employee's immediate family.

The courses for which the waiver is sought must have sufficient enrollments to run without the additional students enrolled as a result of this policy.

### **3.7.2.2.2 Fitness Center**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/1990*

Fees associated with use of the College's Fitness Center will be waived for all part-time employees who are employed for at least 15 hours per week on a continuous basis. Individuals in "temporary" classification are not eligible. The waiver does not extend to a part-time employee's immediate family.

### 3.7.2.3 Adjunct Faculty

### **3.7.2.3.1 Credit Classes**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/1990*

The College will waive tuition for adjunct faculty members to take two credit courses per semester under the following conditions:

- The adjunct faculty member will be teaching at least one credit course during the semester for which the waiver is sought and,
- Will have taught at least one credit course in a previous semester.

This waiver does not extend to an adjunct faculty's immediate family.

The courses for which the waiver is sought must have sufficient enrollments to run without the additional students enrolled as a result of this policy. Further, the additional enrollment shall not over-enroll the courses.

### **3.7.2.3.2 Fitness Center**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/1990*

Fees associated with the use of the College's Fitness Center will be waived for all adjunct faculty members teaching at least one credit course during the semester for which the waiver is sought. This waiver does not extend to an adjunct faculty's immediate family.

### 3.7.2.4 Retired Employees

### **3.7.2.4.1 Credit Classes**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/1990*

Retired employees of the College (who may be qualified as an annuitant defined by the State University Retirement System) are eligible for a tuition waiver of two credit courses per semester. This waiver does not extend to the retiree's immediate family.

### **3.7.2.4.2 Fitness Center**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/1990*

Fees associated with the use of the College's Fitness Center will be waived for all retired employees (who may be qualified as an annuitant defined by the State University Retirement System) of the College. This waiver does not extend to the retiree's immediate family.

### **3.7.2.4.3 Non-Credit Classes**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

Richland Community College will waive tuition for non-credit classes for retired employees if all the following conditions are met:

- The non-credit course must be exclusively sponsored by Richland Community College, with no shared revenues with third-party organizations or institutions; and
- Enrollment of paid students in the course must be sufficient to cover all costs including the instructor's salary, advertising costs, materials, supplies, etc.; and
- Enrollment must not exceed maximum class size.

Retired employees will be required to pay for course textbooks, handouts, or supplies that are not included in the course's tuition.

Commercial Driver's License (CDL) classes are exempt from employee tuition waivers.

### **3.7.3 Retirement under the State Universities Retirement System (SURS) Program**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/1990*

All employees meeting the eligibility requirements per state statute will participate in the State Universities Retirement System Program and will be governed by the rules and regulations promulgated by the Board of Trustees of the State Universities Retirement System.

## 3.8 Disability Accommodations

### **3.8.1 Reasonable Accommodation for Disabilities**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/1990*

The College is committed to complying fully with all applicable federal, state, and local laws that are designed to promote equal opportunity in employment for qualified persons with disabilities. The College will make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals when required by law, unless doing so would result in an undue hardship as defined by applicable law. Such accommodations may include but are not limited to time away from work, modifications to an employee's work environment, special equipment, reassignment of non-essential job duties, or transfer to other open positions for which the employee is qualified.

## **3.8.2 Pregnancy and Childbirth**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/1990*

The College will provide reasonable accommodations to employees when needed due to pregnancy, childbirth, or related conditions to the same extent that accommodations are provided for other medical conditions or disabilities, and to the extent required by applicable law, unless doing so creates an undue hardship for the College.

### **3.8.3 Nursing Mothers**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/1990*

The College supports mothers who choose to breastfeed, and will provide reasonable break time and a suitable private location for expressing breast milk during the work day. The College will also comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws relating to nursing mothers in the workplace.

### **3.8.4 Religious Accommodations**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

The College respects the freedom of religion, and will grant employees reasonable accommodations when needed to avoid conflicts between work duties and their religious beliefs, if it can do so without undue hardship.

### **3.8.5 Requesting an Accommodation**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

If an accommodation is needed, the College will work with the employee to determine what accommodation is appropriate. The College will review and evaluate requested accommodations per the applicable law.

## **3.9 Service Recognition**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/1990*

Richland Community College gives appropriate recognition to those individuals who, as a result of performance of their responsibilities, bring honor to the College or to themselves. The College will continue to develop and support incentive programs that recognize and encourage excellent performance, innovation, and service to the College community.

### **3.9.1 Professor Emeritus**

*Adopted: 5/2008*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

The Board of Trustees recognizes that certain faculty have demonstrated exemplary service over the course of their careers. Such service is generally rewarded through promotion and other awards and methods of recognition. In those cases where the faculty members' service and contributions to the College have been particularly meritorious and significant, a faculty member may be eligible for appointment to Professor Emeritus upon retirement.

Bestowal of Professor Emeritus is recognition of the value the College places on the experience, knowledge, and ability of its retiring faculty. To encourage retiring faculty to remain a part of the College, to maintain their professional identity, and to continue to be productive members of the educational community, Professor Emeritus shall be awarded to retiring faculty who meet the criteria established by the College.

### **3.9.2 Staff Emeritus**

*Adopted: 5/2008*

*Last Revised: 5/2008*

The Board of Trustees recognizes that certain staff have demonstrated exemplary service over the course of their careers at Richland Community College. Such service is generally rewarded through awards and methods of recognition. In those cases where the staff member's service and contributions to the College have been particularly meritorious and significant, a staff member may be eligible for appointment to Staff Emeritus following retirement.

Bestowal of Staff Emeritus is recognition of the value the College places on the experience, knowledge, and ability of its retiring/retired staff. To encourage retiring/retired staff to remain a part of the College, to maintain their professional identity, and to continue to be productive members of the College community, Staff Emeritus shall be awarded to retiring/retired staff who meet the criteria established in the College's Procedures for the Awarding of Staff Emeritus.

**Section 4: Student Affairs**

## **4.1 Admission**

*Adopted: 6/1998*

*Last Revised: 3/2019*

Richland Community College shall admit students in accordance with all qualifications and preferences set forth in Illinois Revised Statutes, *110 ILCS 205/9.07*, and in the guidelines established by the Illinois Community College Board.

Eligibility for admission, requirements, procedures, and options are published in the College Catalog and online.

## 4.1.1 Admission to the College

*Adopted: 8/2010*

*Last Revised: 3/2019*

Richland Community College is open to all people who:

- Have graduated from high school, or
- Have received a High School Equivalency Certificate based on the GED test, or
- Intend to enroll in a GED course, or
- Are high school or gifted students who have principal/administrator approval to enroll.

### **4.1.1.1 New Student Orientation**

*Adopted: 2/2006*

*Last Revised: 5/2015*

New Student Orientation should be attended by all new degree and certificate seeking students. A new student is defined as someone who has not previously completed any college courses at Richland Community College or had taken college courses only as part of a dual credit program.

## **4.1.2 Admission to a Program or Courses**

*Adopted: 8/2010*

*Last Revised: 3/2019*

Admission to the College is not the same as admission to a program of study and/or courses. Admission to a program or courses is based upon previous education, experience, and levels of achievement.

### 4.1.2.1 Course Placement Methods

*Adopted: 8/2010*

*Last Revised: 3/2019*

Placement in courses with prerequisites may be done using a variety of measures:

- Sufficient ACT or SAT scores as established by appropriate College personnel. The student must submit proper documentation to the Records Office. The ACT or SAT scores must be no more than three years old.
- A high school cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.75 or higher for placement in English or courses with a prerequisite of eligibility for ENGL 101.
- A high school cumulative GPA of 2.75 or higher with successful completion of a 4<sup>th</sup> year of mathematics for placement in identified mathematics courses.
- An appropriate high school transition course in mathematics with a grade of C or higher.
- A GED score in mathematics and English of 165 or compatible score on other high school equivalency tests.
- Successful completion of English and/or mathematics course(s) at an accredited college or university, as recognized by the Higher Education Directory. The level of the course(s) successfully completed determines the level of course(s) for which a student may be eligible.
- Completion of an appropriate developmental course in mathematics, English, and/or reading at another accredited college or university
- Results of mathematics, Reading, or Sentence Skills placement tests administered at Richland. Placement exams, cut-off scores, and other criteria have been established by the respective programs' faculty to ensure proper course placement. Scores are valid for the length of time determined administratively.
- Results of a placement exam identical to Richland Community College's exam taken at another college or university within the determined time and presented as officially validated scores for evaluation prior to registration.

## 4.1.2.2 Course Placement Testing

*Adopted: 12/2003*

*Last Revised: 3/2019*

Students tested in mathematics, English, reading, math, or other areas may take one test of each type at no cost. A student may retest by waiting a minimum of twenty-four hours and paying a retest fee. A student may be allowed to take the test a third time only with appropriate permission and payment of the retest fee.

The student is required to retest, at no charge, if the previously determined time has passed since the student tested the first time.

### **4.1.2.3 Foreign Language Placement**

*Adopted: 12/2003*

*Last Revised: 12/2003*

Placement in a foreign language course will be determined by a student's previous foreign language education in high school or college. Students who have studied a specific foreign language in high school within the past five years are to begin their study at Richland with the course number determined by the earned quality points as outlined in the College Catalog. Foreign language faculty may grant exceptions, based on individual assessment. All persons whose most recent prior study of the language was more than five years ago should start their college study with the course number 101.

#### **4.1.2.4 Technology Orientation**

*Adopted: 5/2012*

*Last Revised: 5/2012*

All students enrolling in a course utilizing a learning management system are required to successfully complete the mandatory technology orientation.

### 4.1.3 Admission to a Program of Study

*Adopted: 6/1998*

*Last Revised: 3/2019*

Each program of study (for example, Nursing, Accounting, Associate in Arts in Teaching, etc.) has specific requirements for admission. These requirements are based on the student's previous education, work experience, and levels of achievement.

Information that may be used in admission to a program includes:

- A transcript of the student's high school and college records. The student should request a transcript from the school(s) to be sent to the Records Office at Richland.
- Test scores. Richland uses either the ACT or the SAT. Other comparable test results may be submitted if approved by appropriate Richland staff.
- Application and personal interview, including related experiences since leaving school or college.

Students may be provisionally admitted to a program, even though they fail to meet all the requirements. Students provisionally admitted may be required to enroll in developmental courses, take a reduced load, complete further testing, and/or receive career counseling.

Similar procedures may also be applied to students enrolling in individual courses only.

## 4.1.4 Admission of High School Students and "Gifted" High School Students

*Adopted: 6/1998*

*Last Revised: 5/2015*

High school students may take Richland courses for either application toward a high school diploma or a college credit. Eligibility for enrollment as a high school student is decided as follows:

1. The student is a high school student.
2. The student's high school principal submits the appropriate form stating the student is taking the course(s) for high school or college credit, and has the principal's approval.
3. A high school transcript is submitted to Richland.
4. Tuition may be determined by course and delivery.
5. Final approval for enrollment is then determined by Richland.

**"Gifted students"** are students with exceptionally high academic ability as determined by the students' school and the College.

## **4.1.5 Student Enrollment Status**

*Adopted: 1/2001*

*Last Revised: 8/2010*

Verification of student enrollment status, for any purpose, may be obtained only through the Student Records Office. Documentation from other individuals or College offices does not represent an official College record.

## 4.2 Residency Status

*Adopted: 10/1993*

*Last Revised: 5/2025*

Students enrolling at Richland Community College shall be classified as in-district resident, out-of-district resident, or out-of-state resident for tuition and fee purposes according to ICCB Administrative Rule 1501.501-05. The College is authorized to require such documentation to verify residency status.

A student is considered a resident of Richland Community College District 537 if the student occupied a dwelling within the district for at least 30 days immediately before starting classes. The College shall maintain documentation verifying State or district residency of students.

### **Special Residency Status**

Students who are currently under the legal guardianship of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services or have been recently emancipated from the Department and had a placement change into a new community college district shall be exempt from the 30-day requirement if they demonstrate proof of current in-district residency. Documentation of current residency may be submitted to the district from the student, a case worker or other personnel of the Department, or the student's attorney or guardian ad litem.

Richland will charge in-district tuition rates for students utilizing benefits under the federal All-Volunteer Force Educational Assistance Program or the federal Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 or any subsequent variations of that Act.

