



# Student Handbook

Last Updated: December 1, 2023



*Dedicated to student success. Committed to excellence.*

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## ABOUT THE COLLEGE

### About VHCC

Virginia Highlands Community College was established on November 30, 1967 by action of the State Board for Community Colleges, and assigned a service region of Washington County, the western portion of Smyth County, and the city of Bristol, Virginia. Today it is one of 23 community colleges within the Virginia Community College System.

During its first academic year, 1969-1970, VHCC began delivering the occupational-technical programs that formerly were offered by the Washington County Technical School. More than 300 students enrolled in the first Virginia Highlands classes, which were offered at night in the technical school's facilities.

The College moved to its permanent 100-acre campus during the summer of 1970 and, in response to the community's needs, expanded its course offerings to include both occupational-technical programs and baccalaureate-transfer programs.

Over its 52 years of operation, Virginia Highlands Community College has become a dynamic leader in Southwest Virginia with a primary goal of providing comprehensive and quality education and related services for residents throughout its region. More than 3,000 students were served this past year by 111 full-time and 133 part-time faculty and staff members. The rolling hills of the campus have been developed to include six modern buildings, athletic and recreational facilities, and substantial parking. Programs and services also have changed to meet the needs of the local community. For example, the Division of Workforce Development and Continuing Education was created in 1996 to better prepare the local workforce. The Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center, a separate organization located on the VHCC campus, opened in 1998 to bring baccalaureate and graduate programs to the area, and the Arts Array cultural program was expanded into a community-wide program.

In addition, the dual enrollment program now offered by the College is allowing students to earn college credit while still in high school, and the service learning initiative is teaching VHCC students the value of volunteerism.

State-of-the-art technology has made it possible to take online learning courses and has provided the entire College community with modern, up-to-date computer facilities. Through the Federal Trio programs, Student Support Services (EXCEL) and Upward Bound, high school and college students are receiving the academic help and encouragement they need to complete high school and succeed in college.

To evaluate each of its programs and services, the College engages in an ongoing strategic planning process aimed at examining every aspect of campus life. This thorough self-examination will ensure Virginia Highlands Community College continues to achieve its fundamental mission of effectively serving a community that is always changing.

### Accreditation & Recognition

Virginia Highlands Community College, a division of the Virginia Community College System, is approved by the State Board for Community Colleges and by the Virginia Community College Systems Office. The associate degree curricula of the College have also been approved by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia.

Virginia Highlands Community College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award associate degrees. Questions about the accreditation of Virginia Highlands Community College may be directed in writing to the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097, by calling 404-679-4500, or by using information available on SACSCOC's website ([www.sacscoc.org](http://www.sacscoc.org)).

The Associate degree nursing program at Virginia Highland Community College located in Abingdon, Virginia Nursing Program is approved by the Virginia Board of Nursing and is accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) 3390 Peachtree Road NE, Suite 1400 Atlanta, GA 30326 (404) 975-5000, [www.acenursing.org/](http://www.acenursing.org/). The most recent ACEN accreditation decision made by the ACEN Board of Commissioners for the Virginia Highlands Community College Associate degree nursing program is continuing accreditation. ACEN is officially recognized as the national accrediting agency for nursing education by the Council on Post-secondary Accreditation (COPA) and by the U.S. Department of Education.

The Radiography program is fully accredited by the Joint Review Committee for Radiologic Technology Education (JRCERT), 20 North Wacker Drive, Suite 2850, Chicago, Illinois, 60606-3182, phone 312-704-5300. You may also contact JRCERT at [mail@jrcert.org](mailto:mail@jrcert.org) or at [www.jrcert.org](http://www.jrcert.org).

The Emergency Medical Services Technology program is accredited nationally by the Committee on Accreditation of Allied Health Educational Programs (CAAHEP), 25400 U.S. Highway 19 North, Suite 158, Clearwater FL, 33763, phone 727-210-2350.

VHCC is approved for listing in U.S. Department of Education directories and for participation in various federally sponsored programs of student aid and educational assistance. It has also been approved by the Virginia State Approving Agency to offer GI Bill® benefits.

VHCC is an institutional member of the American Association of Community Colleges, the Southern Association of Community, Junior, and Technical Colleges, and the Association of Virginia Colleges.

## Mission of the College

Virginia Highlands Community College provides exceptional educational pathways to enrich lives and strengthen our communities.

## Vision Statement

Virginia Highlands Community College will be an educational institution of choice, empowering students, employees and community members to reach their fullest potential.

## Core Values

**At Virginia Highlands Community College, we value excellence, individual worth, a welcoming environment, accountability and achievement.**

Educational **excellence** that furthers intellectual, creative, ethical and social development through a broad range of programs, professionally delivered and continuously evaluated with a focus on improvement.

**Individual worth**, focusing on the strengths, experiences, and perspectives of all people. We set aside personal preferences and focus on the best interest of our campus and local communities, which are strengthened in an environment of mutual respect and learning.

A safe, secure, and **welcoming environment** that cultivates a student-centered approach to service.

**Accountability**, accepting responsibility for our actions and accepting ownership for the results. We uphold the values of honesty, transparency, and integrity while remaining good stewards of the resources entrusted to us.

**Achievement**, recognizing that life-long learning provides individual empowerment, resulting in success and personal satisfaction. We are proud to be a life-changing institution that encourages a passionate pursuit of excellence.

## LearningPLUS+

LearningPLUS+ is a student-centered college-wide initiative designed to teach students the soft skills of communication, professionalism, problem solving and teamwork through hands-on experiential learning. VHCC students will participate in the LearningPLUS+ program in three ways:

1. Direct instruction and assessment of soft skills in their SDV 101 course.
2. Direct soft skill instruction, hands-on learning opportunities and assessment in most of their VHCC courses.
3. All students will be required to participate in a capstone experience that will allow them to demonstrate their mastery of the LearningPLUS+ soft skills prior to graduation.

At VHCC, we are committed to LearningPLUS+ because we're committed to student success and the needs of our communities. LearningPLUS+ is VHCC's way of ensuring our graduates have the skills they need to be successful in life and in the workplace.

## Special College Policies

The College reserves the right to make changes as required in course offerings, curricula, academic policies and other rules and regulations affecting students, to be effective at the discretion of the College. These changes will govern current and formerly enrolled students. Enrollment of all students is subject to these conditions. Virginia Highlands Community College retains the right to make appropriate changes to remain in compliance with Virginia Community College System policy. Changes and supplements to this catalog will be issued as necessary.

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## STUDENT POLICIES & SERVICES

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### Academic Computing and Instructional Technology

The purpose of academic computing and instructional technology is to provide instructional hardware, software, training, and classroom assistance.

The academic computing and instructional technology system is comprised of ten (10) instructional labs, one general learning lab, faculty and staff offices, and three video conferencing classrooms. In addition, most regular classrooms are equipped with computers and LCD projectors that instructors use for delivering content. These computers, as well as all other computers on campus, are connected through a Local Area Network (LAN). The LAN also supports the automated library system providing remote access to local, state, and national comprehensive collections of materials, internet access, printing, and all online learning services.

### Alumni Association

The Virginia Highlands Alumni Association actively seeks participation of current students, former students, graduates, and friends of Virginia Highlands Community College. The purpose of the Association is to advance the growth and development of Virginia Highlands Community College; promote the personal, educational and professional relationship between the College and its alumni; and engender a spirit of shared interest and active involvement in community between the College, its alumni and the region served by the College. For more information or to apply for membership in the association, contact the Institutional Advancement Office or go to the VHCC alumni website at [www.vhcc.edu/alumni](http://www.vhcc.edu/alumni).

### Audio-Visual Services

The purpose of Audio-Visual Services is to provide video production and audio reinforcement services in support of academic and community activities on the VHCC campus.

The Audio-Visual Services staff provides photography, video/ audio production, and equipment operation services in support of the educational program. In addition, Audio-Visual staff supports both faculty/staff and external customers using any of VHCC's campus facilities.

### Bookstore

Books and general school supplies may be purchased from the Bookstore located in OTC 117. Visit the online VHCC Bookstore for textbook information at [www.bkstr.com/vhccstore](http://www.bkstr.com/vhccstore) or by clicking the Follett Discover app in MyVHCC.

### Campus Police

VHCC has its own police officers, who are sworn officers with full police authority, including that of arrest. The main function of the campus police is to ensure your rights, safety, and security while on campus. The Campus Police office is located in ISC 151, 276-739-2448 and police officers carry cell phones (276-614-8282) to enhance communications.

#### A. Campus Safety

Students are expected to conduct themselves at all times in a manner conducive to the safety of all. Behavior considerate of the welfare of others will result in the maximum degree of safety on campus. Anyone recognizing possible hazard, should notify campus police, a member of our buildings and grounds staff, or, if appropriate, [file a Safety or Hazard Report](#) online. All visitors must register with the receptionist before going to any part of the campus. For the safety of children, students and visitors should not leave them unattended in the buildings or on the campus for any reason. More information can be found on the [Campus Police website](#).

