



# Employee Handbook



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# **Georgia College Employee Handbook**

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# INTRODUCTION

## **Purpose of Handbook**

This handbook provides in a brief and readable form, the policies and benefits of the Board of Regents applicable to employees in the University System of Georgia and Georgia College (GC).

The Vice President for Business and Finance and/or the Chief Human Resource Officer of GC shall make interpretations of and enforce the policies in the handbook. These policies are subject to review and change by the Board of Regents and the administration of the university.

This handbook is prepared for the convenience of employees and is not an official publication of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia. In case of any divergence from or conflict with the Bylaws or Policies of the Board of Regents, the official Bylaws and Policies of the Board of Regents shall prevail. An institutional or Board of Regents policy or procedure shall override any departmental policy or procedure which conflicts with those outlined in this handbook.

Any questions should be directed to your supervisor or the Office of Human Resources.

## **To Whom Does This Handbook Apply?**

The information contained in this handbook applies to all classified employees working one-half time or more.

A classified employee is one who is not identified as a member of the faculty or a student employee. There are two categories of classified personnel. They are as follows:

- **Professional and Administrative Personnel (Exempt):**  
All employees who are exempt (paid monthly) from the Federal Wage-Hour provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act because of their professional or administrative responsibilities and who are not identified as faculty or graduate assistants shall be designated as professional and administrative personnel.
- **Staff (Non-Exempt):**  
All employees who are not exempt (paid bi-weekly) from the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act shall be

designated as staff.

## **The Office of Human Resources**

The Office of Human Resources functions to serve the best interests of both the employees and GC. The Chief Human Resource Officer and the Office of Human Resources staff are responsible for implementing university personnel policies, recruiting, position classification, wage and salary administration, orientation, training, employee records, payroll and staff benefits. If you need information or guidance, please contact the Office of Human Resources for assistance.

## **History of the University**

Georgia College was chartered in 1889 as Georgia Normal and Industrial College. Its emphasis at the time was largely vocational, and its major task was to prepare young women for teaching or industrial careers. In 1917, in keeping with economic and cultural changes in the state, Georgia Normal and Industrial College was authorized to grant degrees, the first of which was awarded in 1921.

In 1922, the institution's name was changed to Georgia State College for Women. The college has been a unit of the University System since the system was formed in 1932.

The name was changed to Women's College of Georgia in 1961, and, when the college became coeducational in 1967, it became Georgia College at Milledgeville. This name was later shortened to Georgia College. In August of 1996, the Regents approved a change of name to Georgia College, and a new mission as Georgia's public liberal arts university. Currently, Georgia College offers more than 46 baccalaureate, 14 pre-professional programs and 38 graduate degree programs and awards more than 1,100 degrees annually, of which 300 are graduate.

## **Vision**

As the state's designated public liberal arts university, Georgia College is committed to combining the educational experiences typical of esteemed private liberal arts colleges with the affordability of public higher education. GC is a residential learning community that emphasizes undergraduate education and offers selected graduate programs. The faculty is dedicated to challenging students and fostering excellence in the



classroom and beyond. GC seeks to endow its graduates with a passion for achievement, a lifelong curiosity, and exuberance for learning.

## **Your Employer**

GC is an important part of an educational organization that includes thirty-three other institutions of higher education throughout the state, all supported by you and your fellow tax payers. Responsibility for direction of these educational institutions is given to the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, created by an Act of the General Assembly of the State of Georgia.

The Board of Regents appoints the President of GC. The President, in turn, recommends to the Regents the appointment or reappointment of faculty and other employees, the salary of each, promotions and removals.

## **Affirmative Action**

GC is an equal employment opportunity/affirmative action institution. In accordance with the policy of the Board of Regents and the institution's official affirmative action policy, there shall be no discrimination based upon race, color, sex, religion, creed, national origin, veteran status, age or disability of employees in their appointment, promotion, retention, pay, or any other condition of employment. Any questions or assistance with affirmative action should be directed to the Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity.

## **Americans With Disabilities Act**

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in employment, public services, public accommodations, and telecommunications. Employees may self-identify any qualified disability as defined under ADA for which assistance is needed in carrying out their assigned duties.

Individuals with disabilities are defined under ADA as persons who either have or are regarded as having a record of a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. GC will make every effort possible to accommodate any employee needing assistance within the definitions of the law.