Students shall not be classified as residents of the district where attending even though they may have met the general 30-day residency provision if they are: federal job corps workers stationed in the district; inmates of State or federal correctional/rehabilitation institutions located in the district; or students attending under a chargeback or cooperative agreement with another community college.

Students shall be classified as residents of the State without meeting the general 30-day residency provision if they are: federal job corps workers stationed in Illinois; members of the armed services stationed in Illinois; inmates of State correctional/rehabilitation institutions located in Illinois; or employed full time in Illinois.

Students who live out-of-district but work 35 or more hours per week in district can complete a residency verification form with the Cashier's to be considered for in-district rates.

Senior Citizens aged 65 shall be charged the in-district rate.

Students who move from outside the district and who obtain residence in the district for reasons other than attending the College are exempt from the 30-day in district requirement if they provide documentation of a verifiable interest in establishing permanent residency.

## **4.3 Tuition and Fees**

*Adopted: 7/1993*

*Last Revised: 7/1993*

Tuition and fees for resident and non-resident students may be charged as permitted by law and as established by action of the Board of Trustees. Other fees may be required depending on the status of the student, the program in which the student is enrolled, and the requirements of the College.

Each semester, the Business Services Office shall determine and publish a due date (before the beginning of the semester) by which time all tuition and fees are to be paid.

### **4.3.1 Senior Citizen Tuition**

*Adopted: 7/2000*

*Last Revised: 7/2000*

District 537 residents who are 65 or older or who will become 65 years old during the calendar year are eligible to enroll without the payment of tuition in regularly scheduled credit courses, other than credit courses designed specifically for senior citizens, provided that such enrollment does not over-enroll the course and tuition paying students enrolled constitute the minimum number required for the course. Such waiver does not apply to all other fees associated with enrollment in such course.

### **4.3.2 Education Service Agreement**

*Adopted: 12/1993*

*Last Revised: 8/2010*

The College may enter into written agreement with a business, civic, social service organization, or any government entity to provide instruction to employees of such groups. The College may also enter into written agreement to provide instruction to students from certain high schools, community colleges having reciprocal cooperative educational programs, and four-year public and private colleges and universities. Individual students enrolling under such an agreement will be subject to the current in-district tuition rate including the prevailing fees.

### **4.3.3 Tuition and Fee Installment Plan**

*Adopted: 12/1994*

*Last Revised: 8/2010*

To better serve the needs of students, the College may offer an Installment Plan for the payment of tuition and fees. Students will be subject to all policies and procedures relating to the payment of student accounts associated with the plan.

### **4.3.4 Cooperative Educational Programs with Other Community Colleges**

*Adopted: 10/2000*

*Last Revised: 8/2010*

Richland Community College has Cooperative Educational Program agreements with other Illinois community colleges that all Richland Community College District residents to enroll in a degree and or certificate program in a vocational-technical program not available at Richland. Students are able to enroll in such a program at the cooperating college's in-district tuition rate and programs offered are listed in the College Catalog.

Students may take all specialized courses at the cooperating college. Related technical and general education courses required in the programs may be taken either at Richland or at the cooperating college. The cooperating college issues all degrees or certificates for successful completion of the programs.

### **4.3.5 Continuing Education Fees**

*Adopted: 9/1996*

*Last Revised: 8/2010*

Continuing Education tuition rate is a variable rate and set separately for each course, depending upon the amount of the direct costs.

### **4.3.6 Non-Credit Fitness Center Fees**

*Adopted: 1/1994*

*Last Revised: 5/2015*

A non-credit open entry/exit enrollment option to the College Fitness Center is available for Richland students who are not desiring college credit.

## 4.4 Tuition Refunds

*Adopted: 7/1993*

*Last Revised: 5/2015*

Richland Community College's refund policy is based on full payment of tuition, fees, and other charges. Any student who registers and then officially withdraws from any or all classes at the College will have a portion of his or her tuition returned according to the refund schedule determined by the Business Services Office.

Students participating in the Pell grant program shall receive refunds computed in accordance with Federal regulations.

## 4.5 Student Financial Obligations

*Adopted: 8/2010*

*Last Revised: 11/2023*

Students shall discharge all financial and other obligations to the College prior to registering for the next semester. These obligations include, but are not limited to, tuition, fees, and any other amount due to the college.

Students with a balance due of \$100 or more will have a hold placed on their account before registration for the next semester opens; grades and transcripts may also be withheld.

Students who wish to have the hold remove to allow for registration should submit a request to the Cashier's office via email at [businessoffice@richland.edu](mailto:businessoffice@richland.edu), or in person at the Cashier's window located in the Student Success Center.

Students with a balance of \$100 or more who have an unpaid balance after 3 billing cycles may be sent to a third-party collection agency.

In accordance with Illinois Public Act 103-0054, Richland Community College will not withhold transcripts from students with a balance owed if the transcript is requested for the following reasons:

- Complete a job application
- Transfer from one institution of higher learning to another
- Apply for State, Federal, or institutional financial aid
- Join the United States Armed Forces or Illinois National Guard
- Pursue other postsecondary opportunities

## 4.6 Academic Standards

## 4.6.1 Grading Standards

*Adopted: 6/1996*

*Last Revised: 5/2021*

### 4.6.1 Grading Designations – 6/18/96; revised 10/21/03, 8/17/10, 1/17/12, 6/20/17, 5/18/21

The following grade designations are used at Richland to represent the student's level of performance in courses or to document credits earned from an external source:

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A	Superior or excellent
B	Very good or above average
C	Good or average
D	Barely passing or below average
F	Failure or unsatisfactory
AU	Audit (For more information, see "Auditing a Course" in this section.)
CR/X	Completed course requirements or did not complete course requirements. CR/X grades are applicable for vocational courses.
I	Incomplete. All course work must be finished by the end of each term unless the instructor agrees in writing to a suspension of the requirement.
PF	Pass/Fail for selected courses to be determined by faculty and the Dean of a division with the approval of the Academic Senate.
W	Withdraw
AC	Credit awarded through advanced course
AP	Credit awarded through Advanced Placement
CE	Credit awarded through proficiency exam
CL	Credit awarded through CLEP exam
DA	Credit awarded through DSST exam
IB	Credit awarded through International Baccalaureate Program
JO	Credit awarded through Journeyman Card
LI	Credit awarded through licensure
PT	Credit awarded through professional training
PO	Credit awarded through portfolio

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## 4.6.2 Grade Point Average Standards

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/2021*

The minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) standard for all attempted courses is 2.0. Students are considered “in good standing” if they meet the minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0, are eligible to re-enroll at the College, and are not on academic probation or suspension.

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A student who fails to achieve the minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0 may be placed on academic probation. Standards are available in official publications such as the *College Catalog* and in the Student Success Office. Semester and cumulative attempted hours are located on the unofficial and official transcripts. Attempted hours are also used to calculate Satisfactory Academic Progress to qualify for federal and state financial aid.

Failure to achieve a cumulative 2.00 GPA in the subsequent semester after being placed on Academic Probation may result in Academic Suspension (dismissal from the College) for one or more semesters, excluding the summer term.

A student may appeal following the Student Grievance Policy.

### **4.6.3 Auditing a Course**

*Adopted: 12/1994*

*Last Revised: 8/2010*

Any credit class offered by Richland may be taken as an audit unless otherwise specified.

Students wishing to audit a class will be assessed the credit hour rate and other applicable fees and must complete an audit form in Student Records by the add/drop period. Changes to the grading status cannot be made after this period, and a grade of AU will be assigned at the completion of the course. No credit will be awarded for auditing a course.

## 4.6.4 Dropping or Withdrawing from a Course

*Adopted: 10/1993*

*Last Revised: 5/2021*

A student may drop or withdraw from a course during the allotted timeframe as determined by the President of the College or the President's designee. A drop occurs within the refund period; a withdrawal occurs after the refund period but before the official last day of withdrawal for the course.

## 4.6.5 Administrative Drop or Withdrawal

*Adopted: 10/1993*

*Last Revised: 5/2021*

An instructor may drop a student who has failed to attend the first two class sessions.

At mid-term the College will withdraw any student who has failed to meet the attendance standard or attain sufficient progress as certified by the instructor.

During the allotted timeframe, as determined by the President of the College or the President's designee and as outlined in the College Catalog, an instructor may drop or withdraw a student who has failed to meet attendance standards or attain sufficient progress in the course but is not required to do so.

## **4.6.6 Withdrawing from the College**

*Adopted: 10/1993*

*Last Revised: 5/2015*

A student withdrawing from the College is required to settle all obligations, including money owed to the College, and should contact a Student Success Center staff member as part of the withdrawal process.

## 4.6.7 Repeating a Course

*Adopted: 10/1993*

*Last Revised: 10/2003*

Students may repeat any course taken at Richland Community College with the understanding that the earlier grade and credit hours will be replaced by the most recent, even if the most recent grade and credit hours are lower.

Students should be cautioned that some colleges include all grades earned in computing grade point averages even if the course has been repeated.

## 4.6.8 Appealing a Grade

*Adopted: 3/1996*

*Last Revised: 10/2003*

A student who feels he/she has received an unfair or inaccurate grade may appeal through the Student Grievance Policy found in the Student Rights, Responsibilities, Grievance, and Disciplinary Proceedings.

## 4.6.9 Vice President's Academic Honors

*Adopted: 10/1993*

*Last Revised: 5/2021*

The Vice President's Academic Honors List includes the names of students who have:

- Completed 12 or more cumulative semester hours; and
- Completed 6 or more semester hours for the current term; and
- Attained at least a 3.50 GPA for the current term.

## 4.6.10 Graduation Requirements

## 4.6.10.1 Graduating with Multiple Certificates or Degrees

*Adopted: 10/1993*

*Last Revised: 8/2015*

Richland students may work toward completion of more than one program of study if they so desire. Students may receive all certificates and AAS degrees for which they have completed the requirements. In order to receive a second transfer-oriented associate's degree, a student must:

- Complete all graduation requirements for the second degree; and
- Complete at least an additional 10 hours of applicable credit beyond the first degree.

A separate *Application for Graduation* must be submitted for each certificate or associate's degree.

A student may earn only one Associate in Arts (AA) degree, one Associate in Science (AS) degree, one Associate in Fine

Arts (AFA) degree, and one Associate in Engineering Science (AES) degree.

## 4.6.10.2 Graduating Transfer Students

*Adopted: 10/1993*

*Last Revised: 8/2010*

Many students enter Richland after completing courses at other institutions. In order to give these students credit for previous college work and, at the same time, maintain Richland's standards for graduation, students must complete a total of 15 semester hours of an associate's degree or half of the credit for a certificate program (up to 15 hours) at Richland.

Richland students completing occupational certificate programs only offered within the Division of Correctional Education are exempt from this 15-semester-hour requirement.

If a transfer student completes a course at Richland that is substantially the same as a course for which the student received transfer credit, the hours of transfer credit will be replaced by the hours earned at Richland.

### 4.6.10.3 Earning Graduation Honors

*Adopted: 10/1993*

*Last Revised: 4/2006*

When a student applies for graduation, all 100-level course work and above will be evaluated for graduation academic honors. Students must have earned at least half of the credits needed for their degree or certificate at Richland Community College. In addition, students must have met Richland Community College's residency requirement, which means completing no fewer than 15 hours for a degree or half of the certificate requirements at Richland Community College.

Graduation academic honors are based on the student's cumulative grade point average as follows:

Cumulative GPA	
3.50 - 3.74	Honors
3.75 - 3.99	High Honors
4.00	Highest Honors

Graduation academic honors are noted on a student's transcript and at graduation.

#### **4.6.10.4 Effect of Changes in Program on Graduation**

*Adopted: 10/1993*

*Last Revised: 8/2006*

The student has the responsibility to know and fulfill all degree/certificate academic requirements and follow graduation procedures. The advisor's role is to assist the student in making decisions.

Students whose enrollment has not been interrupted by three or more years (six successive semesters, excluding summers) should graduate under the program structure listed in the Catalog for the year in which they enter their certificate or degree program. In cases where a current program is changed, the student should work with the appropriate Dean and the Registrar to determine the appropriate coursework required.