#### B. Code Adam

For the safety of children, students and visitors should not leave them unattended in the buildings or on the campus for any reason. The 2003 session of the Virginia General Assembly passed legislation mandating the implementation of a Code Adam policy and procedure in every building owned or leased in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The purpose of Code Adam is to prevent and/or find a lost or missing child or young adult. VHCC participates in project Code Adam.

#### C. Medical Emergencies

The Office of Campus Police located in ISC 151 is designated as the official emergency first aid station. All serious accidents and/or illnesses should be reported immediately to this office or the office of the Vice President of Financial and Administrative Services ADM 109A.

When emergency medical attention is needed, the Campus Police Officer or person in charge will call 911 to request emergency medical services and/or transportation to Johnston Memorial Hospital.

Students with specific health conditions or needs are encouraged to inform their counselor and instructors as applicable, to the extent such information may be helpful in case of accident or illness on campus.

As a commuting institution, the College does not provide organized health services or infirmary facilities. It is expected that routine health care will continue to be a responsibility of the student and/or the family.

### **D. Parking**

Ample parking space is provided for students attending Virginia Highlands Community College. All parking areas are provided for faculty, students, and visitors to the campus.

### **E. Student Right-To-Know**

Institutions are required to provide to their current and any prospective student information on institutional policies regarding security procedures and campus law enforcement, as well as a description of programs designed to inform students about crime prevention. Statistical data concerning occurrence on campus of certain criminal offenses which have been reported to campus security authorities or local police agencies must also be disclosed. This information may be obtained from campus police or the Student Services Center. The VHCC Crime Report and other important information are located on the Campus Police web site. The Campus Police makes available information on Campus Security Statistics, Emergency Response Plan, Emergency Procedures, and the Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities and Conduct.

The college normally provides police officers, custodial services and administrative support when classes are in session. After hours, maintenance and police officers are generally available on a round-the-clock basis and available by campus radio or cell phone.

The campus police department is responsible for enforcing all college security regulations and cooperating with appropriate local, state, and federal authorities. Uniformed campus police officers are duly sworn police officers and have full authority to act within the scope of their law enforcement responsibilities.

The VHCC Crime Awareness and Campus Security policies will be distributed to all current students and employees annually in orientation and in-service programs. These programs will be structured to encourage students and employees to be responsible for their own security and the security of others and will offer information concerning crime prevention. The programs are offered on a regular basis throughout the year.

The campus police office will conduct fire or weather-related drills every semester. This will keep you informed of where to go and what to do in the event of an emergency

## **Campus Clubs and Organizations Policies**

VHCC and the State Board for Community Colleges recognizes and encourages honorary, scholastic, service organizations, and sports clubs that do not restrict membership based on race, color, gender, age, religion, disability, national origin, sexual orientation or other non-merit factors. The following regulations and procedures apply to all student activity programs:

- a. The entire program of student activities shall be under college supervision.
- b. There shall be a full-time faculty or staff sponsor for each student club or organization.
- c. All student activity funds shall be deposited with and expended through the college business office, subject to State Board policies, procedures, and regulations pertaining to such funds.
- d. Each college, with the approval of its local board, shall adopt its own regulations and procedures to implement the above policy.
- e. All student activity programs and recognized clubs and organizations must comply with the nondiscrimination policy, except as follows:

Any recognized religious or political student club or organization shall be authorized to limit certain activities only to members who are committed to furthering the mission of such organization. Such activities include ordering the club or organization's internal affairs, selecting the club or organization's leaders and members, defining the club or organization's doctrines, and resolving the organization's disputes.

Private clubs, private associations, social fraternities, and social sororities shall not be recognized by VHCC.

### **A. Guidelines**

1. A group shall become a club or organization only after administrative review and formal recognition by the College President, Vice President of Instruction and Student Services, and the Student Affairs Committee. The process for establishing a club or organization is detailed in the Student Club/Organization Resource Manual, located on the VHCC website under Current Students>Student Life>Clubs and Organizations.
2. Clubs and organizations agree to abide by all policies and regulations of VHCC and the State Board for Community Colleges. When a club or organization is affiliated with an external body, such as a national society, a copy of that club or organization's constitution and bylaws shall be filed at the same time with the Student Services office.
3. Formal recognition of a club or organization is granted or denied by the College President. Formal recognition of a club or organization implies neither approval nor disapproval of the stated aims, objectives, and policies of the organization.
4. All changes and amendments to a club or organization's constitution or bylaws including changes and amendments adopted by an affiliated external body must be submitted to the College President, Vice President of Instruction and Student Services, and the Student Affairs Committee. All changes and amendments to the constitution or bylaws of a club or organization's extramural affiliate shall be submitted to the College President, Vice President of Instruction and Student Services, and the Student Affairs Committee within a reasonable time before their effective date. The president will approve or disapprove these changes.
5. A club or organization may use the College name as a whole, as a part of, or in conjunction with its name only with the express written permission of the College President.

6. College clubs and organizations may distribute or communicate information related to their purpose and aims through print and/or electronic media. All communication must be approved by the Student Services office.
7. A club or organization engaging in illegal activities, either on or off campus, may have sanctions imposed, including admonition, probation, restitution, or withdrawal of College recognition.
8. College clubs and organizations may use college facilities for regular business meetings, social programs, and programs open to the public unless, in the opinion of the College President, the planned program poses a serious threat to the continued well-being and safety of the College. College facilities are scheduled by the Office of the Vice President of Instruction & Student Services, ADM 109.

### **B. Meeting Times**

Activity hour is designed primarily for the purpose of: (1) providing time for the faculty, staff, administration, and students to implement the College's plan of governance; (2) enabling the College to develop and implement an effective program of extracurricular activities; and (3) establishing a time for various forms of communication (counseling, advising, etc.) that need to take place between and among faculty, staff, and students. College clubs and organizations are encouraged to schedule meetings during this time.

### **C. Solicitation of Funds and Fundraising**

Solicitation of funds for the benefit of recognized charitable or civic organizations on campus without the prior written approval of the Vice President of Institutional Advancement for each specific fund drive is prohibited. Anyone seeking approval for such an activity may receive further information on procedure through the Student Services office. Other types of solicitation of funds are specifically prohibited.

### **D. Selling on Campus**

The privilege of selling merchandise of any variety on campus is limited to the bookstore, recognized college clubs or organizations, and those having valid contracts as concessionaires. The president or his/her designee shall have the authority to specify or limit the place and times of such sales. Student clubs and organizations desiring to sell merchandise on campus should make their request to the Student Services office.

## **Career Services**

The Career Services Resource Center (ISC 101) is dedicated to helping students pursue their passion by equipping students with tools, strategies, and knowledge to develop life-long career planning and job search skills. The Career Services Resource Center provides information, resources, contacts, and services that will help students decide on a major or career path and obtain employment. Students will be empowered to choose and attain personally rewarding careers.

Through the Career Services Resource Center's STEP Program, students can:

**Discover** – Career advising and assessments will help students link their interests, skills, and unique personalities to college majors and growing career fields.

**Explore** – Students will learn strategies to make stronger career choices and will gain access to reliable career information such as salaries, high-demand career fields, required education levels, and more.

**Experience** – Students will have the opportunity to clarify career goals and gain exposure to the world of work through job shadowing, industry tours, or internships.

**Engage** – By learning the latest job search techniques, creating a dynamic resume, and perfecting the job interview, students will be fully prepared to market their skills at the annual career fair in the spring!

The Career Services Resource Center provides a listing of full- and part-time employment opportunities from a variety of employers and industries. Job opportunities are posted on VHCC Career Explorer ([www.vhcc.edu/careerexplorer](http://www.vhcc.edu/careerexplorer)), VHCC Career Connection Facebook page, and the job board located outside of the Career Services Resource Center Office. Students who seek part-time work are encouraged to apply for openings that fit within their future career plans. The experience gained will assist them in finding permanent and rewarding positions.

The services of this office are available to all part-time and full-time students as well as alumni. The office is located in ISC 101.

Like us on Facebook @VHCCCareerServices, and visit our webpage at [www.vhcc.edu/careerservices](http://www.vhcc.edu/careerservices).

## **Computer Ethics Guidelines**

The VHCC community abides by the policy set forth in the VCCS Computer Ethics Guidelines which are posted in all computer labs and public access terminals. Therefore, ethical behavior must be exhibited when using VHCC computing resources.



## Controlled Substances and Alcohol

This institution will abide by all applicable federal, state, and local laws pertaining to the illegal use and abuse of alcohol and controlled substances. The College has a comprehensive plan to provide educational programs and services to its students and staff to address substance abuse concerns.

### A. Alcoholic Beverages at Social Functions

The State Board for Community Colleges has delegated to the VHCC College Board the responsibility for taking action on requests to serve alcohol at College social functions in view of local mores and in accordance with State regulations (Code of Virginia Sections 4.1-100 and 4.1-200, and Virginia Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control – Special Event Licensure).