# YOU AND YOUR JOB

## **The Employee**

GC recognizes that its employees are important, and fairness to all defines the relationship between the university and its personnel.

University policy is to employ those persons who are best qualified based on ability, skill, experience, training, character, and physical condition, regardless of race, color, sex, or creed. The university provides working conditions, salaries, and benefits that will attract and retain competent employees.

## **Types of Employment**

There are two types of employment: regular and temporary. A regular employee is employed continuously for more than six months. A temporary employee is employed for a period no longer than six months under Board of Regents policy provisions.

Temporary employees may be re-appointed at the end of their period of employment for another period not to exceed six months. Once an individual has served as a “temporary” employee for a twelve-month period he/she can not continue to be employed as a “temporary” employee until a period of thirty calendar days has elapsed. Such a re-appointment, however, will not automatically change the status of the employee from temporary to regular. When the status of an employee is changed from temporary to regular, the appropriate department head and the Human Resources Department will notify the employee. All graduate assistants, student assistants, and casual laborers are classified as temporary.

Certain benefits contained in this handbook are not applicable to employees classified as temporary.

## **Conditions of Employment**

Prior to starting to work at GC all new employees must complete the following before their paychecks can be processed:

- The State of Georgia requires all employees to complete a Security Questionnaire/Loyalty Oath to be retained in the permanent files of the university.

- Federal and Georgia income tax withholding forms.
- Where applicable, application for Teachers Retirement System of
- Georgia and other optional benefit forms.
- In compliance with the Federal Immigration Reform and Control Act, all persons accepting employment must provide proof of identity and employment eligibility by providing specific documents requested. Failure to do so may result in termination of employment.
- Some positions will require drug testing.
- Direct Deposit Form

## **Employment of Relatives**

No individual shall be employed in a department or unit under the supervision of a relative who has or may have direct effect on the individual's progress, performance, salary or welfare.

For the purpose of this policy, relatives are defined as husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers, sisters and any in-laws of any of the foregoing.

## **Provisional/Probationary Appointments**

All regular classified employees, with the exception of public safety officers pending training, are required to serve the first six months of employment on a provisional basis. If the work of the employee is satisfactory, employment will be continued. Should the work not be satisfactory, the employee will be notified in writing at any time prior to the completion of the six-month provisional period and the employee may be terminated at that time without right of appeal.

Transfers to other positions are not made during the provisional period.

Temporary employees hired into regular positions are considered new employees and will serve a six-month probationary period beginning with the first work day of regular employment.

An employee need only serve one provisional/probationary period.

## **Fair Labor Standards Act**

GC complies with the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards

Act for non-exempt employees. This Act, in part, established a minimum hourly wage and requires the payment of overtime for work in excess of forty hours per week at a rate of not less than one and one-half times the employee's regular rate of pay.

Any staff employee required to work in excess of his/her normal work day may be granted compensatory time off, in lieu of overtime pay, at the discretion of the immediate supervisor and in accordance with the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

The Act provides that employees of one gender must not be paid wages at rates lower than those paid employees of the other gender for substantially equal work on jobs requiring equal skill, effort, and responsibility which are performed under similar working conditions.

## **Time Records**

Employees (non-exempt employees) subject to the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act are required to keep a time record of the hours worked. Some employees will use time clock cards; other employees will prepare hand written bi-weekly time reports. Time records have to be maintained on a daily basis.

The time sheet should be completed in ink without strikeovers or whiteout. It should be checked for completeness and accuracy and signed by the employee and supervisor. Time sheets are due in the payroll office by 9:00 A.M. on the Monday before payday.

If the time sheets are not received by the stated deadline, it is not possible to verify hours worked for that period. In this case, the payroll check may be delayed until the following pay period.

Payroll records are subject to audit and will reflect actual time worked and leave taken. Any intentional falsification of time records may be grounds for termination of employment.

## **Performance Evaluations**

The University System of Georgia requires that each employee be evaluated on performance at least once every twelve (12) months. Performance evaluations should be completed on new classified employees before the end of their provisional period. The employee's immediate supervisor completes the evaluation

and the employee is provided with a copy.