Students whose enrollment has been interrupted by three or more years (six successive semesters, excluding summers) are required to follow graduation requirements of the catalog in effect at the time of reentry or any catalog published after reentry.

Because of licensing criteria, legal requirements, or other conditions, graduation from certain programs (including selective admission programs), such as those in the Health Professions Division, may fall under different guidelines as determined by the Registrar in consultation with the appropriate Dean. In such cases, the student must follow the program in existence at the time of admission to or re-entry into the program.

If a student wishes to graduate under program provisions other than those above, the Registrar will review the student's Application for Graduation and will consult with the appropriate Dean regarding clearance for graduation.

## 4.6.11 Computer Technology Fluency

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 4/2006*

All degree-granting programs will be designed to provide instruction leading to computer fluency, defined as the ability to use computers and other related technologies to access, gather, organize, manage, evaluate, and communicate information; to generalize and apply learned skills to new situations and problems; and to conduct these activities confidently, effectively, and legally. These instructions may be provided by specific computer courses or incorporated into courses within the degree program.

## 4.6.12 Student Military Leave

*Adopted: 3/2025*

*Last Revised: 3/2025*

Any student who is a member of the United States military or National Guard of any state, including the District of Columbia, a commonwealth, or a territory of the United States, or any reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States shall have the ability to submit any coursework upon their return from duty within a reasonable period of time, provided that the coursework was assigned, submitted, or assessed during the student's military duty period.

In the event that a student's military duty period extends past the end of an academic semester, the college shall assign a grade of incomplete ("I"). The dates of the student's military duty shall be verified by the Registrar upon the student's return to the college.

Upon the student's return to the college, the student shall have the right to request to be administratively withdrawn from courses they were registered for during their military duty period, resulting in a final grade of "W". This request must be made within 30 days following the end of the student's military duty period. Students who choose to withdraw in this manner will be refunded tuition paid for the classes they withdraw from, and the student will not be subject to financial aid or satisfactory academic progress standards for the withdrawal term, as is allowed by applicable law.

## 4.7 Earned College Credit

*Adopted: 6/2008*

*Last Revised: 6/2008*

College credit may be earned through course completion, proficiency credit, transfer credit, professional licensure or certification, or training and work experience equivalency. Credit may be reviewed by faculty and may not be accepted in all programs.

## 4.7.1 Course Completion

*Adopted: 6/2008*

*Last Revised: 6/2008*

Students are granted credit by meeting course competencies and objectives for courses offered and conducted by Richland Community College.

## 4.7.2 Proficiency Credit

*Adopted: 6/2008*

*Last Revised: 6/2008*

Students with a wide variety of educational experiences may convert this experience into college credit on the basis of evaluations by designated Richland Community College personnel.

### **4.7.3 Transfer Credit**

*Adopted: 6/2008*

*Last Revised: 6/2008*

A student who has been officially accepted as a Richland Community College student may apply for and receive college credit for courses taken at an accredited postsecondary institution, as recognized by the Higher Education Directory, and which meet the course objectives of his/her academic program required for graduation at Richland Community College. Approved credit hours will be applied toward the total number of hours needed for the degree or certificate, provided the average grade for all such work is “C” or better. Transfer credit will not be included in computing the student’s grade point average at Richland. Approved credit hours will be recorded on the student’s academic record after a formal evaluation of the transfer work.

## **4.7.4 Credit Equivalency by Licensure or Certification**

*Adopted: 6/2008*

*Last Revised: 6/2008*

If a student has already obtained a recognized license or certification for which the College offers a technical curriculum, that student may be granted credit for specific courses in the program of study for which he/she is pursuing. Approved credit will be posted to the student's record after a minimum of eight (8) semester hours of 100-level or above credit has been earned at the College and after any additional program requirements have been fulfilled.

## 4.7.5 Credit Equivalency for Professional Training

*Adopted: 6/2008*

*Last Revised: 6/2008*

Academic course credit for professional training events in some disciplines and technical fields may be granted if the event is offered by Richland Community College and/or one or more of the College's training partners. A training partner is a professional organization or other authorized training provider recognized by the College. This partner ensures that the training meets predetermined standards. In some instances, training must be delivered by certified instructors as dictated by program/curricular requirements. The training must meet all objectives of the relevant course(s) in order to receive credit, as determined by faculty responsible for the content area. Approved credit will be posted to the student's record after a minimum of eight (8) semester hours of 100-level or above credit has been earned at the College.

## 4.7.6 Credit Equivalency for Professional Experience

*Adopted: 6/2008*

*Last Revised: 6/2008*

Students with wide varieties of experience may develop a portfolio of these experiences and apply for course credit. A portfolio is a collection of documentation of learning, which may include samples of actual work, and is submitted for evaluation in consideration of course credit. The portfolio must meet all objectives of the course in order to receive credit, as determined by faculty responsible for the course. Approved credit will be posted to the student's record after a minimum of eight (8) semester hours of 100-level or above credit has been earned at the College.

## **4.7.7 Credit for Military Service & Training**

*Adopted: 6/2008*

*Last Revised: 6/2008*

A student who has been officially accepted as a Richland Community College student may apply for and receive college credit for courses taken while serving in the military, if the courses meet the objectives of his/her academic program as required for graduation from Richland Community College. Consideration for the awarding of credit for military experience and training will be guided by the college credit recommendations developed by the American Council on Education. Approved credit will be posted to the student's record after a minimum of eight (8) semester hours of 100-level or above credit has been earned at the College.

### **4.7.7.1 Armed Forces Health and Physical Education**

*Adopted: 6/2008*

*Last Revised: 6/2008*

Any veteran who has completed a minimum of six months' active duty in the armed forces and presented evidence of an honorable or general "under honorable conditions" discharge from the service is eligible for a maximum of four semester hours of physical education activity course credit. Approved credit will not be used to compute a grade point average. Approved credit will be posted to the student's record after a minimum of eight (8) semester hours of 100-level or above credit has been earned at the College.

## 4.8 Student Evaluation System

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/1990*

The grading system shall be published in the College Catalog. Evaluation standards shall be included in course syllabi.

## 4.9 Student Records

*Adopted: 1/2001*

*Last Revised: 1/2001*

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 and its accompanying regulations establish the rights of students, including rights pertaining to their educational records. Information regarding accessibility to student records is available in the College Catalog.

## 4.9.1 Directory and Confidential Information

*Adopted: 1/2001*

*Last Revised: 5/2015*

All information received by the College becomes a part of the student's education record except for information specifically exempted under FERPA. Student education records are classified as follows:

### **Directory Information**

Consists of a student's name, address, telephone listing, electronic mail address, photograph, date and place of birth, major field of study, dates of attendance, grade level, participation in officially recognized activities, degrees, honors, and awards received, the most recent educational agency or institution attended, student ID number, user ID, or other unique personal identifier used to communicate in electronic systems that cannot be used to access education records without a PIN, password, etc. (A student's SSN, in whole or in part, cannot be used for this purpose.)

Directory information may be released by the College to any person or organization without the student's consent. If a student does not want directory information released, a form must be filed with Student Records.

### **Confidential Information**

All information other than directory information is considered confidential. Examples of confidential items include:

- Class schedule, daily attendance, academic record, grade reports, progress reports, high school and college transcripts, and test results;
- Correspondence, including letters of recommendation and comments from counselors and faculty; and
- Application information for financial aid and veterans' educational benefits.

## **4.9.2 Access to Confidential Information by Students**

*Adopted: 1/2001*

*Last Revised: 5/2015*

Students may have access to the confidential information in their own records by submitting a written request to Student Records, subject to exceptions under the law. The College will comply with the request within 45 days.

Students have the right to a hearing to challenge any portion of their education records. Requests for a hearing should be directed to the Vice President of Student Success.

### 4.9.3 Access to Confidential Information by Others

*Adopted: 1/2001*

*Last Revised: 8/2010*

Confidential information contained in a student's records will not be released to other parties without the student's consent. Exceptions are listed below, and information is given only with the understanding that such information may not be passed on to a third party without the student's written consent.

The College will maintain a record of all persons other than College personnel who have obtained access to a student's records. The College record will include the legitimate reason that the outside party has for reviewing the student's educational record.

Persons and agencies who may review student's records without student consent are:

- College personnel having a legitimate need for information as a result of their College duties;
- Colleges, universities, and other academic institutions at which the student wishes to enroll;
- Agencies and their representatives requesting financial aid information in connection with a student's application for or receipt of financial aid;
- State and local officials to whom the College must release information as required by a state statute or administrative regulation adopted before November 19, 1974;
- State and federal officials for auditing and evaluating federally or state-supported education programs or enforcing legal requirements related to these programs;
- Organizations conducting studies for the College, including the development, validation, or administration of student aid programs, and improvement of instruction;
- Persons acting pursuant to a judicial order or subpoena, providing the College notifies the student before complying;
- Appropriate persons if necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or others; and
- Parents of an eligible student who is claimed as a dependent for income tax purposes.

## 4.9.4 Withholding Student Information

*Adopted: 11/1995*

*Last Revised: 11/2023*

The College has the right to withhold grade reports, transcripts, certificates and degrees, and other student information if the student has unmet obligations, including financial obligations, to the college.

In accordance with Illinois Public Act 103-0054, Richland Community College will not withhold transcripts from students with a balance owed if the transcript is requested for the following reasons:

- Complete a job application
- Transfer from one institution of higher learning to another
- Apply for State, Federal, or institutional financial aid
- Join the United States Armed Forces or Illinois National Guard
- Pursue other postsecondary opportunities

## 4.9.5 Deceased Students

*Adopted: 7/2007*

*Last Revised: 7/2007*

Records of deceased students may be released upon request to legally authorized representatives.

## 4.10 Out of District Charges

## **4.10.1 Cooperative Agreements**

*Adopted: 10/2003*

*Last Revised: 5/2015*

Richland has cooperative agreements with many other community colleges. Cooperative agreements provide a student with the opportunity to attend another Illinois community college for program not offered at Richland. Cooperative Agreement applications must be completed prior to the start of each academic year the student is attending the other community college, regardless of any prior year's approval.

## 4.10.2 Charge-Backs

*Adopted: 10/2003*

*Last Revised: 8/2010*

Residents of Richland Community College's District who choose to pursue a program of study that is not offered by Richland at another Illinois public community college may be eligible for a charge-back. If a charge-back is approved by the Richland Board of Trustees, the College will pay an out-of-district fee prescribed by the other College. Charge-backs may not be approved for an individual course.

If Richland has a cooperative agreement with another college for the program of study for which the student is requesting a charge-back, the College may not approve a charge-back request.

Applications for charge-back must be completed and submitted to the Vice President of Academic Services no later than 30 days prior to the beginning of each academic year the student is attending the other community college, regardless of any prior year's approval. Charge-backs may not be approved retroactive to the time of application.

## 4.11 Scholarships and Institutional Waivers

*Adopted: 8/2004*

*Last Revised: 5/2015*

Richland Community College and the Richland Community College Foundation offer scholarships and tuition waivers to students. The Board of Trustees authorizes the Administration to establish the applicable criteria and procedures for administering such awards. Scholarship or waiver recipients may be required to submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to determine their eligibility for other aid awards. Other awards (except the PELL Grant and Direct Student Loans) will be applied to the student's account before the RCC scholarship or college tuition waiver is applied.

## 4.12 Student Insurance

## 4.12.1 General Insurance Coverage

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/1990*

The staff is authorized to make arrangements with insurance agencies to provide insurance coverage for students at the expense of the student. It should be noted that any settlement relating to individual insurance policies will be a direct matter between the student and the insurance company, and the College will not be involved.

## **4.12.2 Insurance for Participation in Extra-Curricular Activities**

*Adopted: 8/1993*

*Last Revised: 8/1993*

Any student who engages in extra-curricular activities, including intramural sports, must provide his or her own insurance coverage either through a separate policy or a policy held by the student's parents if he or she wishes to be insured.

### **4.12.3 Assistance in Obtaining Insurance Coverage**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/1990*

The College will make all reasonable efforts to facilitate a student making arrangements for insurance coverage with a private carrier. Any student not covered through his or her parent's policy, who elects not to purchase his or her own coverage, will assume responsibility for all expenses connected with any injuries incurred during the activity-type programs.