Within the framework established by the State Alcoholic Beverage Control Board, VHCC, under special conditions, may be permitted to obtain a one day banquet license to serve alcohol at college sponsored functions provided that no person under 21 years of age is possessing, dispensing or drinking alcoholic beverages.

The VHCC administration and the College Board must approve this type of activity before the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board is contacted.

Students who are 21 years of age or older may be permitted to consume alcoholic beverages at college-sponsored events that have previously been approved to serve alcohol.

### B. Illegal Substance Policy

Students of VHCC shall not possess, sell, use, manufacture, give away or otherwise distribute illegal substances while on campus, attending a college sponsored off-campus event, or while serving as a representative of the college at off-campus meetings. Students who violate this policy shall have College charges processed against them in the normal manner of due process provided by VHCC rules. Further, students who violate this policy shall have committed a criminal offense, and VHCC shall notify the appropriate agency of the Commonwealth of Virginia, county or city government for investigation and, if warranted, prosecution.

### C. Substance Abuse Program

VHCC has developed the following substance abuse program including drug and alcohol education and substance abuse counseling and referral services for students and employees.

- **Drug and Alcohol Education**

**Student Orientation:** In orientation, VHCC representatives or other selected groups inform students of the issues related to substance abuse. Students are provided with prevention and treatment information.

**Substance Abuse Materials:** Print and/or electronic materials are available to inform students and employees of substance abuse issues.

**Substance Abuse Programs:** VHCC offers seminars and workshops dealing with substance abuse. These activities are open to the general public.

- **Substance Abuse Counseling and Referral**

VHCC's Student Services office maintains referral information on substance abuse treatment and rehabilitation services available in the community. Substance abuse inquiries and referrals are handled in a confidential manner.

## Counseling Services

### 1. Academic Advising

Advising services are available to all currently enrolled and prospective students to assist in making important career, educational, and personal/social plans. As part of this assistance, appropriate tests, inventories, occupational and educational information, and information regarding employment are available. The Campus Connection Center is located in ISC 133, (276) 739-2438. Advisors are available evening hours by appointment. Should a problem require assistance above and beyond that which the advisor feels adequate to handle, the student will be referred to another appropriate professional resource person, either on campus or in the larger community.

### 2. Professional Counseling

As a service to students, the College maintains a staff of professional academic counselors, advisors and faculty advisors. The counseling and advising programs function to assist students in making intelligent career decisions and in setting educational and personal goals. It is the goal of the College to draw on the counseling and advising staff to facilitate the College experience for students, especially first year students. As a part of this assistance, counselors and advisors have available appropriate tests, inventories, occupational and educational information, and information regarding financial assistance or employment.

All curricular students will begin their education at VHCC with a Coaching Session and meeting with an academic advisor. These sessions include an assessment of the student's goals and intentions, proper program placement, faculty advisor assignment, overview of college resources, interpretation of placement and enrollment in first semester courses.



### 3. Faculty Advising

A faculty member or other college representative will be designated as a student's advisor to provide educational guidance in the student's field of specialization. VHCC subscribes to the developmental advising model where faculty advisors assist students in clarifying personal and career goals, developing educational goals, and evaluating the progress toward established goals. The faculty advisor will utilize the resources of the College and refer students to the appropriate academic support services. The advising relationship is a decision-making process in which the sharing of information between student and advisor promotes responsible and appropriate choices and facilitates a successful academic experience.

### 4. Recruitment and High School Articulation

The College cooperates with the high schools in the region to provide pre-college advising to those students planning to attend the community college. Students in area high schools are kept informed of the offerings of the College. In addition, college officials work closely with individuals and organizations in the community to determine the educational needs and interests of citizens in the region who are not currently attending high school. College representatives are available Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. to provide assistance and respond to requests from individuals seeking information about admission to the College.

## Cultural Events - Arts Array

The Arts Array cultural program at VHCC is a comprehensive performance and lecture series provided for the students and staff of the College and made available to the general public. The series includes musical and drama performances and lectures on topics of academic and regional interest held at a variety of venues. A wide variety of musical performances are provided to help broaden the listening opportunities for student and community members. Classical, Jazz, Folk, and eclectic styles are provided in the concert series. In addition, weekly foreign and independent American films are shown at the Abingdon Cinemall.

## Debt Collection

In the instance that a student does not pay for any expense incurred at VHCC in a timely manner and in accordance with college policy, an invoice is sent from the Business Office to each student stating that he/she will be given thirty (30) days after the postmark of the invoice to make payment.

All delinquent debts owed to Virginia Highlands Community College will be logged into Virginia's Department of Taxation Set-Off Debt Program. The debt then would be collected from tax refunds, motor vehicle refunds, and other payments made to the debtor by the Commonwealth of Virginia. In addition, delinquent accounts are listed with a third-party collection agency.

## Email Accounts

Electronic mail or "email" is an official method of communicating at the Virginia Community College System (VCCS). When communicating legally required information, personally identifiable information, grades, or any FERPA-protected information, faculty and staff must use college or VCCS email and VCCS student email or other VCCS authenticated method. All official email communication is distributed to VCCS email accounts only. Students are encouraged to regularly check their campus email accounts. For assistance contact the Help Desk at (276) 739-2500 or [helpdesk@vhcc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@vhcc.edu).

## Expressive Activity

### A. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out the policy and procedures that will govern all expressive activities on campus.

### B. Policy

1. This policy applies to all buildings, grounds, and other spaces owned or controlled by a college. The term "expressive activity" includes:
  - Meetings and other group activities of students and student organizations;
  - Speeches, performances, demonstrations, rallies, vigils, and other events by students, student organizations, and outside groups invited by student organizations;
  - Distributions of literature, such as leafleting and pamphleting; and
  - Any other expression protected by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

This policy does not apply in instances when speakers, performers, groups, etc. are invited by the college or to external groups that arrange to use college space through a Facilities Use Agreement. [Guidelines for Use of Facilities by Community Groups](#)

2. College property is primarily dedicated to academic, student life and administrative functions. But it also represents the "marketplace of ideas," and especially for students, many areas of campus represent a public forum for speech and other expressive activities. Colleges may place restrictions on expressive activities occurring indoors, but especially for students and student organizations, the outdoor areas of campus remain venues for free expression, including speeches, demonstrations, and the distribution of literature.
3. Indoors or outdoors, colleges shall not interfere with the rights of individuals and groups to the free expression of their views or impermissibly regulate their speech based on its content or viewpoint. Nevertheless, colleges may establish reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions on expressive activity. Such restrictions must be content-neutral, narrowly tailored to serve a significant

governmental interest, and allow ample alternative channels for communication of the information.

4. No event or expressive activity shall be permitted to violate or hinder the rights of others within the campus community or substantially disrupt normal college operations.

### **C. Responsibilities**

The Vice President of Instruction and Student Services is responsible for implementing this policy. To report a disruption to protected speech, please contact the Vice President at 276-739-2429 or [dwhisman@vhcc.edu](mailto:dwhisman@vhcc.edu). In cases of emergency, please call the Campus Police Department at (276) 614-8282 or (276) 739-2448 or 911. Please refer to these [FAQs](#) for additional information.

### **D. Procedures for Reserving Campus Facilities**

1. If students, student organizations, or college employees desire to reserve campus facilities, they shall submit their requests to the Office of the Vice President of Instruction and Student Services at 276-739-2429. Requests must be made with at least 24 hours' notice. (Note that this does not suggest that any facility requested must be made available within one day if the facility is already reserved. If the procedure at the college does not allow for one day's notice, then state what notice is necessary to reserve facilities, i.e., two days' notice.) More notice may be required to allow for sufficient logistical support and to ensure the safety and security of the campus.
2. If individuals or organizations who are not members of the college community (i.e., not students, student organizations, or college employees) desire to reserve campus facilities, they must be sponsored by a recognized student organization or the college to conduct expressive activities or events on campus. These individuals or organizations should contact the Vice President of Finance and Administration at 276-739-2426 or [cfields@vhcc.edu](mailto:cfields@vhcc.edu) if interested in being sponsored by the college.
3. The college will assess appropriate fees for equipment and facility use to users who are not members of the campus community. Security fees may be assessed to defray the actual costs of providing security when the size of the audience may pose a risk to safety. At no time shall the college assess a security fee based on the anticipated reaction to the expressive activity.
4. Facilities available for use are available only during normal operating hours or as otherwise posted.
5. Students, student organizations, and college employees may request to reserve campus facilities on a first-come, first-served basis. These requests may be denied for the following reasons only:
  - a. The requested venue is an indoor facility that the college has designated as not available for expressive activity under section F of this policy;
  - b. The requested venue is an indoor facility and the request conflicts with restrictions enacted pursuant to section D(4) of this policy;
  - c. The venue is already reserved for another event<sup>1</sup>;
  - d. The activity will attract a crowd larger than the venue can safely contain;
  - e. The activity will substantially disrupt another event being held at a neighboring venue<sup>2</sup>;
  - f. The activity will substantially disrupt college operations (including classes);
  - g. The activity is a clear and present threat to public safety, according to the college's police or security department;
  - h. The activity will occur during college examination periods; or
  - i. The activity is unlawful.
6. During an event, the student, student organization, or college employee requesting the reservation is responsible for preserving and maintaining the facility it reserved. If it causes any damage to those facilities, the person(s) or organization (and its officers, if applicable) shall assume responsibility.
7. When assessing a request to reserve campus facilities, the college will not consider the content or viewpoint of the expression or the possible reaction to that expression. The college will not impose restrictions on students, student organizations, or college employees due to the content or viewpoint of their expression or the possible reaction to that expression. In the event that other persons react negatively to a student's, student organizations, or college employee's expression, college officials (including college police or security) shall take all necessary steps to ensure public safety while allowing the expressive activity to continue.