## **Promotions**

Classified employees, after completing the provisional period of employment, will be eligible for transfer and/or promotion on completion of the "Notice of Application for Internal Transfer" form. No supervisor may prohibit a classified employee from applying for or accepting a transfer and/or promotion via official procedures. Transfers and promotions must be based on mutual agreement between departments or divisions. Prior to making an offer of employment to an internal applicant for a transfer or promotion, a supervisor shall ascertain whether the applicant wishes to accept the position. The employee must then advise their current supervisor of acceptance of another position on campus. The two supervisors shall agree upon a mutually acceptable timetable for the transfer or promotion. Any disputes between supervisors concerning transfers or promotions will be resolved by the Chief Human Resource Officer. The Vice President for Administration and Campus Operations will resolve any disputes involving the Office of Human Resources.

The Office of Human Resources will provide information concerning available openings to all eligible employees. Notices of vacancies will be announced on the Human Resources web site, and postings on the campus.

Promotional increases are contingent upon the availability of funds, and with appropriate approvals. Promotional increases must be managed within the established salary budget. It is important to note that almost every promotion is unique and factors affecting them will vary.

When an employee's present job is reclassified to a higher-grade level, the employee will be eligible, contingent upon the availability of funds, for a promotional increase at the next authorized salary adjustment date or upon special approval by the appropriate Vice President and the President.

## **Transfers**

A transfer is a shift of an employee from one position to another in the university. It may be in the same classification or to one with comparable skills in the same pay grade. It may also be a promotion based on experience, ability or training. It is based on a mutual agreement between appropriate supervisors and staff.

Transfers are not made during the provisional period of employment.

Upon movement of an employee among institutions of the university system, accumulated sick leave, retirement, and other applicable benefits and service continuity will be transferred if there is no actual break in service. Use or transfer of accrued vacation leave will be based upon mutual agreement of the institutions involved and in accordance with Board of Regents policies. Employees transferring

to GC who have more than twenty days of accrued vacation leave at another University system institution may request their departing institution to either transfer the total accrued leave, not to exceed forty-five days or make payment for accrued vacation leave greater than twenty days, but not exceeding twenty-five days.

## **Changes in Status**

It is the employee's responsibility to notify the Office of Human Resources of changes in name, marital status, address, telephone number, tax exemptions, etc. and to keep information current in the personnel record at all times. It is vital that an emergency contact be maintained in the personnel file in the event of an accident, illness or injury to the employee during working hours.

## **Resignations**

Unless a shorter period is acceptable to the supervisor, a regular employee should give not less than two weeks notice if he/she wishes to resign in good standing with eligibility for re-employment. Your supervisor will advise you of the proper procedure for submitting your resignation.

## **Exit Interview**

All regular employees who are terminating their employment must participate in an exit interview conducted by the Human Resources Department. At that time, employees will receive all pertinent information regarding their separation, complete all necessary paperwork, and return any identification cards, keys, or other institutional property to the university. This interview will also give employees an opportunity to express their feelings about their employment experience at GC.

## **Grievance Procedure**

In the day-to-day operation of any area or department, problems and misunderstandings sometimes occur. While consideration, cooperation, and common sense can resolve most of these situations, a few require special attention.

A grievance is defined as any formal complaint registered by the employee expressing dissatisfaction with working conditions, disciplinary actions, or alleged discrimination with regard to race, color, sex, religion, creed, national origin, age or disability or any condition of employment. The grievance procedure is applicable to those classified employees who have completed their provisional work period of six months.

GC has established a formal grievance procedure. If an employee believes that he/she has a legitimate complaint, she/he should feel free to discuss it with his/her supervisor. If that does not prove satisfactory, the normal procedure is to discuss the problem with his/her department head, then the Chief Human Resource Officer.

Questions regarding the formal grievance procedure may be directed to the Chief Human Resource Officer or the Office of Legal Affairs.

An impartial Board of Review will be appointed to hear appeals from a regular employee when a grievance cannot be resolved through normal administrative channels of the university. The recommendation of the Board of Review will be forwarded to the president for final decision. If this does not meet the satisfaction of the employee, he/she may file an appeal, in writing, to the Board of Regents within twenty days following the president's decision.

Classified employees terminated prior to completion of the six months provisional period do not have the right to file formal grievance or appeal regarding their termination.

## **Dismissal, Demotion, or Suspension**

The employee's immediate supervisor may effect dismissal, demotion, or suspension of classified employees when the supervisor determines that the employee's performance of duty or personal conduct is unsatisfactory.