## 4.13 Chronic Communicable Diseases

*Adopted: 8/2010*

*Last Revised: 8/2010*

Students with chronic communicable diseases may attend school in the regular classroom setting whenever, through reasonable accommodation, the risk of transmission of the disease or the risk of further injury to the student is sufficiently remote in such a setting.

Each student with a chronic communicable disease shall be evaluated by a placement committee that will consist of the President, as Chairperson, and other appropriate College personnel, a physician or other consultants selected by the President or his/her designee, the student's physician, public health personnel, the student, and the student's parents or guardians.

The student's placement shall be determined in accordance with the above standards and upon the following factors: the risk of transmission of disease to others; the health risk to the particular student; and reasonable accommodations which can be made without undue hardship to reduce the health risk to the student and others. The vote of a majority of the committee shall determine the student's placement.

The student shall be reevaluated periodically, at least once a year, by the placement committee to determine whether the student's placement continues to be appropriate. The student's medical condition shall be disclosed only to the extent necessary to minimize the health risks to the students and others. The College President may establish additional rules and regulations designed to implement this policy.

## 4.14 Substance Abuse and Intoxicant Use

*Adopted: 5/2015*

*Last Revised: 5/2015*

A student shall not possess or use any illegal or controlled drug or substance in either refined or crude form on college property except under the direction of a licensed physician. Any student who violates any provision of federal or state law pertaining to the manufacture, possession, purchase, sale or use of drugs on college property will be referred to the appropriate civil authority. Irresponsible behavior attributable to any such drug or substance will not be tolerated and will be subject to college disciplinary action, which may include expulsion from the college.

A student shall not possess drug paraphernalia commonly used for the consumption, distribution or ingestion of cannabis or controlled drug or substance. Drug paraphernalia includes but is not limited to, pipes, syringes, packaging material, scales, etc. Any student possessing these items will be subject to college disciplinary action, which may include expulsion from the college.

Possession and use of intoxicants on College property is prohibited. Irresponsible behavior attributable to any such intoxicants will not be tolerated and will be subject to College disciplinary action, which may include expulsion from the College.

## 4.15 Students Rights and Responsibilities

*Adopted: 4/1998*

*Last Revised: 10/2003*

Richland Community College, an open-door institution, recognizes the rights of its students guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Illinois. The College further recognizes and identifies students' rights to equal access to all programs, information, freedom of speech, inquiry, assembly, to the peaceful pursuit of an education, and to the reasonable use of services and facilities of the College.

Richland Community College is committed to learning and teaching. As a teaching and learning community, relationships among students, faculty, and staff are marked by mutual respect and appreciation for each other's roles and responsibilities.

Furthermore, Richland Community College strives to maintain an educational environment that supports the academic, professional and/or personal development of all members of the community and identifies responsibilities assigned to students as members of the learning community.

Richland Community College has established a "Statement of Student Rights" and a "Statement of Student Responsibilities" to educate students about the manner in which they are to pursue their own educational objectives as well as support the objectives of others. These statements identify the rights to which students are entitled through membership in the Richland learning community along with the responsible behaviors in which students should be engaged as members of the learning community.

## 4.15.1 Statement of Student Rights

*Adopted: 4/1998*

*Last Revised: 5/2015*

As members of Richland's learning community, students are entitled to certain rights and provisions, to include a quality education and quality services. In addition, students have the right to know:

- The College's admissions requirements
- The degrees and certificates offered
- The types of career and personal development resources available
- When classes are offered
- Course requirements
- Policy on class attendance and participation
- Grading policies and procedures
- The cost of attendance
- Financial aid and veterans' educational benefits available
- How financial aid eligibility is determined
- How financial aid awards are calculated
- When financial aid is awarded
- The College and financial aid satisfactory academic progress requirements and their implications
- The College's refund policy
- The College policies and procedures
- The academic and other support services available
- Student activities available
- The Campus' crime statistics
- Graduation rates
- Job placement rates
- Emergency procedures
- Building hours
- College operational hours
- How to file a grievance

## 4.15.2 Statement of Student Responsibilities

*Adopted: 4/1998*

*Last Revised: 10/2003*

Listed below are the responsibilities that Richland students accept through membership in the College's learning community. Each student should approach academic endeavors, relationships, and personal responsibilities with a strong commitment to personal integrity and mutual respect. As members of the Richland teaching and learning community, students have a responsibility to:

- Read the College Catalog and Student Handbook
- Become knowledgeable about College policies and procedures
- Abide by College policies and procedures
- Be aware of academic and graduation requirements
- Provide accurate information on College forms
- Meet financial obligations to the College
- Attend classes and be on time
- Complete assignments and exams based upon course syllabus information
- Participate in class
- Fulfill their academic responsibilities in an honest and forthright manner
- Utilize appropriate support services when needed
- Seek help from faculty when needed
- Seek out answers to questions
- Abide by the equipment usage policy
- Meet published deadlines
- Notify College officials if a condition exists which is in violation of a student's rights, College policies, rules, standards, and procedures
- Join/seek out groups and individuals that will help students achieve their goals
- Abide by state and federal laws
- Conduct themselves in a responsible manner in and out of the classroom
- Protect, support, and contribute to a safe environment within the learning community
- Show regard for the property of the College, its community members and visitors
- Assist the College in fulfilling its administrative responsibilities

### 4.15.3 Student Grievances

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/2021*

When a student believes that a situation exists that is in violation of student rights, College policies, rules, standards, or procedures, the student has the right to file a grievance.

A grievance may be categorized as follows:

- Academic Concerns
  - Academic Dishonesty
  - Academic Suspension
  - Educational Guarantee
  - Program Dismissal
  - Grade Appeals
  - Graduation Requirements
  - Other Academic Concerns
- Americans With Disabilities Act (accommodations)
- Discrimination (age, disability, gender, race, color, sexual orientation, religion)
- Financial Aid Suspension
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (confidentiality)
- Sexual Harassment (by students, staff, or faculty)
- Student Conduct
- Student Employment
- Tuition Refunds
- Others not represented above

A grievance may be resolved through either an informal or formal process. Informal or formal hearings and resolution of complaints will be conducted in a prompt and fair manner without fear of retribution.

Formal hearings are conducted by the College's Judicial Board. A Special Committee will be appointed by the President to address complaints against senior executives.

The College student grievance processes, although encouraged in resolving grievance issues, are not mandatory. Students may seek alternatives in resolving grievances. Procedures for an informal or formal grievance filing are available online.

#### **4.15.4**

Composition of the Judicial Board

*Adopted: 7/2000*

*Removed: 5/2015*

## 4.15.5 Student Conduct

*Adopted: 4/1998*

*Last Revised: 5/2015*

Students enrolled at Richland Community College are considered by the College to have reached the age of responsible citizenship and are expected to conduct themselves in a responsible manner while on campus.

By the act of registration for classes at the College, students obligate themselves to adhere to the rules and regulations which the institution formulates and publishes in the College Catalog, Student Handbook, and other published materials. Accordingly, students are expected to assume primary responsibility for their own conduct.

Disciplinary action may be imposed upon a student by an instructor or an administrator of the College for gross misconduct that would tend to interfere with educational process, disrupt the normal activities of the institution, or infringe upon the rights of others while the student is on the College premises (owned, leased or rented) or at functions under the sponsorship of the College. In addition, the College reserves the right to remove any individual from the campus who is physically or verbally disrupting a class or disturbing the peace.

Students charged with misconduct or with violation of law and/or College rules and policies may be subject to written reprimand, restitution, temporary expulsion, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion. Individuals who are not students and who violate these regulations will be considered trespassers and will be treated accordingly.

In addition, charges of a disciplinary nature may be filed against a student by a fellow student.

When an action is taken against a student by a faculty member or other College personnel, the student has a right to a formal hearing. Prior to imposing an expulsion or a suspension of a semester or longer, the College's Judicial Board must conduct a formal hearing unless the student waives this right. Procedures for conducting a hearing will be published and made available to students.

Students removed from the College must apply for readmission through the Vice President of Student Success. Richland Community College reserves the right to require a psychological or psychiatric examination from any student at any time that such course of action would seem to be in the best interest of the student and/or the College district. Expenses incident to such an examination will be paid by the College.

Students, as citizens, remain subject to the Federal, State and local laws; therefore, the Judicial Board is not intended to replace or modify existing law. The College and its students recognize that violation of these laws may lead to prosecution by agencies or persons in addition to the College.

## **4.15.6 Academic Integrity**

*Adopted: 4/1998*

*Last Revised: 8/2010*

All students are expected to maintain academic integrity in their academic work and honesty in all dealings with the College. A student who cheats, plagiarizes, or furnishes false, misleading information to the College is subject to disciplinary action up to and including failure of a class or suspension/expulsion from the College.

## 4.15.7 Removal from a Class or the College

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 4/1998*

The Colleges reserves the right to remove any individual from a class or the College for the following reasons:

- For physically or verbally disrupting a class or disturbing the peace.
- For unsatisfactory academic progress.
- For gross misconduct or any other actions or unlawful conduct which would tend to interfere with the educational process, disrupt the normal activities of the institution, or infringe upon the rights of others while the individual is on the College premises (owned, leased, or rented) or at functions under the sponsorship of the College.

## **4.15.8 Hazing Prohibition**

*Adopted: 8/2025*

*Last Revised: 8/2025*

Pursuant to federal public law 118-173 (the Stop Campus Hazing Act), the President or their designee shall implement procedures to ensure that all acts of hazing are prohibited, and will be addressed and adjudicated in accordance with the Student Conduct policy.

## **4.16 Student Development Program**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/1990*

The College shall maintain a comprehensive student development program which will include advising and counseling, financial aid, and placement services. In addition, the program may include orientation, assessment, educational planning, personal counseling, career counseling, testing, and psychological referral.

## 4.17 Student Engagement Program

*Adopted: 11/1995*

*Last Revised: 5/2015*

The Student Engagement program enhances the educational experiences of students through exposure to, and participation in social, cultural, intellectual, recreational, and governance programs designed to reflect the needs of a diverse student body.

This program may include academic support services and activities, diversity training for students and staff, government, student publications, social activities, intramurals, clubs, organizations, cultural and fine arts programs, forensics, and any other activities which have value for students and the College. Further, any fundraising activities of the program shall be accessible to College students, staff, and District citizens as individuals, and as such are not intended to compete with or supply to private enterprise.

The Student Engagement programs are funded by a portion of Student Academic/Technology fees. The Student Government Association is authorized to allocate funds subject to established guidelines.

Activities supported by Student Engagement fees must be open to all Richland students.

Academic/Technology fees money cannot be used as a contribution to an outside group, church, political party, etc., or inside organization for individual student use.

Any misuse or fraudulent use of funds is grounds for termination of future funding.

## 4.18 Financial Aid

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## 4.18.1 Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 11/2018*

In accordance with the U.S. Department of Education and State of Illinois student aid regulations, Richland Community College is required to establish satisfactory academic progress standards to qualify for federal and state financial aid. The purpose of the policy is to ensure that students are making progress toward the completion of their education program. The Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy is subject to change without notice to comply with federal or state regulations.

### Financial Aid Programs Covered

The SAP policy applies to students who are requesting or receiving funds from the following federal and state financial aid programs: Federal PELL Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG), Federal Work Study, Federal Direct Student and Parent Loans, Illinois Monetary Award Program (MAP) grant, Illinois Veterans Grant (IVG), Illinois National Guard Grant (ING), and the Illinois MIA/POW Scholarship.

(NOTE: IVG, ING, and the MIA/POW Scholarship only require students to meet the cumulative GPA requirements of this policy).

### Evaluation of Progress

Academic Progress will be evaluated at the end of the fall, spring, and summer semesters. At the time of evaluation, students will be placed in good standing, warning, or suspension.

The SAP policy measures a student's academic progress in three ways. Students must meet all three progress standards. The standards are grade point average (GPA), completion rate, and maximum time frame. Students will be notified via Richland Community College (Student) email if they are placed on warning or suspension; however, students are responsible for knowing their SAP status.