### **E. Spontaneous Expressive Activity**

1. For outdoor campus facilities and areas, students, student organizations, and their sponsored guests may freely engage in spontaneous expressive activities as long as they do not (a) block access to campus buildings, (b) obstruct vehicular or pedestrian traffic, (c) substantially disrupt previously scheduled campus events, (d) substantially disrupt college operations, (e) constitute unlawful activity; or (f) create a clear and present threat to public safety, according to the college's police or security department.
2. No indoor areas or facilities are available for spontaneous expressive activity.

<sup>1</sup> In the event that multiple individuals or organizations submit conflicting reservation requests, the following order of precedence shall govern: (1) official college sponsored activities and events; (2) recognized student organization activities and events; (3) student activities and events; and (4) all other activities and events.

<sup>2</sup> The expression of competing viewpoints or multiple speakers in proximity to each other does not, without more, constitute a substantial disruption.

## **F. Areas Not Available for Expressive Activity**

The following indoor areas/facilities are not available for expressive activity:

- Library
- Administrative/business/faculty/staff offices
- Classrooms (during instructional hours)

## **G. Banners and Distribution of Commercial Materials**

1. Banners used in expressing speech should comply with the provisions of this policy and cannot be used to block, obstruct or otherwise deny access to any pedestrian or to block or obstruct vehicular traffic.
2. Distribution of commercial advertising or the placement of commercial material is prohibited in the following areas:
  - Administrative/business/faculty/staff offices
  - Classrooms, computer rooms, laboratories, and other places where instruction takes place
  - Libraries

## **Food Service**

Food and beverages are available through Food Truck visits (bookstore parking lot, between OTC and MEC buildings) and vending machines located in the Collins' Student Center. The Collins' Student Center is also for relaxation and enjoyment between classes, etc., and your cooperation is solicited in keeping this area neat and clean.

## **Intramurals and Club Sports**

VHCC supports the development of intramural programs or sports clubs on campus and/or off campus in community facilities. These programs will be designed to promote the physical well-being of the individual student and the development of recreational skills. Competition of intramural teams, including "all-star" teams, in civic leagues and competition between intramural or sports club teams of other institutions is authorized with the approval of the VHCC College Board providing that all direct expenses, including transportation, are paid from non-state funds.

Looking for a little friendly competition? Intramural sports encourage participation in a competitive, yet fun, sports program. You need not be a star athlete to participate! Intramural Sports can include Flag Football, Pool, Ultimate Frisbee, Softball, Basketball, Volleyball, etc. Play for the fun of it and experience for yourself why intramural sports is where the action is.

## **Intellectual Property Materials**

The 1986 session of the General Assembly amended the Code of Virginia by adding Sections 23-4.3, 23-4.4, and 23-9.10:4 which require that each board of a state-supported institution of higher education adopt formal intellectual property policies consistent with guidelines developed by SCHEV. The guidelines adopted by the State Council in June 1987 stipulate that a State institution must: define the nature of the intellectual property it wants to own, if any; establish procedures by which the institution shall be notified by the creator of intellectual property within the purview of this policy; install procedures designed to protect and promote said property; when required, obtain prior authorization to transfer title to said properties from the Governor; and, submit an annual report including a quantitative listing of intellectual properties owned by the institution.

The VHCC Policy on Intellectual Property determines ownership rights and responsibilities regarding intellectual property produced by a student and/or an employee of the VCCS. The policy is subject to applicable law and guidelines issued by the State Council for Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV). The guidelines adopted by the State Council in June 1987 stipulate that a State institution must: define the nature of the intellectual property it wants to own, if any; establish procedures by which the institution shall be notified by the creator of intellectual property within the purview of this policy; install procedures designed to protect and promote said property; when required, obtain prior authorization to transfer title to said properties from the Governor; and, submit an annual report including a quantitative listing of intellectual properties owned by the institution.

VHCC's Intellectual Property (Copyright & Patent) Policies and Procedures can be found in the [Faculty & Staff Manual - 4.7.0](#).

## **Library**

The Virginia Highlands Community College Library provides reference services and an organized, accessible, comprehensive collection of material, resources, and programming that supports and enriches the curricula of the College.

### **Services**

The Library readily offers library instruction and research assistance to students, and users can receive support in a variety of ways, including in-person, e-mail, telephone, and a 24-hour staffed chat service. VHCC identification cards are requested online at [www.vhcc.edu/studentid](http://www.vhcc.edu/studentid) and may be renewed at the end of each academic year at the circulation desk. Additionally, an interlibrary loan service is offered to patrons as a way to obtain books, audio-visual materials, and periodical articles that are not directly available through VHCC Library resources.

The Library is open free of charge to any community member. Community use is encouraged and a community user library card may be obtained by registering at the Library's circulation desk.

## Print Resources

The Library houses over 22,000 volumes available for circulation. The collection also includes almost 700 DVDs, including a copy of each film offered as part of the Arts Array series. The Library subscribes to 50 print periodicals, including both titles that support College programs and curricula and popular publications. Additionally, the Library maintains subscriptions to regional and local newspapers.

## Electronic Resources

Electronic access to research materials for students and faculty is available through VHCC Library databases, the Virginia Community College System, and the Virtual Library of Virginia (VIVA). These are accessible through the VHCC Library's homepage and the MyVHCC portal. Through VIVA, VHCC students, faculty, and staff have access to over 150 scholarly databases, over 30,000 electronic journals and magazines, and over 2,000,000 additional full-text sources. These resources cover a wide variety of topics, including those relating specifically to VHCC programs and courses.

Additionally, over 150,000 e-books and audiobooks are available for VHCC Library patrons, and access is provided to thousands of streaming videos as well. All VHCC Library electronic resources can be easily accessed off-campus by anyone with a VHCC login and password.

## Facilities

In addition to resources and services, the Library furnishes facilities and equipment for students, faculty, staff, and the public. Computers, networked printers, a photocopier with fax capability, and other technologies are provided. The Library has study and work spaces for both groups and individuals. Library furniture is adaptable to accommodate large groups in the Library's primary open space, while two quiet areas with study carrels and partitions are available for individual study. Two reading nooks provide comfortable lounge-type seating.

## Hours

The Library is open day and evening hours throughout the week to provide services to all patrons. When classes are in session, the Library is generally open 8am-7pm Monday-Thursday and 8am-5pm Friday. When classes are not in session, hours of operation are typically 8am-5pm Monday-Friday. Specific schedules are posted on the Library's webpage and on the sign at the Library's entrance, and patrons are encouraged to call the Library if they have questions about the hours of operation.

## Lending Guidelines

The VHCC Library generally allows a two-week loan period for print material and a one-week loan period for audio-visual items. The Library does not charge fines for overdue items. Library patrons will receive two notices of overdue items via e-mail before a lost item bill is generated. The lost item bill includes the replacement cost of the overdue item(s), and this amount is also billed to the student's account. Access to official College records and transcripts is blocked until the items are returned to the Library or the student's account is paid in full.

## Lost and Found

VHCC maintains a Lost and Found station at the campus reception desk, which is located in the Administration Building (ADM). Any items found on campus can be turned into, or any lost items can be picked up at, this location.

After 90 days, VHCC is no longer responsible for any unclaimed items.

## The Moose Academic Resource Center

The purpose of the MARC is to provide a computer equipped study center, and an academic mentoring center to help meet the educational needs of faculty and students, and to benefit the community at large.

MARC services include individualized enrichment studies, computer assisted instruction, and computers for general and specific course study. Other services are addressed on an individual basis.

The MARC offers academic mentoring for most core and developmental courses and high-need subjects in both open group sessions and appointment formats throughout the semester. Other subjects are offered based on student requests and academic mentor availability. Mentoring is available free of charge for VHCC students.

The MARC is located in the Learning Resources Center (LRC 121).