The employee shall be informed in writing of the reasons for the action taken (except during the six-month provisional period) and granted a reasonable opportunity (not less than five working days) to respond to the next highest authority prior to the effective date of action; provided however, that under emergency circumstances when immediate action is necessary, the employee may be forthwith dismissed, demoted or suspended, with or without pay, by the immediate supervisor, pending a review by the next highest authority.

Any such employee shall also be entitled to the procedural protections of a hearing before a Board of Review convened pursuant to Section II-K (Appeals) of the Board of Regents Policy.

Any employee who has been dismissed or suspended without pay and is later reinstated shall be entitled to recover back pay unless the president or his/her designee determines otherwise.

## **Deductions from Salary**

There are certain amounts that, by law, must be deducted or withheld from your paycheck. Among these may be federal or state income tax, Social Security/Medicare taxes, and applicable retirement contributions. All deductions will be explained during orientation.

Employees eligible for benefits may elect certain benefits offered by the university in the form of insurance, tax-sheltered annuities, credit union, approved charities, and parking. These benefits will be explained to employees during an extensive orientation and are subject to change, as the institution deems necessary.

## **Orientation**

The Office of Human Resources will conduct an extensive orientation for new employees. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to provide orientation of the job for each new employee. This means explaining the nature of the job to be done and the usual work methods. New employees shall be responsible for reading and familiarizing themselves with the contents of this handbook.

## **Working Conditions**

One of the most important aspects of employment to both the



employee and the employer is working conditions. The university makes every effort to provide an atmosphere that is good for individual development and job enrichment.

In general, the policy in this area is one of common courtesy and understanding. The university must always strive to understand the needs of the employees and, likewise, each employee should realize the role he/she plays in the overall goals of the university.

All policies have been established to create a cooperative working environment for both the university and the employee.

## **Breaks**

If the work situation permits, a supervisor may authorize two fifteen minute breaks, one in mid-morning and one in mid-afternoon. Care should always be taken to see that all work assignments are covered. Such breaks are not mandatory and are a benefit subject to departmental and the supervisor's needs. An employee may not forego breaks to accumulate extra time off.

## **Workweek**

All full-time staff employees observe a minimum workweek of 40 hours. The requirements of the various operations of the university are highly diverse and different work schedules may be adopted to meet these needs. The department head, subject to the approval of the Vice President, establishes the schedules for a given department. Most offices shall be open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday and, as required by some departments, in the evenings, nights, and weekends. Lunch periods will be one hour, depending on the individual department, while ensuring the 40 hour workweek.

## **Overtime**

It is expected that most work will be done within a normal 40-hour workweek. However, overtime work may be authorized for employees who are not exempt from the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act when the work is deemed necessary by the immediate supervisor. An employee may not work more than 40 hours a week unless specific prior authorization is given. Payment for overtime will be made in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act. Exempt employees are not eligible for

overtime compensation.

## **Compensatory Time**

In lieu of payment for approved overtime work, compensatory time may be granted to non-exempt employees at the rate of one and one half hours of compensatory time for each hour of overtime work. Approved compensatory time is subject to a maximum accumulation of sixty hours and must be expended by the end of the succeeding calendar semester. Records of compensatory time must be maintained in the department.

## **Safety and Worker's Compensation**

(or Injuries on the Job)

Every employee is expected to perform his/her duties in as safe a way as possible for his/her protection, for the protection of fellow workers and the general public and to reduce the amount of work time lost through injuries or accidents. Unsafe conditions or practices observed by an employee should be reported to his/her supervisor.

All personal injuries and accidents must be reported to the immediate supervisor and the Office of Human Resources immediately. Employees requiring medical treatment for an injury on the job must check with the Office of Human Resources for directions on where to receive treatment. Deviation from the approved Workers Compensation Panel of Physicians may result in non-payment of the claim by the Department of Administrative Services.

## **Public Employee Hazardous Chemical Protection and Right to Know**

The State of Georgia has enacted legislation to protect employees from the dangers of hazardous chemicals, which may be encountered in the workplace. GC has developed a plan to assure that employees receive training and information about hazardous chemicals present in the workplace. As an employee of GC you must make sure you attend new employee orientation to receive this information. Those employees whose jobs involve the handling of such materials will receive additional training in the safe use, storage, and disposal of any chemical they use.