### Standards for Satisfactory Academic Progress

#### Grade Point Average Standard

To remain in good standing, students must have a 2.0 semester GPA and a cumulative GPA of 2.0 once they have 31 credit hours. Students with less than 31 credit hours must meet the cumulative GPA standards listed below.

<b>Cumulative Hours Attempted</b>	<b>GPA Required</b>
1-15 hours	1.70
16-30 hours	1.85
31 + hours	2.00

Students receiving IVG, ING, and the MIA/POW Scholarship are required to maintain a 2.0 cumulative GPA. Students who do not meet that standard will have one warning semester to improve their GPA. If the cumulative GPA does not meet the standards at the end of the warning semester, the student will not be eligible for IVG, ING, or MIA/POW. Students will have the option of attempting an appeal.

Grades for development course (courses below 100 level) will count towards the semester GPA requirement but will not be calculated in the cumulative GPA requirement.

#### Completion Rate Standard

To remain in good standing, students must complete 67% of the credit hours that they attempt each semester and maintain an overall completion rate of 67% for classes attempted at Richland Community College. Attempted credit hours are the credit hours that the student is enrolled in after the drop with a refund period.

Grades of A, B, C, D, and P are considered successful completion of a course for financial aid purposes. Grades of I, W, and F are NOT considered as successful completion.

#### Maximum Credit Hour Standard

To remain in good standing, students cannot exceed 150% of the credit hours needed to complete the program. For example, if a student is completing a program that require 60 credit hours, they will reach the 150% maximum credit hours standards when they have attempted 90 credit hours.

IVG, ING, and MIA/POW do not have a maximum credit hour standard because the amount of benefits is set by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission or the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs or the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Students who have completed an associate's degree and are returning for a second degree will be eligible for aid unless they have met the maximum credit hour standard. Students who have met the standard may attempt a financial aid appeal.

#### Scope of Evaluation

A student's total academic record including courses that financial aid did not pay for, dual credit courses, transfer work showing on the Richland Community College transcript, and development coursework\* will be evaluated for SAP.

*\*Developmental courses are counted in the semester GPA standard (but not the cumulative GPA standard), in the semester and cumulative completion rate standard, and in the 150% calculation as attempted credits. Student are allowed to receive financial aid for 30 credit hours of developmental coursework.*

Courses that are not evaluated for SAP include Adult Education courses, noncredit course, audited courses, and English as a Second Language courses.

### **Repeat Credit Hours**

Students may receive financial aid for repeating a course where a passing grade was not earned (F or W). Students who have successfully completed a course (grade of D or higher), may receive financial aid for one repeat of the course. Grades for repeated courses supplant the previous grade. All course repeats are used in determining SAP.

## **4.18.2 Financial Aid Warning and Suspension**

*Adopted: 11/2018*

*Last Revised: 11/2018*

Students who do not meet the GPA or completion rate standard will be placed on Financial Aid Warning for one semester. Students on Warning are eligible to receive federal and state financial aid. Students who do not return to good standing after their Warning semester, will be placed on Financial Aid Suspension. Students that meet the maximum credit hour standard will be placed on Suspension.

Students on Financial Aid Suspension are not eligible to receive federal or state financial aid.

### **4.18.3 Financial Aid Appeal**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/2018*

Students who are placed on Financial Aid Suspension may request an appeal. Students wishing to appeal will complete a Financial Aid Appeal Form and include an explanation of the mitigating circumstances that caused or contributed to the student's inability to meet SAP standards along with documentation to support the explanation.

Students who are placed on Financial Aid Suspension for meeting the maximum credit hours standard can also appeal using the Financial Aid Appeal Form.

Students who appeal successfully on placed on Financial Aid Probation. Students on Probation must maintain a 2.0 semester GPA, 100% semester completion rate, and only take courses that count towards their degree. Progress will be reviewed each semester. Students who meet those requirements may be placed on Continued Probation until they meet SAP standards or complete their degree. Students who fail to meet those standards will return to Financial Aid Suspension status.

Once a student has met the SAP standards they will be notified via Richland (Zimbra) email that they have returned to good standing.

#### **Regaining Eligibility**

A student who has been on financial aid suspension can regain eligibility through the appeal process or by returning to SAP standards through improving their GPA and completion rate. The SAP standards that bring a student back to good standing are the same as the standards listed above to remain in good standing.

## 4.18.4 Other Financial Aid Policies

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 11/2018*

Federal financial aid applicants must have a high school diploma or GED or meet any standard set forth by the U.S. Department of Education for Title IV Eligibility.

A student must be attending classes on a regular basis. Any student reported as not attending classes will have financial aid adjusted accordingly.

A student must be enrolled in an eligible program as approved by the U.S. Department of Education, leading to a certificate or degree. All courses must be applicable to that certificate or degree. Veterans receiving benefits from the Department of Veterans' Affairs must be taking courses in degree programs approved by the State of Illinois Approving Agency for Veterans' Education.

## **4.18.5 Disbursement**

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 11/2018*

Financial aid awards are calculated by federal, state or veterans' regulations that take into account hours of enrollment and attendance.

Refund dates are published.

## 4.18.6 Loan Policies

*Adopted: 8/2010*

*Last Revised: 11/2018*

All Federal Direct Loan applicants must file a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The resulting Student Aid Report must be verified before a loan will be certified.

Students must be enrolled in at least 6 credit hours to receive a loan. Students on Financial Aid Suspension are not eligible for loans.

Students are required to complete entrance loan counseling and a master promissory note prior to a loan being disbursed. Once a student is no longer enrolled in at least 6 credits hours they are expected to complete exit loan counseling.

If the Director of Financial Aid and Veterans' Affairs chooses not to certify a loan, the student must be informed in writing.

## 4.18.7 Return of Title IV Funds

*Adopted: 5/1990*

*Last Revised: 11/2018*

The Higher Education Amendment of 1998 requires institutions to calculate the amount of Title IV aid earned by students who completely withdraw from the institution before completing 60 percent of the enrollment term. Richland Community College must calculate the amount of Title IV funds the student earned for the period enrolled before withdrawing. This process requires Richland to determine whether any Title IV funds received by or on behalf of that student must be returned or if the student is entitled to further disbursements of awarded Title IV funds. A student who attended more than 60 percent of the payment period will earn 100 percent of their aid.

The last date of attendance is determined in one of two ways. If a student officially withdraws from the institution, your last date of attendance is the date you began the withdrawal process or notified the institution of your withdrawal. An unofficial withdrawal occurs when a student stops attending classes, but does not notify the institution of the withdrawal. The Financial Aid Office will research to find the last date of attendance by contacting Instructors, using Canvas, and receiving drop reports. If a student has ceased to attend all classes, the latest date of attendance in all classes will be used in the calculation.

The return of Title IV funds formula calculates the amount of Title IV aid to which a withdrawn student is entitled in direct proportion to the percentage of the period that the student attended. If the amount disbursed to the student is greater than the amount the student earned, the unearned funds must be returned. If the amount disbursed to the student is less than the amount earned, and for which the student is otherwise eligible, the student is eligible to receive a post-withdrawal disbursement of the earned aid that was not received. Richland Community College will return funds in the following order:

1. Direct Unsubsidized loan
2. Direct Subsidized loan
3. Direct PLUS loan
4. Federal Pell Grant
5. Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)

Richland will notify the student within 30 days if they are required to repay a portion of their financial aid for the term. Richland will return funds within 45 days to the U.S. Department of Education.

## **4.18.8 Verification**

*Adopted: 8/2010*

*Last Revised: 11/2018*

All federal and state financial aid students are required to sign a Policy and Procedures statement. Students selected for verification by the U.S. Department of Education are required to submit documents that verify information reported on the Student Aid Report.

## **4.18.9 Military Benefits**

*Adopted: 8/2010*

*Last Revised: 11/2018*

Military benefits defined as Illinois Veterans' Grant, Illinois National Guard Grant, Illinois MIA/POW scholarship and benefits through Department of Veterans' Affairs are offered at Richland Community College.

Recipients of benefits from the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs should have all transcripts from previously attended colleges and universities evaluated for transfer credit. If all transcripts are not evaluated, benefits may be suspended until transcripts are received.

## 4.19 Guarantee of Educational Effectiveness

*Adopted: 3/1993*

*Last Revised: 8/2010*

Richland Community College, as an expression of confidence in the educational programs of the College, shall guarantee to the public the educational effectiveness of both its transfer and technical programs and instruction.

The guarantee(s) shall occur as follows:

- Richland Community College shall guarantee the transferability of pre-baccalaureate (university-parallel) credit courses to senior Illinois colleges and universities for each student who completes a designated transfer degree. If such appropriately approved courses and credits do not fully transfer, the College shall refund to the graduate who has completed the degree the tuition paid for the non-transferring course credits.
- Richland Community College shall guarantee the technical competence needed for entry into the technical employment position for each student who completes the appropriate Associate in Applied Science degree or certificate. An Associate in Applied Science degree or certificate graduate who is judged by his/her employer to be lacking in the technical or the general educational skills necessary for entry to the position shall be provided up to nine (9) tuition-free credit hours of additional skill training in the program completed by the graduate.

The President or designee shall be authorized to establish procedures and guidelines under which these guarantees shall apply.

## 4.19.1 Guarantee for Transfer Credit

*Adopted: 3/1993*

*Last Revised: 5/2015*

Richland Community College guarantees to those earning an appropriate transfer degree beginning May, 1993, that their courses will transfer to Illinois state colleges or universities as identified in the most current published transfer information or equivalency guide.

### Qualifying Conditions for the Guarantee

- Transfer of a course means the acceptance of credits for entrance at a senior institution.
- Classes must have been taken at Richland Community College no earlier than two years before the attempt to transfer.
- Any refund request must be made no later than two years after Richland Community College graduation.

## Section 5: General

## **5.1 Statement of Economic Interest**

*Adopted: 5/1996*

*Last Revised: 5/2014*

Richland Community College will comply with the Illinois Governmental Ethics Act 5 ILCS 420/requiring persons to file written statements of economic interest annually.

## **5.2 Freedom of Information (FOIA)**

*Adopted: 2/2007*

*Last Revised: 5/2014*

Richland Community College will comply with the Illinois Freedom of Information Act 5 ILCS 140

## 5.3 Statement of Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity

*Adopted: 1/1999*

*Last Revised: 5/2021*

Richland Community College adheres to all federal, state, and local civil rights laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination in public institutions of higher education.

Richland's nondiscrimination policy applies to the admission and retention of students, recruitment, employment, and retention of faculty and staff, and access to and treatment in the College's programs and activities.

Richland Community College prohibits discrimination against any employee, applicant for employment, student, or applicant for admission on the basis of:

- Race,
- Color
- Religion,
- Sex,
- Creed,
- Ethnicity,
- National origin (including ancestry),
- Citizenship status,
- Physical and/or mental disabilities (including perceived disability and except where they are bona fide occupational qualifications),
- Age,
- Marital or parental status,
- Sexual orientation,
- Gender identity,
- Gender expression,
- Veteran or military status (including disabled veteran, recently separated veteran, active duty wartime or campaign badge veteran, and Armed Forces Service Medal veteran),
- or any other protected category under applicable local, state, or federal law, including protections for those opposing discrimination or participating in any grievance process on campus, with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and/or other human/civil rights agencies.

Therefore, any member of the Richland community whose acts deny, deprive, or limit the educational or employment access, benefits, and/or opportunities of any member of the Richland community, guest, or visitor on the basis of that person's actual or perceived membership in the protected classes listed above is in violation of the Richland Statement of Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity.

When brought to the attention of Richland Community College, any such discrimination will be promptly and fairly addressed and remedied by Richland Community College according to the appropriate grievance process identified online.

## 5.4.1 Rationale

*Adopted: 6/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/2021*

Richland Community College is committed to providing a work and educational environment, as well as other benefits, programs, and activities, that is free from discrimination and harassment based on a protected category and retaliation for engaging in a protected activity.

To ensure compliance with federal, state, and local civil rights laws and regulations and to affirm its commitment to promoting the goals of fairness and equity in all aspects of the educational program or activity, Richland Community College has developed internal policies and procedures that provide a prompt, fair, and impartial procedure for those involved in an allegation of discrimination or harassment on the basis of protected class status and for allegations of retaliation.