Information on using the MARC can be obtained from MARC personnel at [www.vhcc.edu/mentoring](http://www.vhcc.edu/mentoring). The operating hours for academic mentoring in the MARC are as follows:

Monday - Thursday: 8:00am - 7:00pm  
Friday 9:30am - 5:00pm

VHCC students can access mentoring by:

- Attending open sessions as needed in LRC 121. The schedule is posted online each semester;
- Requesting mentoring by appointment by emailing the MARC Coordinator at [tutoring@vhcc.edu](mailto:tutoring@vhcc.edu);

- Accessing online mentoring through the Brainfuse link on the MyVHCC site or from within Canvas;
- Requesting specific subject mentoring (not available during open session) by contacting the MARC Coordinator at [tutoring@vhcc.edu](mailto:tutoring@vhcc.edu).

The MARC will follow the same schedule as the VHCC Library. The hours printed above are subject to change.

## Online Learning & Instructional Technology

Online learning describes a formal instructional setting, where the student and instructor are not in the same place. In an online learning course, the majority of instruction, student to instructor and student to student interaction is achieved through electronic communication. Today, most online learning courses leverage the Internet as the primary channel for communicating using web pages, email, discussion boards and streaming video and audio. VHCC offers high quality online learning courses to provide equal access and flexibility to both traditional and nontraditional students and to expand the number and type of course offerings available.

VHCC uses the latest innovative instructional technologies to deliver online learning offerings to our students and community. When students desire maximum scheduling flexibility, VHCC offers anywhere, anytime courses online using the VCCS provided Canvas® learning management system.

VHCC provides educational support services such as library services, computer software and support, tutoring and other student services to help ensure that online learning students get all the assistance that they may require.

The Online Learning & Instructional Technology staff provides instructional design services, online learning related technology training, online course quality assurance monitoring and support for faculty. The Online Learning & Instructional Technology staff also provides online learning related technical support and training for students. The staff administers VHCC's implementation of the Canvas® learning management system along with several other instructional technology related applications.

In addition to the online learning specific support activities listed above, the Director of Online Learning & Instructional Technology also provides oversight for VHCC's QEP Initiative: LearningPLUS+, Testing Center and Audio-Visual Services Department.

For more information concerning online learning or instructional technology, visit our website at [www.vhcc.edu/vhcconline](http://www.vhcc.edu/vhcconline) or contact Ken Fairbanks at 276-739-2462.

## Open Computer Laboratories

Computer labs are located in rooms 222, , 224, 226, and 233, of the Learning Resource Center and rooms 153 and 155 of the Instruction and Student Center, and are available for general use when classes are not in session. Computers also are available for student use in the Library and Learning/Tutoring Center. Students must abide by the policy set forth in the VCCS Computer Ethics Guidelines which are posted in all computer labs and public access terminals. Therefore, ethical behavior must be exhibited when using VHCC computing resources.

## Service Learning

Service Learning is an instructional process that integrates community service with academic learning. It permits students to perform service in the community (through various local agencies) in areas related to their course objectives.

Service-Learning is related to but does not include cooperative education, practicum or internship programs. If you are interested in a service-learning activity as part of a course you are enrolled in, please contact your instructor or the Career Development office.

## Sexual Violence, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking

### Notice of Nondiscrimination.

As a recipient of federal funds, Virginia Highlands Community College is required to comply with Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. § 1681 et seq. ("Title IX"), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities, admission and employment. Under certain circumstances, sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, and similar conduct constitute sexual discrimination prohibited by Title IX.

The most updated complete Title IX Policy as well as contact information for the VHCC Title IX Coordinator may be found at <http://www.vhcc.edu/titleix>

Below are community resources which can offer confidential assistance and support:

- 1) Crisis Center, Inc. Bristol, VA – 24/7 Hotline: 276-466-2312. Website- [www.crisiscenterinc.org](http://www.crisiscenterinc.org) (Serves City of Bristol, VA and Washington Co., VA)
- 2) Abuse Alternatives- Bristol, TN/VA. Hotline- 423-764-2287 or 1-800-987-6499. TTY line: 423-652-9750. Website- [www.abusealternativesinc.org](http://www.abusealternativesinc.org) (Serves City of Bristol, VA and Washington Co., VA)
- 3) Family Resource Center, Inc. Wytheville, VA. Hotline- 1-800-613-6145. Website- [www.frcinc.org](http://www.frcinc.org) (Serves Smyth County)

## Single Stop

VHCC has teamed up with Single Stop, USA to help make the college experience more sustainable for long term success. Single Stop is an easy and quick virtual questionnaire for students to screen for state and federal benefits in which they possibly qualify. No matter the results – you'll be linked with a trained coach who will connect you to applications required for receiving benefits and/or local resources that can assist you.

## Smoking Policy

Virginia Highlands Community College is subject to and enforces provisions of the “Virginia Indoor Clean Air Act.”

Smoking is defined as any product or apparatus (including an electronic or e-cigarette) that emits smoke/vapor or is designed to simulate smoking cigarettes or any other tobacco product. Smoking is not allowed within 25 feet of a building entrance. The use of tobacco products is not permitted inside any Virginia Highlands Community College building or classrooms. The college will continue to offer prevention programs for all drugs to promote healthy living.

## Snow Schedule and Emergency College Closings

In the event of inclement weather or another emergency, it may be necessary to operate on a delayed schedule or to close. The following schedule has been adopted for operating the College’s daytime programs on a delayed schedule. Information about College delays/closings will be available through the local media, on the College’s web site ([www.vhcc.edu](http://www.vhcc.edu)), and on the College’s main telephone line at (276) 739-2400. Additionally, VHCC uses an early alert system to send text, email and voice alerts in the event of a schedule change. Faculty, staff and students can register for the early alert system online at [www.vhcc.edu/alert](http://www.vhcc.edu/alert). Each student ultimately must decide if it is possible and/or safe to travel to campus. The College will make every attempt to accommodate students who experience legitimate difficulties getting to campus or meeting the altered course schedule due to conflicts.

| <b>Monday &amp; Wednesday</b> |                      |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Regular Schedule</b>       | <b>Snow Schedule</b> |
| 8:00 - 9:21 am                | 10:00 - 11:00 am     |
| 9:30 - 10:51 am               | 11:05-12:05 pm       |
| 11:00 - 12:21 pm              | 12:10 - 1:10 pm      |
| 12:30 - 1:51 pm               | 1:15 - 2:15 pm       |
| 2:00 - 3:21 pm                | 2:20 - 3:20 pm       |
| 3:30 - 4:51 pm                | 3:40 - 4:45 pm       |
| <b>Tuesday &amp; Thursday</b> |                      |
| <b>Regular Schedule</b>       | <b>Snow Schedule</b> |
| 8:00 - 9:21 am                | 10:00 - 11:00 am     |
| 9:30 - 10:51 am               | 11:05-12:05 pm       |
| 11:00 - 12:21 pm              | 12:10 - 1:10 pm      |
| 12:30 - 1:51 pm               | 1:15 - 2:15 pm       |
| Activity Period               | 2:15 - 3:00 pm       |
| 3:00 - 4:21 pm                | 3:00 - 4:15 pm       |
| <b>Friday</b>                 |                      |
| <b>Regular Schedule</b>       | <b>Snow Schedule</b> |
| 8:00 -10:51 am                | 10:00 - 12:05 pm     |
| 11:00 - 1:51 pm               | 12:10 - 2:15 pm      |
| 2:00 - 4:51 pm                | 2:20 - 4:25 pm       |

Evening classes meet at regularly schedule times.

Media outlets are notified when the VHCC operating schedule is altered because of inclement weather or an emergency situation.



## Student Activities

Student activities are designed to supplement the instructional program by providing a variety of meaningful, educational, cultural, social and civic experiences for all members of the campus community. The student activities program may include the following activities: professional entertainment, musical programs, cookouts, dances, stage plays, movies, intramural athletics, Student Government Association (SGA), clubs and organizations and special interest groups as approved by the College. The College encourages student participation in extracurricular activities on campus.

A student activity fee is required of all students registered for credit courses. The fee subsidizes student programs, intramurals, and cultural events, including the Arts Array Series. VHCC students are admitted free to these events with a valid Student ID.

VHCC and the State Board for Community Colleges recognizes and encourages honorary, scholastic, service organizations, and sports clubs that do not restrict membership based on race, color, gender, age, religion, disability, national origin, sexual orientation or other non-merit factors, with the following exception:

Any recognized religious or political student organization shall be authorized to limit certain activities only to members who are committed to furthering the mission of such organization. Such activities include ordering the organization's internal affairs, selecting the organization's leaders and members, defining the organization's doctrines, and resolving the organization's disputes.

The following regulations and procedures apply to all student activity programs:

1. All student activities are under college supervision.
2. A full-time faculty or staff sponsor is designated for each student organization.
3. All student activity funds are deposited with and expended through the College Business Office, subject to State Board policies, procedures, and regulations pertaining to such funds.
4. VHCC, with the approval of its local board, has developed its own regulations and procedures regarding the student activity program.