## **HIPPA Policy**

In support of the health and safety of our employees and students, GC maintains personal health care information about its students, employees, and others. All GC employees are committed to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of this information.

GC fully supports and complies with all federal and state statutes and rules regarding the use, maintenance, transfer, and disposition of health care records and information.

## **Attendance**

All employees are advised of their work hours when they accept employment at the university. For the University to maintain a smooth and consistent operation, employees must be conscientious in all areas of their work. For this reason, each employee must report to work at the designated time and remain on duty in accordance with the schedule.

Employees or their representatives must notify their supervisor when, in the event of an emergency, they are unable to report to work. Prompt notification is essential.

Excessive absenteeism or tardiness or failure to report the reason for absenteeism affects promotions and can result in termination of employment.

## **Paydays**

Paychecks (or Pay advices) for exempt personnel are issued on the last working day of each month. Non-exempt personnel are paid every other Friday. The Payroll Office will communicate any alterations to this schedule that may be required due to holidays or shutdown periods. Pay advices are delivered electronically through the ADP Portal.

Upon receipt of your paycheck (or pay advice), please review the information to make sure the proper deductions have been made. If an error is found notify the Office of Human Resources immediately.

Units of the university are authorized to withhold paychecks or deduct from paychecks amounts owed by employees for any fine, penalty, or other financial obligation to the institution.

## **Direct Deposit**

All employees hired on or after January 1, 2004 are required to participate in direct deposit of their paycheck as a condition of employment. Arrangements for direct deposit can be made through the Payroll Office.

## **Employee Travel**

Travel by employees on official business is covered by regulations relating to reimbursement for reasonable and necessary expenses. Employees required to make official trips should understand the regulations by consulting with their supervisor. Tax-exempt forms for Georgia hotel/motel excise taxes are also provided for employees on official business, and may be obtained by contacting their supervisor. An approved Travel Authorization Form is required prior to any official travel.

## **GENERAL WORK RULES**

### **Behavior on the Job**

At GC, one of the most important parts of any job is to be courteous at all times to all persons with whom you deal, whether face-to-face contact, by telephone, or letter. Proper behavior includes promptness, efficiency, and impartial treatment of the public and fellow employees. It also includes recognition of lines of authority and a friendly attitude toward co-workers.

### **Appearance**

As an employee of GC, you are expected to dress in suitable attire because you will probably meet the public in connection with your duties. You will also meet people on off-duty hours that know you are employed at the university. Remember, your actions and appearance can, and do, influence people's perception of the university.

Employees should dress appropriately for their position. Be neat, clean, and well-groomed at all times. By dressing professionally and appropriately, employees will make a favorable impression on those they meet and serve in the performance of their duties. What is fashionable is not always appropriate for the workplace.

### **Social Life**

Plan your social events and discuss your after-hours activities at times other than working hours. Remember your co-workers have their work to do, and so do you.

### **Telephone, Equipment, and Software Utilization**

Prompt and courteous answers to telephone calls are very important. Telephone manners can make or lose friends on or off campus.

University telephone lines must be kept clear for business use. Incoming and outgoing personal calls are discouraged, and should be limited to emergencies only. Personal long distance calls may not be charged to the university, as this constitutes a misuse of state funds. Other University equipment, such as fax machines and e-mail are also for university business only. Employees are reminded to use their university assigned electronic mail account responsibly and in compliance with state

and federal laws and University policies and procedures. All employees shall use software only in accordance with GC license agreements. Any duplication of copyrighted software is a violation of federal law and GC policy. Questions regarding software policies for the university may be directed to the office of the Chief Information Officer.

## **Confidential Information**

In the performance of their duties, some employees must deal with confidential information. Such information should not be discussed or made available to anyone until it has been approved for release by the proper authority. Certain university records are strictly confidential.

## **Georgia's Open Records Act**

As an employee of GC, you should know that certain information maintained by the institution about you and your employment record is considered to be a matter of public record and is subject to the Open Records Act of the State of Georgia. This means that any citizen may request access to certain information contained in your personnel file without your knowledge or consent.

Open records requests may be filed with the Custodian of Records or the Director of Legal Affairs. Although some information is excluded by law and cannot be accessed under provisions of the Open Records Act, your employment and salary history and performance evaluations are among the material that may be available for review.