Richland Community College values and upholds the equal dignity of all members of its community and strives to balance the rights of the parties in the grievance process during what is often a difficult time for all those involved.

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## 5.4.2 Applicable Scope

*Adopted: 6/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/2021*

The core purpose of this policy is the prohibition of all forms of discrimination. Sometimes, discrimination involves exclusion from or different treatment in activities, such as admission, athletics, or employment. At other times, discrimination takes the form of harassment or, in the case of sex-based discrimination, can encompass sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking, sexual exploitation, dating violence, or domestic violence. When an alleged violation of this nondiscrimination policy is reported, the allegations are subject to resolution using Richland Community College's established procedures as determined by the Title IX Coordinator.

This policy applies to all Richland staff, students, and third-party vendors. Several methods of reporting violations are available; Richland's Title IX Coordinator shall serve as the first contact for filing a complaint. Procedures for filing along with other information are available online or in the Student Success Center.

Upon notice of a violation, Richland staff will respond to the report with information and a list of available resources within two business days.

When the Respondent is a member of the Richland community, a formal complaint may be filed and a grievance process may be available regardless of the status of the Complainant, who may or may not be a member of the Richland community. This community includes, but is not limited to, students, student organizations, faculty, administrators, staff, and third parties such as guests, visitors, volunteers, vendors, contractors, and invitees. The processes may be applied to incidents, to patterns, and/or to the campus climate, all of which may be addressed and investigated in accordance with this policy.

External complaints shall be filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Illinois Department of Human Rights and the Office of Civil Rights of the United States Department of Education. Contact information for these organizations is available on the Richland website or in the Student Success Center.

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### 5.4.3 Title IX Coordinator

*Adopted: 6/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/2021*

The Title IX Coordinator oversees implementation of the College's Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity plan and the policy on equal opportunity, harassment, and nondiscrimination.

The Title IX Coordinator has the primary responsibility for coordinating Richland's efforts related to the intake, investigation, resolution, and implementation of supportive measures to stop, remedy, and prevent discrimination, harassment, and retaliation prohibited under this policy.

All parties will be provided with a comprehensive letter detailing options and resources, which the Title IX Coordinator may also review in person with the parties, as appropriate.

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## 5.4.4 Prohibition of Other Forms of Discrimination and Harassment

*Adopted: 6/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/2021*

Conduct that has a purpose or effect of substantially interfering with a reasonable individual's work or learning performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or learning environment when such conduct is directed at an individual because of race, national origin, disability, age, religion, sexual orientation or any legally protected classification is prohibited.

Harassment prohibited by this policy includes both verbal and physical conduct. Richland Community College will not tolerate conduct in any form that is intended to cause or contribute or has the effect of causing or contributing to the humiliation, embarrassment, or discomfort of reasonable employees or students because of their protected status.

Harassment does not include oral or written expressions that are academic in nature and purpose or that are relevant and appropriately related to course subject matter or curriculum. This policy shall not be used to abridge academic freedom or to interfere with the College's educational mission.

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## 5.4.5 Prevention and Reporting of Sexual Harassment, Sexual Discrimination, Sexual Violence, Gender-Based Discrimination, and Other Forms of Discrimination and Harassment

*Adopted: 6/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/2021*

Richland Community College will take appropriate, periodic measures to educate and train employees regarding this policy and conduct that could violate the policy. All faculty, administrative, and supervisory personnel are required to participate in such education and training.

In addition, all responsible persons and confidential counselors, including students, faculty, administrative, and supervisory personnel, will be educated and trained on how to handle reports and/or complaints and what to do to help victims of sexual discrimination. All individuals responsible for investigating complaints will be trained on issues related to sexual violence, sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and Title IX.

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## 5.4.6 Notice/Complaints of Discrimination, Harassment, and/or Retaliation

*Adopted: 6/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/2021*

Notice or complaints of discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation may be made by filing a report with or giving verbal notice to the Title IX Coordinator. Such a report may be made at any time (including during non-business hours) by using the telephone number or email address, online, or by mail, to the office listed for the Title IX Coordinator.

A detailed procedure for filing a notice or complaint and subsequent steps are located on the Richland website.

If notice is submitted in a form that does not meet this standard, the Title IX Coordinator will contact the Complainant to ensure that it is filed correctly.

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## 5.4.7 Independence and Conflict of Interest

*Adopted: 6/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/2021*

The Title IX Coordinator manages the Title IX Team and acts with independence and authority free from bias and conflicts of interest. The Title IX Coordinator oversees all resolutions under this policy and developed procedures. Members of the Title IX Team are vetted and trained to ensure they are not biased for or against any party in a specific case or for or against Complainants and/or Respondents, generally.

To raise any concern involving bias or conflict of interest or to report misconduct or discrimination by the Title IX Coordinator, an individual should contact the Richland Community College President. Concerns of bias or potential conflict of interest or to report misconduct or discrimination by any other Title IX Team member should be directed to the Title IX Coordinator.

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## 5.4.8 Assistance

*Adopted: 6/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/2021*

The safety and well-being of any individual who believes they have been subject to sexual discrimination will be first priority. These individuals will be provided information about appropriate College or local area resources, including law enforcement, legal services, medical services, counseling, and victim advocacy/support.

Richland will take interim actions necessary to protect victims of sexual discrimination and prevent retaliation pending the investigation. Interim actions may include changes in academic or work situations, orders directing the victim and alleged perpetrator to avoid contact with one another, or any other appropriate measures.

Confidential counseling will be available for individuals who believe they have been a victim of sexual discrimination who wish to speak with someone confidentially and do not want to pursue an internal complaint. The Title IX Coordinator will provide information about available counseling services.

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## 5.4.9 Supportive Measures

*Adopted: 6/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/2021*

Richland Community College will offer and implement appropriate and reasonable supportive measures to the parties upon notice of alleged harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation.

Supportive measures are non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered as appropriate and as reasonably available. They are offered without fee or charge to the parties to restore or preserve access to Richland Community College's education program or activity, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties and/or Richland Community College' educational environment, and/or to deter harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation.

The Title IX Coordinator promptly makes supportive measures available to the parties upon receiving notice or a complaint. At the time that supportive measures are offered, Richland Community College will inform the Complainant, in writing, that they may file a formal complaint with Richland Community College either at that time or in the future, if they have not done so already. The Title IX Coordinator works with the Complainant to ensure that their wishes are taken into account with respect to the supportive measures that are planned and implemented.

Richland Community College will maintain the confidentiality of the supportive measures, provided that confidentiality does not impair Richland Community College's ability to provide those supportive measures. Richland Community College will act to ensure as minimal an academic/occupational impact on the parties as possible. Richland Community College will implement measures in a way that does not unreasonably burden the other party.

These actions may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Referral to counseling, medical, and/or other healthcare services;
- Referral to the Employee Assistance Program;
- Referral to community-based service providers;
- Student financial aid counseling;
- Education to the institutional community or community subgroup(s);
- Altering work arrangements for employees or student-employees;
- Safety planning;
- Providing campus safety escorts;
- Implementing contact limitations (no contact orders) between the parties;
- Academic support, extensions of deadlines, or other course/program-related adjustments;
- Trespass, Persona Non Grata (PNG), or Be-On-the-Lookout (BOLO) orders;
- Class schedule modifications, withdrawals, or leaves of absence;
- Increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the campus;
- Any other actions deemed appropriate by the Title IX Coordinator.

Violations of no contact orders or other restrictions will be referred to appropriate student or employee conduct processes for action.

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## 5.4.10 Emergency Removal

*Adopted: 6/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/2021*

Richland Community College can act to remove a student Respondent entirely or partially from its education program or activities on an emergency basis when an individualized safety and risk analysis has determined that an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any student or other individual justifies removal. This risk analysis is performed by the Title IX Coordinator.

In all cases when an emergency removal is imposed, the Respondent will be given notice of the action and the option to request to meet with the Title IX Coordinator prior to such action/removal being imposed, or as soon thereafter as reasonably possible, to show cause why the action/removal should not be implemented or should be modified.

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## 5.4.11 Retaliation

*Adopted: 6/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/2021*

Richland prohibits retaliation against a person who in good faith believes they have been subjected to an act of sexual discrimination or harassment or because they have in good faith made a charge, filed a complaint, testified, assisted, or participated in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing regarding sexual discrimination or harassment.

Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment. If any employee or student believes that he or she has been retaliated against for exercising personal rights under this policy, the employee or student should immediately report such conduct using the complaint procedure outlined on the College website or in the Student Success Center. Employees and students are not required to approach the person who is exhibiting the alleged retaliatory behavior. A person engaging in retaliatory conduct shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge or dismissal.

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## 5.4.12 Promptness

*Adopted: 6/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/2021*

All allegations are acted upon in a reasonable amount of time once Richland Community College has received notice or a formal complaint. Complaints can typically take 60-90 business days to resolve. Exceptions and extenuating circumstances could cause a resolution to take longer, but Richland Community College will avoid all undue delays within its control.

Any time the general timeframes for resolution outlined in Richland Community College procedures will be delayed, Richland Community College through the Title IX Coordinator will provide written notice to the parties about the delay, the cause of the delay, and an estimate of the anticipated additional time that will be needed as a result of the delay.

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### 5.4.13 Time Limits on Reporting

*Adopted: 6/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/2021*

There is no time limitation on providing notice/complaints to the Title IX Coordinator.

However, if the Respondent is no longer subject to Richland's jurisdiction and/or significant time has passed, the ability to investigate, respond, and/or provide remedies may be more limited or impossible.

Acting on notice/complaints significantly impacted by the passage of time (including, but not limited to, the rescission or revision of policy) is at the discretion of the Title IX Coordinator, who may document allegations for future reference, offer supportive measures and/or remedies, and/or engage in informal or formal action, as appropriate.

Typically, this Policy is only applied to incidents that occurred after August 14, 2020. For incidents that occurred prior to August 14, 2020, previous versions of this Policy will apply. Those versions are available from the Title IX Coordinator.

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## 5.4.14 Federal Timely Warning Obligations

*Adopted: 6/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/2021*

Parties reporting sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and/or stalking should be aware that under the Clery Act, Richland Community College must issue timely warnings for reported incidents that pose a serious or continuing threat of bodily harm or danger to members of the campus community.

Richland Community College will ensure that a Complainant's name and other identifying information is not disclosed, while still providing enough information for community members to make safety decisions in light of the potential danger.

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## 5.4.15 Confidentiality/Privacy

*Adopted: 6/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/2021*

Every effort is made by Richland Community College to preserve the confidentiality of reports. Richland Community College will not share the identity of any individual who has made a report or complaint of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation; any Complainant; any individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of sex discrimination; any Respondent; any witness, except as permitted by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. 1232g; FERPA regulations, 34 CFR part 99; or as required by law; or to carry out the purposes of 34 CFR Part 106, including the conducting of any investigation, hearing, or grievance proceeding arising under these policies and procedures.

Richland Community College reserves the right to determine which officials have a legitimate educational interest in being informed about incidents that fall within this policy, pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Information will be shared as necessary with investigators, decision-makers, witnesses, and the parties. The circle of people with this knowledge will be kept as tight as possible to preserve the parties' rights and privacy.

Richland Community College may contact parents/guardians of students to inform them of situations with a significant and articulable health and/or safety risk but will usually consult with the student before doing so.

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## 5.4.16 Jurisdiction of Richland Community College

*Adopted: 6/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/2021*

This Policy applies to the education programming and activities of Richland Community College and to conduct that takes place on the campus or on property owned or controlled by Richland Community College and/or at Richland-sponsored events. The Respondent must be a member of Richland's community in order for this Policy to apply.

This Policy can also be applicable to off-campus misconduct that effectively deprives a person of access to Richland Community College's educational programs. Richland may also extend jurisdiction to off-campus and/or to online conduct when the Title IX Coordinator determines that the conduct affects a substantial Richland interest.