## Student Communications

A student, group, or organization of the college shall not distribute material on campus without prior approval of the Dean of Enrollment Management and Student Services (or designee). The Dean will make a determination within one week of receipt of all such material. If approval is denied on the basis of the content of the material, direct appeal may be made to the Vice President of Instruction and Student Services who will render a decision within one week of receipt of the material. Editorial freedom of student communication entails a corollary obligation under the canons of responsible journalism and applicable regulations of the Federal Communications Commission. All student communications shall explicitly state an editorial policy to the effect that the opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the college or its student body.

## Student Conduct

Each individual is considered a responsible adult, and it is assumed that students will maintain standards of conduct appropriate to membership in the college community, including all college related functions, both on and off campus. Emphasis is placed on standards of student conduct rather than on limits or restrictions. Guidelines and regulations governing student conduct are developed by representatives of the students, faculty, staff, and administration.

VHCC refrains from imposing a rigid code of discipline but reserves the right to take disciplinary action compatible with its own best interests when it is clearly necessary.

VHCC guarantees students the privilege of exercising his/her rights of citizenship under the Constitution of the United States without fear of prejudice. Special care is taken to assure due process and to spell out defined routes of appeal when students feel their rights have been violated.

VHCC is part of the Virginia Community College System and adheres to the standards set forth for the System. Student rights and responsibilities are designed to clarify what rights students may expect as a member of the student body and the responsibilities and obligations placed upon them.

VHCC provides an environment conducive to learning. VHCC establishes standards of conduct expected of all students. Any student who has allegedly violated the code of conduct is afforded due process. Should the student's conduct be judged to represent a danger to others, the College will immediately take appropriate action.

The President is responsible for the entire administration of the College, subject to the control of the Chancellor of the Virginia Community College System and the State Board for Community Colleges. It is his/her duty to administer the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia which may be applicable on the campus, as well as the policies, rules, and regulations of the State Board for Community Colleges. Any authority or responsibility or duty granted to or imposed upon the President may be delegated to others on the College faculty or staff. The President or his/her designee may take whatever legal or institutional action is necessary under this authority.

## Forms of Student Misconduct Subject to Disciplinary Action

- A. All forms of dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, knowingly furnishing false information to the College, and the forgery, alteration, or use of College documents or instruments of identification with the intent to defraud are considered misconduct.



1. Plagiarism is the appropriation of passages, either word for word or in substance, from the writings of another and the incorporation of those passages as one's own in written work offered for credit. VHCC assumes that the written work offered for credit is the student's own unless proper credit is given the original author by the use of quotation marks and footnotes or other explanatory inserts.
2. Collaboration with another person in the preparation or editing of notes, themes, reports, or other written work offered for credit is prohibited unless such collaboration has been specifically approved in advance by the instructor. Examples of collaboration include extensive use of another's ideas for preparing a creative assignment and receiving undue assistance in the preparation or editing of written materials.
3. Giving or receiving, offering or soliciting information on any quiz, test, or examination is prohibited; this includes the following:
  - a) Copying from another student's document/work and/or submitting a purchased document/work.
  - b) Use of prepared materials during the examination
  - c) Collaboration with another student during the examination
  - d) Buying, selling, stealing, soliciting, or transmitting the contents of an examination
  - e) Substituting for another person during an examination or allowing such a substitution for one's self.
  - f) Bribery of any person to obtain examination information.
- B. Disruption or obstruction of teaching, research, administration, disciplinary proceedings, or other College activities.
- C. Physical and/or psychological abuse, or the threat of such abuse, of any person on College premises or at College activities.
- D. Participating in or inciting a riot or an unauthorized disorderly assembly.
- E. Seizing, holding, commandeering, or damaging any property or facilities of the College, or threatening to do so, or refusing to depart from any property or facilities of the College upon direction by College officials or other person authorized by the President.
- F. Use of alcoholic beverages on campus, or at any college function, including the purchase, consumption, possession, or sale of such items except where specifically authorized within the regulations of the College.
- G. Possessing, using, selling, or distributing any type of illegal drugs on campus or at any college function.
- H. Gambling or holding an unauthorized raffle or lottery on campus or at any College function.
- I. Violating any College policy, including, but not limited to the [Violence Prevention Policy](#) and the [Weapons Regulation](#).
- J. Physically detaining or restraining any other person or removing a person, against their will, from any place where he/she is authorized to remain, or in any way obstructing the free movement of persons or vehicles on College premises or at College activities.
- K. Littering, defacing, destroying, or damaging property of the College or property under its jurisdiction or removing or using such property without proper authorization.
- L. Violating any local, state, or federal laws.
- M. Violating any rule or regulation not contained within the official College publications but announced as administrative policy by the President or his/her designee.
- N. Willfully encouraging others to commit any of the acts which have been herein prohibited.

## Sanctions

The following sanctions may be imposed:

- A. **Admonition:** An oral or written statement to a student that he/she is violating or has violated College rules and may be subject to more severe disciplinary action.
- B. **Disciplinary Probation:** Exclusion from participation in extracurricular activities of the College, including the holding of any student office, for a period of time not exceeding one academic year.
- C. **Restitution:** Required reimbursement for damage to or misappropriation of property. This may take the form of appropriate services or other compensation.
- D. **Suspension:** Exclusion from attending the College as a student for a definite period of time not to exceed one academic year.
- E. **Dismissal:** Termination of student status for an indefinite period. The conditions of readmission, if any, will be stated in the letter of dismissal.
- F. **Interim Suspension:** If, in the opinion of the Vice President of Instruction and Student Services the continued presence of any student on the campus may reasonably pose a threat to, or interfere with, the College's mission and/or the rights of others, a student may be suspended from the College pending the right to a hearing. The Vice President shall first make a reasonable effort to advise the student orally of the reasons for the suspension, and give the student opportunity for explanation or rebuttal.

The informal opportunity does not give the student the right to present witnesses, to cross examine adverse witnesses, or to require the presence of counsel. As soon as possible after the suspension, the student will have the right to call for a hearing.

## Conduct Resolution and Appeal Procedures

### Level I: Meeting for Alleged Violations of Student Conduct Policies

Instances in which students are accused of violating conduct policies, students are referred to the Dean of Enrollment Management and Student Services or designee for formal resolution. The Dean of Enrollment Management and Student Services or designee shall then conduct a careful and thorough investigation of the alleged violation. In the event the investigation shows that there is no substantial information to support the allegations of wrongdoing, the Dean of Enrollment Management and Student Services or designee shall drop the charges.

If the investigation indicates sufficient information of a policy violation, the Dean of Enrollment Management and Student Services or designee shall set a date to meet with the student to discuss the charges. Within five (5) business days of the conference with the student, the Dean of Enrollment Management and Student Services or designee shall render a written decision to dismiss the charges or to impose one of the sanctions outlined above. The student may, within five (5) working days of receipt of the notice from the Dean of Enrollment

Management and Student Services or designee, submit a written request for an appeal to the Student Affairs Committee (SAC) (Level II). An appeal to SAC may only be requested if the sanction results in suspension or dismissal from the College.

### **Level II: Student Affairs Committee Hearing**

A student found responsible for a violation of College policy may request an appeal for one of the following reasons:

- Insufficient information that a policy was violated;
- A serious procedural error in resolving the case;
- Sanction inappropriate for the circumstances for the violation;

A written appeal to the Student Affairs Committee must be made within five (5) business days of receipt of the original written decision, or by 9 a.m. on the next College business day if the deadline falls on a weekend or after 5 p.m. on a weekday.

The Student Affairs Committee chairperson will schedule an appeal hearing to be conducted no later than ten (10) business days following the student request for appeal. The Student Affairs Committee chairperson will be responsible for notifying the student and the Dean of Enrollment Management and Student Services or designee of the date, time, and place of the hearing. The Student Affairs Committee shall make its decision by simple majority vote and communicate its findings in writing to the Dean of Enrollment Management and Student Services or designee and the student within five (5) business days after the hearing is completed.

After review, the Student Affairs Committee may:

- Affirm the finding(s) of the original hearing authority;
- Reverse finding(s) of the original hearing authority;
- Reduce the sanction(s) of the original hearing authority;

### **Level III: Vice President of Instruction and Student Services Appeal**

A subsequent appeal, which is permitted only in cases where suspension or dismissal remains in effect after the SAC appeal hearing, must be submitted to the Vice President of Instruction and Student Services within 48 hours of the student receiving the previous appeal decision in writing, or by 9 a.m. on the next College business day if the deadline falls on a weekend or after 5 p.m. on a weekday. The Vice President of Instruction and Student Services may either:

- Affirm the finding(s) of the Student Affairs Committee;
- Reverse finding(s) of the Student Affairs Committee;
- Reduce the sanction(s) of the Student Affairs Committee;

The decision of the Vice President of Instruction and Student Services on all hearing appeals resulting in suspension or dismissal is the final decision for the College. The decision of the Student Affairs Committee on all other appeals is the final decision for the College.

### **Time Limitation/Disciplinary Proceedings**

Every effort will be made by all parties to expedite the disciplinary process. The time limitations specified for either party may be extended by written mutual agreement. If there is no written mutual agreement to extend the time limits set herein, the decision reached at the previous level shall be determined to be final.

## **Student Government Association**

The Student Government Association (SGA) serves as a vital link of communication between students, administration, and faculty. It works to provide the leadership necessary for the responsibility of initiating new policies, services, and activities for the benefit of the students.

Student Government elections are held each fall and spring semesters. Executive officers (president, vice president, secretary, historian, publicity, and student activities) are elected each spring semester for the following academic year. Five Senators are elected each fall semester for that academic year to support the executive officers.

The Student Government extends a welcome to any student who is interested in running for SGA office, or becoming involved in student government.

## **Student Grievance Procedures**

The purpose of the student grievance procedure is to provide an equitable and orderly process to resolve grievances at Virginia Highlands Community College. This grievance procedure includes, but is not limited to, concerns and disputes involving application of a policy or procedure; grades/academic record; and discrimination on the basis of race, sex, disability or sexual harassment. The Vice President of Instruction and Student Services is ultimately responsible for overseeing the execution of student grievance procedures.

Recognizing that grievances should be raised and settled promptly, a grievance shall be raised within twenty (20) calendar days following either the event giving rise to the grievance or within twenty (20) calendar days of the time when the student reasonably should have gained knowledge of its occurrence.

**Step 1:** A student who is experiencing dissatisfaction with any academic or administrative official, faculty member, or student concerning application of the provisions of the rules, policies, procedures, and regulations of the College must first attempt to resolve the issue informally by discussing the complaint with the person with whom the problem exists.

**Step 2:** If the issue cannot be resolved informally, the student may initiate a formal written grievance with the immediate supervisor of the person causing the grievance. The immediate supervisor may make a preliminary investigation to determine if the concerns can be resolved by mutual consent. If the issue cannot be resolved, the immediate supervisor will conduct an investigation and render a written decision within ten (10) calendar days.

**Step 3:** If the decision of the immediate supervisor is not satisfactory, the student may file a written appeal within ten (10) calendar days with the Vice President of Instruction and Student Services. The Vice President will render a written decision within ten (10) calendar days.

**Step 4:** If the decision of the Vice President is not satisfactory, the student may file a written request for appeal to the Student Affairs Committee within ten (10) calendar days.

**Step 5:** The Vice President of Instruction and Student Services will schedule a hearing of the Student Affairs Committee to occur not less than seven (7) calendar days nor more than fourteen (14) calendar days following the request for appeal.

A transcript of the hearing shall be prepared by the College; both parties shall have a right to a copy of the transcript of the proceedings at their own expense.

Written decisions will be given by the Student Affairs Committee no later than ten (10) calendar days following such hearings. Either party may appeal in writing the decision of the Student Affairs Committee to the President within ten (10) calendar days of the decision.

The President of the College will review the case and make the final decision. This procedure will apply to student grievances.

## Student Complaints Under State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA)

Virginia Highlands Community College is a member of the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA). A SARA is an agreement among member states, districts, and territories that establishes comparable national standards for interstate offering of postsecondary online learning courses and programs. It is intended to make it easier for students to take online learning courses in a state other than where they reside.

In order to ensure that students enrolled under the agreement have equal opportunity to submit student complaints, VHCC accepts oversight from the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV), the Commonwealth's coordinating body for higher education, in resolving complaints from students taking online learning courses under the aegis of the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA).

All student complaints will be addressed through the VHCC Student Grievance Procedure. Subsequently, if the complaint has not been resolved internally, the student may submit the Student Complaint form to SCHEV. More details on the formal SCHEV student complaints procedure may be found on the SCHEV agency page at [www.schev.edu](http://www.schev.edu). Students may also seek resolution through the Office for Civil Rights of the United States Department of Education ("OCR"). A complaint filed with OCR must be filed within 180 calendar days of the alleged discrimination. Or, if the college complaint procedure was utilized by the student, the OCR complaint must be filed within 60 calendar days from the date of the final decision, unless the time for filing is extended by the OCR for good cause shown. Information on how to proceed may be accessed on [OCR's website](#).

## Student Rights and Responsibilities

Application for admission to VHCC is a voluntary decision on the part of a prospective student to participate in the programs offered by the College. Upon admission, students are subject to policies, rules, and regulations of VHCC and the State Board for Community Colleges.

Students are guaranteed the privilege of exercising their rights without fear of prejudice. Such rights include the following:

1. Students are free to pursue their educational goals. VHCC provides appropriate opportunities for learning curricula offered by the College.
2. No disciplinary action is taken against any student without due process.
3. Free inquiry, expressions, and assembly are guaranteed to all students provided their actions do not interfere with rights of others or the effective operation of VHCC.
4. Academic evaluation of student performance is neither arbitrary nor capricious.
5. VHCC provides for personal safety, protection of property, and the continuity of the educational process.

As provided by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), colleges may disclose the following directory information without the student's prior consent: student's name; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; weight and height of members of athletic teams; degrees, honors, and awards received; major field of study; dates of attendance; grade level; the most recent educational agency or institution attended; and number of credit hours enrolled, photos. Students must provide official notification to the office of the college's registrar to prevent the disclosure of directory information.

## Testing Center

The purpose of the testing center is to provide students and faculty with a secure, quiet and proctored facility for the administration of academic tests and other assessments. Faculty may work with testing center staff to administer both paper-based tests and online tests that require a proctor. The testing center also offers specialized exams by appointment including: Virginia Placement Test (VPT), CLEP, ATI, PSB and others.

The Testing Center will also administer proctored exams from other colleges and assist students and faculty with establishing remote proctors outside of the college's service region.

The Testing Center is located within the college's library and features seating for 36 students, 21 computers, and multiple security cameras for electronic monitoring

For more information regarding VHCC's Testing Center and current hours of operation, visit our website at [www.vhcc.edu/testing](http://www.vhcc.edu/testing) or call 276-739-2476.

## TRIO Programs

TRIO programs are funded by the U.S. Department of Education.

### Excel

The Excel program provides student support services designed to help students complete their program of study at VHCC.

The mission of the Excel program at VHCC is to increase participant retention and graduation rates, facilitate transfer to four-year colleges, and foster an institutional climate supportive of the success of eligible candidates. The Excel program provides tutoring; transfer, academic, and career counseling; and study skills, time management, and financial literacy instruction. The Excel program also provides accommodations for student with disabilities; cultural enrichment activities; academic monitoring; and other related services.

The Excel program is supported by funding from the U.S. Department of Education and is designed to address the individual needs of students who qualify for the program. To qualify for the program and participate in services, a student must have academic need and be from a family in which neither parent has received a bachelor's degree and/or have taxable income that meets U.S. Department of Education guidelines for low income. Some students can qualify based solely on a documented disability.

### Upward Bound

Upward Bound is 100% funded by a U.S. Department of Education annual grant designed to assist students in completing their high school education and subsequently enrolling in, and succeeding in college. In an effort to increase college readiness, participating high school students receive academic services such as tutoring, career counseling, achievement test waivers, and college visits. Students have the opportunity to participate in cultural events, and are also eligible to attend a six-week summer enrichment program on the VHCC campus. Students are exposed to a variety of college and career professionals, and senior Upward Bound students have an opportunity to job shadow in a field of their choice. Students who are accepted into the Upward Bound program can earn a stipend for each time they participate in an Upward Bound activity.

To qualify for Upward Bound, students must meet federal low-income guidelines or be from families in which neither parent has earned a bachelor's degree. All services are free to qualified students.

The Virginia Highlands Upward Bound program is authorized to serve students in specific schools in Washington County, Smyth County, and the city of Bristol, VA. The Upward Bound Office is located in the ISC Building, (276) 739-2506.

## Transcripts

Virginia Highlands Community College has collaborated with Parchment to manage the ordering, processing, and secure delivery of official student transcripts in an electronic or paper format. All requests for official transcripts are required to come through Parchment. You should check to make sure your grades are posted and/or graduation credentials have posted, if applicable, before ordering your transcript. Any holds or financial obligation to the College must be cleared before transcript requests are processed.

Official transcripts of coursework completed at VHCC may be requested online: [www.vhcc.edu/transcripts](http://www.vhcc.edu/transcripts)

Parchment charges a fee of \$3.00 for each digital transcript and \$5.50 for each paper transcript.

Unofficial transcript of coursework completed at VHCC may be obtained through accessing MyVHCC. If assistance is needed contact the VHCC Helpdesk at [helpdesk@vhcc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@vhcc.edu) or 276-739-2500. Students who have outstanding financial obligations with the VHCC Business Office, Bookstore or Library are not permitted to register for classes or obtain official transcripts until their accounts have been paid in full.

## Veterans Affairs

VHCC's Veterans Affairs Office coordinates all veterans' educational benefits from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for the College. The office is located on the Virginia Highlands Community College campus in ISC 128C. The VA certifying official can be reached by phone at (276)739-2414.

The VA requires all students to be enrolled in an official curriculum leading to a certificate or degree in order to receive benefits. You must contact your VA certifying official each semester to complete the necessary forms to establish and maintain your eligibility for benefits.