Regardless of where the conduct occurred, the Title IX Coordinator will address notice/complaints to determine whether the conduct occurred in the context of its employment or educational program or activity and/or has continuing effects on campus or in an off-campus sponsored program or activity. A substantial Richland Community College interest includes the following:

- Any action that constitutes a criminal offense as defined by law. This includes, but is not limited to, single or repeat violations of any local, state, or federal law;
- Any situation in which it is determined that the Respondent poses an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any student, employee, or other individual;
- Any situation that significantly impinges upon the rights, property, or achievements of others, significantly breaches the peace, and/or causes social disorder; and/or
- Any situation that substantially interferes with the educational interests or mission of Richland Community College.

If the Respondent is unknown or is not a member of the Richland community, the Title IX Coordinator will assist the Complainant in identifying appropriate campus and local resources and support options. If criminal conduct is alleged, Richland Community College can assist in contacting local or campus law enforcement if the individual would like to file a police report.

Further, even when the Respondent is not a member of the College community, supportive measures, remedies, and resources may be provided to the Complainant by contacting the Title IX Coordinator.

Richland Community College may take other actions as appropriate to protect the Complainant against third parties, such as barring individuals from Richland property and/or events.

All vendors serving Richland through third-party contracts are subject to the policies and procedures of their employers.

When the Respondent is enrolled in or employed by another institution, the Title IX Coordinator can assist the Complainant in liaising with the appropriate individual at that institution, as it may be possible to allege violations through that institution's policies.

Similarly, the Title IX Coordinator may be able to assist and support a student or employee Complainant who experiences discrimination in an externship, study abroad program, or other environment external to Richland Community College where sexual harassment or nondiscrimination policies and procedures of the facilitating or host organization may give recourse to the Complainant.

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## 5.4.17 Mandated Reporting

*Adopted: 6/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/2021*

Richland Community College employees (faculty, staff, and administrators) are expected to report actual or suspected discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation to the Title IX Coordinator or other appropriate officials immediately, although some limited exceptions exist. These individuals are designated Mandated Reporters.

If a Complainant expects formal action in response to their allegations, reporting to any Mandated Reporter can connect them with resources to report crimes and/or policy violations, and these employees will immediately pass reports to the Title IX Coordinator (and/or police, if desired by the Complainant), who will take action when an incident is reported to them.

Employees must also promptly share all details of behaviors under this Policy that they observe or have knowledge of, even if not reported to them by a Complainant or third party.

Complainants may want to consider carefully whether they share personally identifiable details with non-confidential Mandated Reporters, as those details must be shared with the Title IX Coordinator.

Failure of a Mandated Reporter to report an incident of harassment or discrimination of which they become aware is a violation of Richland Community College Policy; the Mandate Reporter can therefore be subject to disciplinary action for failure to comply.

Though this may seem obvious, when a Mandated Reporter is engaged in harassment or other violations of this Policy, they still have a duty to report their own misconduct, though Richland Community College is technically not on notice simply because a harasser is also a Mandated Reporter unless the harasser does in fact report themselves.

Finally, a Mandated Reporter who is a target of harassment or other misconduct under this Policy is not required to report their own experience, though they are, of course, encouraged to do so.

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## 5.4.18 Online Harassment and Misconduct

*Adopted: 6/1990*

*Last Revised: 5/2021*

The policies of Richland Community College are written and interpreted broadly to include online manifestations of any of the behaviors prohibited elsewhere in the policies, when those behaviors occur in or have an effect on the Recipient's education program and activities or when they involve the use of Richland Community College networks, technology, or equipment.

Although Richland Community College may not control websites, social media, and other venues through which harassing communications are made, when such communications are reported to Richland Community College, it will engage in a variety of means to address and mitigate the effects.

Members of the community are encouraged to be good digital citizens and to refrain from online misconduct, such as feeding anonymous gossip sites, sharing inappropriate content via social media, unwelcome sexual or sex-based messaging, distributing or threatening to distribute revenge pornography, breaches of privacy, or otherwise using the ease of transmission and/or anonymity of the Internet or other technology to harm another member of the Richland community.

Any online posting or other electronic communication by students, including cyber-bullying, cyber-stalking, cyber-harassment, etc., occurring completely outside of the Recipient's control (e.g., not on Recipient networks, websites, or between Recipient e-mail accounts) will only be subject to this Policy when such online conduct can be shown to cause a substantial in-program disruption or infringement on the rights of others.

Otherwise, such communications are considered speech protected by the First Amendment. Supportive measures for Complainants will be provided, but protected speech cannot legally be subjected to discipline.

Off-campus harassing speech by employees, whether online or in person, may be regulated by the Recipient only when such speech is made in an employee's official or work-related capacity.

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## **5.5 Tobacco and Cannabis**

*Adopted: 9/2005*

*Last Revised: 5/2014*

It is the policy of Richland Community College to disallow the use of tobacco products on College owned property, in College vehicles or at events sponsored by the College.

Use of electronic cigarettes are prohibited.

Smoking of cannabis is prohibited on property controlled by the College, at events sponsored by the College, or at events attended while on College business.

## **5.6 Toxic Substances and Hazard Communication Standards**

*Adopted: 5/2009*

*Last Revised: 5/2009*

It is the policy of Richland Community College Board of Trustees that all employees have the right to know of health hazards associated with their work. So that RCC employees can make knowledgeable decisions about any personal risks associated with their employment, the Board of Trustees authorizes the College administration to develop and affect procedures that conform to 820 ILCS 255\1, Toxic Substances Disclosure to Employees Act, and the U.S. Hazard Communication Standard (29 CFR 1910.1200).

## 5.7 Solicitation on Campus

*Adopted: 12/1994*

*Last Revised: 5/2014*

As an educational institution, Richland Community College provides an environment that focuses on teaching and learning. As such, students, faculty, and staff shall be free from external solicitation and other non-college or non-employee sponsored activities.

Therefore, any solicitation on campus by non-college or non-employee sponsored organizations is not authorized. All events sponsored through the Office of Student Engagement must be approved in advance by the Vice President of Student Success. All other College-sponsored events must be approved in advance by the Vice President of Technology and Operations or designee. Such activities must be conducted according to College procedures.

The distribution of signs, handbills, and advertising related to events sponsored by the Office of Student Engagement must be approved in advance by the Vice President of Student Success.

Any other distribution of such materials must be approved in advance by the Vice President of Technology and Operations or their designee. Such distribution must be consistent with the mission of the College.

All approved College or employee-sponsored solicitation must be conducted in a manner that is not disruptive to College operations. The College retains the right to determine when such activities become disruptive.

## 5.8 Possession of Weapons

*Adopted: 3/1996*

*Last Revised: 5/2014*

Possession of weapons on the College campus, on property controlled by the College, at events sponsored by the College, or at events attended while on College business is prohibited unless the individual is a duly authorized law enforcement official/officer in the performance of his/her duty. The College may request current/valid identification of said law enforcement capacity authorizing someone to possess a weapon and reserves the right to confirm the authorization with proper authorities. While the College recognizes that persons other than law enforcement personnel may be permitted to conceal and carry specified weapons under the Illinois Firearm Concealed Carry Act (430 ILCS 66) they are still strictly prohibited on campus. All weapons must be properly stored prior to entering any campus facility vehicle or event.

If a person is determined to pose a clear and present danger to himself, herself, or to others, a law enforcement official or school administrator shall notify the Illinois Department of State Police within 24 hours of making the determination that the person poses a clear and present danger.

A weapon is defined as any instrument or device designed or likely to produce bodily harm or property damage including but not limited to a firearm, dangerous chemical, an explosive device of any description, compressed air guns, pellet guns, BB guns, knives, stun guns, or electric shock devices, metal or brass knuckles, bow and arrows, swords, slingshots or any other item modified from its original purpose to be used as a weapon. The College reserves the right to further determine the definition of a “weapon” and may prohibit other devices on an individual basis.

Legal defensive devices, such as pepper sprays, etc. will be permitted, unless used in an offensive manner.

Any exceptions to this policy must be preapproved through the President’s Office.

Individuals who are found to be in violation of this policy are subject to disciplinary actions up to and including termination of employment, expulsion from the College, and/or being barred from College property.

## 5.9 Confidential and Sensitive Information

*Adopted: 12/2009*

*Last Revised: 11/2011*

Richland Community College is committed to the protection of confidential and sensitive information assets and the resources that support these assets. The Board of Trustees authorizes and delegates to the President of the College the authority to develop Confidential and Sensitive Information Programs and Procedures that are consistent with statutory requirements and consistent with the goals of this policy. Statutory requirements include but are not limited to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, the Federal Trade Commission, Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act Red Flag Regulations, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Fair Credit Reporting Act, the Illinois Personal Protection Information Act, the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard, and other regulations as applicable. Richland Community College programs shall include the appointment of an Information Security Officer, risk assessments, and general employee awareness communications.

## 5.9.1 Responsible Use of Information Technology

*Adopted: 3/1996*

*Last Revised: 5/2014*

In support of its mission and vision, Richland Community College provides access to information technology resources for students, faculty, and staff within institutional priorities and financial capabilities.

The Policy for Responsible Use of Information Technology at Richland Community College shall be adhered to by all College units as well as all individuals who operate or use the information technology resources of the College. In addition, this policy applies to use of information technology resources that are entrusted to the institution by other organizations. In case of conflict, local, state, or federal laws supersede this policy.

Access to the College's information technology facilities is a privilege, not a right, granted to College students, faculty, and staff. The College reserves the rights to extend, limit, restrict, or deny privileges and access to its information resources. Individuals other than College faculty, staff, and students may be permitted access to information technology in a manner consistent with the College's mission and vision, policy, and guidelines.

All users of the technology systems are bound by applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations including but not limited to Red Flag Regulations, and the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard. All people must act ethically, appropriately, and responsibly while using the College's information technology resources. All users of College information systems must respect the rights of other users, maintain the integrity of the resources, and comply with all pertinent licenses and contractual agreements.

Information technology provides important means of communication, both public and private. Users will respect the privacy of person-to-person communication in all forms including, but not limited to, voice (telephone), text (electronic mail, documents, and file transfer), image (graphics), and video (recorded and streaming). Authorized personnel are permitted to view and/or modify any electronic files, including electronic mail messages, as required by law, for any legitimate business reasons, or in the course of diagnosing and resolving system problems and maintaining information integrity.

College facilities and accounts are to be used for the activities or purposes for which they are assigned. College computing resources are not to be used for commercial purposes without written authorization from the College.

This policy provides general guidance and may be supplemented by additional regulations governing particular sub-systems of the College information technology resources. The Board charges the administration with the responsibility, and the Board delegates the administration the authority to develop appropriate guidelines, regulations, and procedures to implement the policy. The College makes no warranties of any kind, expressed or implied, for the technology services it is providing. The College will not be responsible for any actual or perceived damages suffered from the use of its information technology.

Violations of this policy shall be cause for discipline. Alleged violations of this policy shall be subject to the College's disciplinary procedures. Illegal activities by users of the College technology including but not limited to illegal downloading and file sharing are prohibited.

In accordance with Illinois law, any depiction of child pornography discovered by members of the College's information technology staff will be immediately reported to law enforcement authorities.

## 5.10 Copyright

*Adopted: 5/1996*

*Last Revised: 5/2014*

It is the policy of the Board of Trustees of Richland Community College to adhere to the provisions of the Copyright Act of 1976 (17 U.S.C. Sec.101 et seq) The College recognizes and respects intellectual property rights and academic freedom. Faculty, staff, and students of Richland Community College are directed to avoid violation of any and all federal laws protecting copyright and to follow the guidelines recommending the best practices of the use of intellectual property in higher education.

Faculty, staff, and students will be made aware of the laws and guidelines through professional development opportunities and distributed materials. Faculty, staff, and students should consult the following publications for direction on permissible copying and other copyright issues: *Guidelines for Classroom Copying in Nonprofit Educational Institutions*; the *Technology, Education, and Copyright Harmonization (TEACH) Act*, the *Fair Use Guidelines for Educational Multimedia*, *The Code of Best Practices in Fair Use for Academic and Research Libraries*; and the *Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998*.

Individuals found to be intentionally in noncompliance with this policy may receive discipline up to and including termination or expulsion.

## **5.11 Retention and Disposal of College Records**

*Adopted: 9/1996*

*Last Revised: 5/2009*

College records shall be retained and disposed of as stipulated in the Illinois Local Records Act 50 ILCS 205. Such records may be disposed of (1) after their retention period is complete, (2) if all local, state, and federal audit requirements have been met, (3) if they are not needed for any pending or anticipated litigation, and (4) if they have been approved for disposition by the Local Records Commission.

## 5.12 Art Acquisition and Placement

*Adopted: 8/1997*

*Last Revised: 5/2009*

The College recognizes that the display of works of art provides both aesthetic and educational benefits to the District, whether the works are part of the College's permanent collection or are intended for temporary display.

Though the College's collections and display primarily provide educational support material and promote the development of artistic talent and aesthetic awareness, the permanent collection should strive to represent Illinois art contemporary with the College buildings. Acceptance and display of art must fall within the stated mission of the College.

## 5.13 Statement of Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity

*Adopted: 1/1999*

*Last Revised: 5/2014*

Richland Community College subscribes to the principles and laws of the State of Illinois and the Federal Government pertaining to civil rights and equal opportunity, including applicable Executive Orders.

Richland Community College policy prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, marital or parental status, national origin or ancestry, age, mental and/or physical disabilities (except where they are bona fide occupational qualifications), sexual orientation, gender identity, military or veteran status, or other legally protected characteristics or conduct.

The College's nondiscrimination policy applies to the admission and retention of students, recruitment, employment, and retention of faculty and staff, and access to and treatment in the College's programs and activities.

Complaints alleging violations of this policy should be immediately reported to the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Officer, as designated by the President.

Complaints reported to the EEO Officer will be promptly investigated. In all cases, the investigator will make reasonable attempts to determine the facts pertinent to the complaint by interviewing the parties involved, including the alleged harasser. If the accused is a College employee who is a member of a bargaining unit, the employee may request union representation during the investigation. At the conclusion of the investigation, a written report of findings will be prepared and forwarded to the President.

### **No Retaliation**

The College will not retaliate against any person for making a good faith complaint under this policy. Similarly, the College will not retaliate against or discipline any person (other than a person who is found to have violated this policy) who provides truthful information in connection with an investigation. Any employee of the College who retaliates against another employee or student for utilizing the procedure in this policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

If any employee believes that he or she has been retaliated against for exercising his or her rights under this policy, the employee should report such conduct immediately to the EEO Officer. Any employee who makes a complaint that he or she knows to be false will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## 5.14 Statement of Academic Freedom

*Adopted: 5/2009*

*Last Revised: 5/2009*

Academic freedom is the freedom of faculty to teach the truth in their fields without fear of reprisal. It is the student's right to hear the truth as faculty perceives it in their areas of expertise. Academic freedom implies equal consideration of all sides of a question. Therefore, academic freedom is fundamental for the protection of the rights of the faculty in teaching and of the student to freedom in learning. Along with academic freedom are duties correlative with rights. These duties include adherence to all College policies, procedures, rules, and practices.

Faculty are citizens, mentors of a learned profession, and officers of an educational institution. When they write or speak as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As persons of learning, they should remember that the public may judge their profession and their institution by their utterances. Hence, they should at all times be accurate. They should respect the fact that others have the right to their own opinions, and should make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for or representing the institution when they write or speak as citizens.

## **5.15 Naming of College Facilities, Assets, or Programs**

*Adopted: 5/2009*

*Last Revised: 1/2018*

As a method of recognition of a significant contribution from an individual or organization to the College and its mission, certain College-owned or controlled facilities, assets or programs may be named for the individual or organization. The College President shall present recommendations for naming to the Board of Trustees for acceptance by voice vote. The Foundation Board of Directors will develop procedures to be used for naming rights. With the approval of the College President and Board of Trustees.

## **5.16 Publications and Publicity**

*Adopted: 5/2009*

*Last Revised: 5/2009*

The President or designee shall be responsible for disseminating public information about the College including; coordinating all contacts with and inquiries from the news media regarding College programs, services, activities, and special events; preparing and distributing all news releases and public service announcements distributed to the news media; and arranging for all appearances on talk shows and news programs.

The preparation of all official publications of the College intended for distribution to the general public will be supervised and released under the direction of the President of the College or designee.

## 5.17 Intellectual Property

*Adopted: 9/2011*

*Last Revised: 9/2011*

It is the intent of Richland Community College (RCC) to foster an environment in which innovative and creative activity is encouraged for the practical benefit to the public, while maintaining and protecting the intellectual property interests of the creator, the College, and the District. For purposes of this policy, the creator may be an author, an inventor, or a team responsible for making contributions toward the creation of intellectual property and may include faculty, staff, students, and/or community members.

The College recognizes the use of copyrights, trademarks, and patents as typical methods of intellectual property protection. Trade secrets can also be protected using nondisclosure or confidential disclosure agreements.

The College recognizes traditional scholarly works as exempted copyrightable works. These may include class notes; books and other articles; courseware; musical, dramatic, or artistic works. Ownership of exempted copyrightable works resides with the creator.

Ownership of intellectual property resides with the creator, except when *any* of the following exception conditions are met:

- Under or subject to agreement between RCC and a third party
- Significant directed financial support from RCC for a specific project
- Commissioned by RCC
- Significant RCC nonfinancial resources are required to develop the work
- Use of RCC name, logos, or insignias for commercial use
- Subject to contractual obligations by a third party

Absent a negotiation and prior agreement, all rights in copyrights, trademarks, patents, industrial design, and trade secrets shall reside with the creator. Should any of the exception conditions exist, absent prior agreement, the intellectual property resides with the College.

Unless agreed upon by both parties, right of use of intellectual property resides with the owner. Ownership cannot be wrested by any third party without prior agreement by the owner. In addition, in instances where applicable exception conditions are not clear, it is the responsibility of the creator to disclose and clarify ownership to the applicable Richland Vice President at the earliest possible point to avoid possible outside intellectual property claims.

In addition, the College reserves the right at any time to transfer or abandon its intellectual property rights under this policy. Any such transfer or abandonment must be in writing and signed by the President. The College also reserves the right at any time to cease its financial support for developing, protecting, or commercializing any of its intellectual property.

## 5.18 Official College Social Media

*Adopted: 5/2022*

*Last Revised: 5/2022*

It is the policy of the Board of Trustees of Richland Community College to acknowledge that social media plays an important role in the lives of the community, students, faculty, and staff. Richland Community College will maintain official social media sites to support the College in accomplishing its mission and vision, achieving its goals and objectives, and advancing the College's Core Values.

### **Responsible Use of Social Media**

This policy only applies to social media accounts created to represent Richland Community College, a subset of the college (such as an academic department, student club, or office), or individual communications when an employee explicitly identifies themselves as a Richland employee in a social media post. This policy does not apply to any other activities on personal social media accounts.

This policy governs the publication of and commentary on social media by employees of Richland Community College, as well as the creation and administration of social media accounts. Social media is defined as facility for online publication and commentary, including, but not limited to, blogs, wikis, commentaries, and social networking sites.

The President, or their designee, shall determine which employees & students may create or manage social media sites on behalf of the College. The President, or their designee, may take control of, delete, or shut down any social media presence that represents the college at their discretion.

Employees and students who are charged with representing the college on social media will be provided with guidelines regarding the operation of the college's social media presence by the President or their designee. Failure to follow these guidelines may result in disciplinary action.

Employees who explicitly identify themselves as Richland Community College employees in a social media post conversation are also expected to exhibit the same level of professionalism as is required when communicating in any other format. Failure to maintain professional standards may result in disciplinary action.

The College reserves the right to remove content for any reason, including but not limited to content which is defamatory, offensive, pornographic, libelous, discriminatory or otherwise inappropriate, injurious or illegal.

## 5.19 Liquor Control and Deliver of Alcoholic Beverages

*Adopted: 9/2017*

*Last Revised: 9/2017*

The Board of Trustees will regulate the delivery of alcoholic beverages in all College facilities.

This Policy is pursuant to Section 5/16-15 of the *Liquor Contract Act*, 235 ILCS 5/1-1 et seq.

Alcoholic liquors may be served or sold on property under the control of the Board of Trustees of the College for events that the Board of Trustees of that may determine are public events and not student-related activities.

The Board of Trustees delegates it authority and charges the President of the College to establish criteria and guideline and to review and approve an activity, event, reception, meeting, or other social or educational activity, public or private event where alcoholic beverages may be distributed, sold, given, and or consumed on College owned and controlled property.

### **Culinary Program**

In conjunction with the Richland Community College Culinary Program, the Board of Trustees authorizes the delivery and sale of alcohol beverages that are included for educational purposes associated with the program and for fundraising events for the College Foundation.

## 5.20 Public Safety

*Adopted: 11/2018*

*Last Revised: 11/2018*

Pursuant to the Illinois Public Community College Act Ch. 110 ILCS 805 / 3 – 42.1-2), Richland Community College authorizes the establishment and maintenance of a Public Safety Department. The Board of Trustees delegates the President to establish such other regulations as are determined to be necessary for the protection of community college students, staff, visitors, properties and interests or for the proper maintenance, operation or development of Richland Community and prescribes that fines and penalties for the violation for these regulations is established.

The enforcement of these regulations is the responsibility of the Chief of Public Safety and the members of the Campus Public Safety Department. As such, law enforcement officer members of this department shall have all of the powers of police officers in cities and sheriffs in counties, including the power to make arrests on view or on warrants for violations of State statutes and to enforce county or city ordinances in all counties that lie within the community college district, when such is required for the protection of community college personnel, students, property, or interests. Such officers shall have no power to serve and execute civil process.

As peace officers in Illinois, all laws pertaining to hiring, training, retention, service authority, and discipline of police officers, under State law, shall apply. Law enforcement officer members must complete the minimum basic training requirements of a police training school under the Illinois Police Training Act. Law enforcement officer members who have successfully completed an Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board certified firearms course shall be equipped with appropriate firearms and auxiliary weapons.

The College Public Safety Department is tasked with the enforcement of College, local, state and federal laws, ordinances and regulations. The enforcement of the regulations established under this policy, will contribute to maintaining a safe learning and working environment for all members of the College community.

## 5.21 Federal Statistical Reporting Obligations

*Adopted: 5/2019*

*Last Revised: 5/2019*

Certain campus officials – those deemed Campus Security Authorities – have a duty to report the following for federal statistical reporting purposes (Clery Act):

- All “primary crimes,” which include homicide, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, motor vehicle theft, and arson;
- Hate crimes, which include any bias-motivated primary crime as well as any bias motivated larceny or theft, simple assault, intimidation, or destruction/damage/vandalism of property;
- VAWA-based crimes, which include sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking; and
- Arrests and referrals for disciplinary action for weapons-related law violations, liquor-related law violations, and drug abuse-related law violations.

All personally identifiable information is kept private, but statistical information must be shared with Campus Police regarding the type of incident and its general location (on or off-campus or in the surrounding area, but no addresses are given) for publication in the Annual Security Report and daily campus crime log.

Campus Security Authorities include student success staff, campus law enforcement/public safety/security, local police, student activities staff, human resources staff, advisors to student organizations, and any other official with significant responsibility for student and campus activities.

## 5.22

COVID-19 Emergency Actions

*Adopted: 6/2020*

*Removed: 12/2023*

## 5.23 Use of College Facilities

*Adopted: 6/2025*

*Last Revised: 6/2025*

The Board of Trustees authorizes the use of Richland Community College facilities and properties by organizations and individuals primarily residing within District 537. College Administration is responsible for establishing and maintaining clear expectations regarding who may use College spaces, including criteria for eligibility, cost, liability, insurance, and associated fees. All facility use must align with the College's educational mission, support workforce development, or enhance community engagement.

Use of facilities must comply with all applicable local, state, and institutional policies. Priority may be given to organizations whose activities directly support education or community advancement. This policy ensures that the use of Richland Community College's facilities is managed in a manner that supports the institution's mission and serves the community effectively.

## **5.24 Accessibility**

*Adopted: 8/2025*

*Last Revised: 8/2025*

Richland Community College recognizes the importance of adhering to the guidelines set by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and other applicable federal and state laws. Richland is committed to removing disability-related barriers for all institutional programs and services.

Documentation of disability may be required for individual accommodations.

The President, or their designee, shall be authorized to establish procedures and guidelines as needed to maintain these commitments.