The Department of Veterans Services State Approving Agency approves programs of education offered at Virginia Highlands Community College.

For more information regarding Veterans Affairs, please refer to the website at [www.vhcc.edu/veterans](http://www.vhcc.edu/veterans).

## Credits2Careers

The colleges in the Virginia Community College System are committed to evaluating your military experience and granting college credit. This credit, Credit for Prior Learning, can then be applied to meet the academic requirements of a degree or certificate program at that college - so you complete the degree or certificate you need for a future career - faster and at a lower cost.

Credits2Careers also helps you explore careers based on either your military background or your personal goals and interest and VCCS programs that prepare you for the career you choose.

For more information on Credits2Careers, please refer to the website at [www.credits2careers.org](http://www.credits2careers.org).

## Student Veterans Association

This organization is to serve as a collective voice for all veterans and military enrolled at VHCC, to be a source of open communication that will connect veterans with each other in a way that promotes camaraderie, and to provide support for student veterans and their families as they pursue their post military career through education. Membership is open to all interested students, faculty and staff. Check with the Veterans Officer for more details.

## Veterans/Military Parking

VHCC has reserved "Veterans Parking." Contact the Veterans Officer located in the Division of Enrollment Management and Student Services in room ISC 128C for a parking pass.

## Veteran's Institutional Grievance Procedure

The Virginia State Approving Agency (SAA), approves education and Virginia training programs. The office investigates complaints of GI Bill® beneficiaries. While most complaints should initially follow the school grievance policy, if the situation cannot be resolved at the school, the beneficiary should contact the office via email, [saa@dvs.virginia.gov](mailto:saa@dvs.virginia.gov). "GI Bill®" is a trademark of the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA). More information about education benefits offered by the VA is available at the official U.S. government website at <http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill>.

## VHCC Alert

VHCC students, parents, employees, and community members have the option of receiving up-to-the-minute alerts in the event of a campus emergency or a weather event that leads to a delay or cancellation of classes. You must register to receive these alerts via email, cell phone, smart phone, PDA, and other electronic devices and choose the types of alerts you would like to receive.

You may register at [www.vhcc.edu/alert](http://www.vhcc.edu/alert) or. The service is offered free by VHCC, but wireless carriers may charge a fee for users who receive messages. In order to receive alerts regarding schedule changes/closings due to weather, you must register online. Please note that these alerts are often issued before 6:00 a.m. and on weekends.

## VHCC Student Photo ID

The VHCC student photo ID serves as the official, standard source for student identification, as a library card, and as an admission ticket to all free student activities. The initial card is issued at no cost to all students who have enrolled. Cards are validated in the Library each academic year at no cost to students. Replacement cards may be purchased for \$5.00. The ID card can be ordered (no cost) by going to [www.vhcc.edu/studentid](http://www.vhcc.edu/studentid).

## VHCC Website

The VHCC Website provides up-to-date information and a variety of student resources, including exam schedules, course schedules, the College catalog, and information about campus activities.

## Violence Prevention Policy

It is the policy of the Commonwealth of Virginia and Virginia Highlands Community College to promote a safe environment for its employees, students and visitors. VHCC is committed to working with employees and students to maintain a campus environment free from violence, threats of violence, harassment, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior; however, no workplace is immune.

Therefore, Virginia Highlands Community College (VHCC) prohibits threats and acts of violence on college property, within VHCC facilities, at any VHCC-sponsored event; while engaged in College office business, educational, or athletic activities; and while traveling in state vehicles. Prohibited conduct includes but is not limited to:

- injuring another person physically;
- engaging in behavior that creates a reasonable fear of injury to self or another person;
- engaging in behavior that would subject a reasonable person to, and does subject another individual to, extreme emotional distress;
- intentionally damaging property;
- threatening to injure an individual (including oneself) or to damage property;
- committing injurious acts motivated by, or related to, domestic violence or sexual harassment; and
- retaliating against any employee or student who, in good faith, reports a violation of this policy.
- oral or written statements, gestures, or expressions that communicate a direct or indirect threat of physical harm.
- violating the Weapons Regulation.



All reports of incidents will be taken seriously and will be dealt with appropriately. Such behavior can include Individuals who commit such acts may be removed from the premises and may be subject to disciplinary actions and/or criminal penalty.

Everyone's cooperation is needed to implement this policy effectively and maintain a safe campus and working environment. Do not ignore violent, threatening, harassing, intimidating or other disruptive behavior. If you observe or experience such behavior by anyone on campus, whether he or she is an employee, student or visitor, report it immediately to a supervisor or to Campus Police. Supervisors who receive such reports should seek advice from the Human Resource Office regarding investigating the incident and initiating appropriate action. PLEASE NOTE: Threats or assaults that require immediate attention by police should be reported immediately to Campus Police at office phone 276-739-2448 or cell phone 276-614-8282 or local police at 911.

## Weapons Regulations

### STATE BOARD FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES

#### CHAPTER 10 - REGULATION OF WEAPONS

##### **8VAC95-10-10. Definitions.**

The following words and terms when used in this chapter shall have the following meanings unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

"Police officer" means law-enforcement officials appointed pursuant to Article 3 (§ 15.2-1609 et seq.) of Chapter 16 and Chapter 17 (§ 15.2-1700 et seq.) of Title 15.2, Chapter 17 (§ 23-232 et seq.) of Title 23, Chapter 2 (§ 29.1-200 et seq.) of Title 29.1, or Chapter 1 (§ 52-1 et seq.) of Title 52 of the Code of Virginia or sworn federal law-enforcement officers.

"College property" means any property owned, leased, or controlled by a member college of the Virginia Community College System and the administrative office of the Virginia Community College System.

"Weapon" means (i) any pistol, revolver, or other weapon designed or intended to propel a missile of any kind by action of an explosion of any combustible material; (ii) any dirk, bowie knife, switchblade knife, ballistic knife, machete, razor, slingshot, spring stick, metal knucks, or blackjack; (iii) any flailing instrument consisting of two or more rigid parts connected in such a manner as to allow them to swing freely, which may be known as a nun chahka, nun chuck, nunchaku, shuriken, or fighting chain; (iv) any disc, of whatever configuration, having at least two points or pointed blades which is designed to be thrown or propelled and which may be known as a throwing star or oriental dart; or (v) any weapon of like kind, to include but not limited to, tasers.

"Weapon" does not mean knives or razors used for domestic purposes, pen or folding knives with blades less than three inches in length, or knives of like kind carried for use in accordance with the purpose intended by the original seller.

##### **8VAC95-10-20. Possession of weapons prohibited.**

- A. Possession or carrying of any weapon by any person, except a police officer, is prohibited on college property in academic buildings, administrative office buildings, student centers, child care centers, dining facilities and places of like kind where people congregate, or while attending any sporting, entertainment, or educational events. Entry upon the aforementioned college property in violation of this prohibition is expressly forbidden.
- B. Any individual in violation of this prohibition will be asked to remove the weapon immediately. Failure to comply may result in a student conduct referral, an employee disciplinary action, or arrest.

##### **8VAC95-10-30. Exceptions to prohibition.**

- A. The prohibition in 8VAC95-10-20 shall not apply to current sworn and certified local, state, and federal law enforcement officers with proper identification, nor shall it apply to possession of a weapon when stored securely inside the vehicle of properly permitted students and employees.
- B. The chief of the college police department or head of security department, or his designee, may authorize in writing a person to possess, store, or use a weapon: (i) when used for educational or artistic instruction, display, parade, or ceremony sponsored or approved by the college (unloaded or disabled only and with other specified safeguards, if appropriate); or (ii) for any college-approved training, course, or class.

##### **8VAC95-10-40. Person lawfully in charge.**

Campus police officers or security, and other police officers acting pursuant to a mutual aid agreement or by concurrent jurisdiction, are lawfully in charge for the purposes of forbidding entry upon or remaining upon college property while possessing or carrying weapons in violation of this chapter.

## **Work-based Learning Opportunities**

VHCC provides opportunities for work-based learning, also known as experiential learning, through cooperative education, internships, and apprenticeship training. The programs are designed to supplement classroom learning with work experience.

Students enrolled in the cooperative education and internship programs must meet certain academic guidelines and typically work between 10 and 25 hours per week. Credits are awarded for time spent in workplace.

Apprenticeship training is an employer-sponsored training strategy for new hires or existing employees that leads to a certificate of completion and official journeyman status from the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Information about cooperative education and internships is available from the Co-op/Internship Program in LRC 211, (276) 739-2452. Workforce Development & Continuing Education, ADM 101, (276) 739-2430, can provide information about the apprenticeship program.





**100 VHCC Drive, Abingdon, VA 24210**  
**[www.vhcc.edu](http://www.vhcc.edu) | (276)739-2400**  
**[info@vhcc.edu](mailto:info@vhcc.edu)**

VHCC is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution.  
Si necesita ayuda en español, marque el número 276-739-2559.