## **Family Members in the Workplace**

While the university encourages the families of faculty and staff to take advantage of opportunities on the campus, it is emphasized that university employees should not allow family members to visit them on a regular or prolonged basis while in the workplace. It is expected that university personnel will make the necessary arrangements for childcare.

## **Economy**

Employees of GC have a responsibility to hold costs of operation down. University property should be given the same care as one's personal property. Supplies should not be wasted simply because they may appear to be plentiful. Office

equipment lasts longer and performs better if given proper care. Employees are not permitted to use university supplies and equipment for personal reasons.

## **Disruptive Behavior**

While supporting freedom of expression and peaceful dissent, the university, in the interest of orderly operation and preservation of an environment favorable to productive study, has adopted a policy prohibiting disruptive behavior on the part of any student, faculty member, administrator, or employee.

GC expects its employees to be productive. It also expects people to follow not only the published rules and regulations but also accepted customs and standards of courtesy, conduct, and cooperation.

It is not possible to list all forms of behavior that are considered unacceptable in the workplace. The following are examples of infractions to rules of conduct that may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

- Insubordination
- Theft
- Discourteous behavior
- Entering an unauthorized area at any time
- Wasting materials
- Willful violation of safety regulations
- Unsatisfactory work performance or conduct.
- Negligence
- Falsifying records, reports or information (timekeeping, personnel or others)
- Intoxication or drinking on the job
- Failure to report an employee's absence
- Habitual absence or tardiness
- Unauthorized absence from assigned work area
- Excessive absenteeism or any absence without notice
- Interfering with work performance of another employee
- Sexual or other unlawful harassment
- Willful damaging of equipment or property
- Gambling
- Sleeping while on duty
- Possession, distribution, sale or use of alcohol or illegal drugs in the workplace, while on duty, or while operating university-owned vehicles or equipment

- Punching the time clock for another employee
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information
- Fighting or threatening violence in the workplace
- Possession of dangerous or unauthorized materials, such as explosives or firearms, in the workplace.
- Refusal to undergo mandated drug or alcohol testing.
- Positive drug test results.
- Use of computer technology for illegal activity i.e.: viewing pornographic material, “stalking”, or significant non-university activity.

## **Drug Free Schools and Communities Act**

GC, as any other educational institution, has a clear responsibility to its students, their parents, and its employees. This involves providing the very best academic atmosphere for the students and a wholesome working environment for the employees.

Any element which may hinder the efforts to carry out these responsibilities cannot be tolerated. Employees involved with drugs pose such a hindrance. Therefore, employees should realize that drug related convictions could lead to termination of employment.

GC also abides by terms and provisions of the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act Amendments of 1989. This policy provides that an employee must notify the Chief Human Resource Officer of any drug statute conviction for a violation no later than five calendar days after such conviction. A copy of the complete policy is available in the Human Resources/Payroll Department.

## **Purchase of Goods and Services: Use of University Property**

Employees of GC are not allowed to purchase goods or services for personal use through University channels. Nor shall any employee permit any university property to be removed from the campus for private use.

## **Mail Services**

The University Mail Room is for the incoming and outgoing correspondence of the institution and is not to be used for personal mail delivery in lieu of a home address. Any personal



mail sent through the university facilities must have a postage stamp attached. Personal packages are not to be routinely routed through the warehouse for delivery or mailing.

## **Gifts and Gratuities**

No official or employee of GC may accept gratuities, courtesies, or gifts in any form whatsoever from any person or persons, corporations, or associations that directly or indirectly, may seek to use the connection for consideration of any commercial commodity, process or undertaking.

## **Issuance of Keys**

If it is determined that keys are needed in the performance of a job, they will be issued by plant operations. Lost keys should be reported immediately to your supervisor. Terminating employees must turn in all keys before they leave the university.

## **Garnishments and Other Legally Mandated Deductions**

GC considers the acceptance and settlement of just and honest debts to be a mark of personal responsibility. Failure to meet personal financial obligation causes discredit to the university. The university is required by law to accept and process garnishments served by officials of a court of law.

Other mandated payments such as child support, tax levies, educational loans, etc., may be deducted from an employee's salary upon receipt of official notice from the appropriate agency.

## **Political Activities**

As an individual, each employee of GC retains all rights and obligations of citizenship provided in the Constitution and Laws of the United States. However, no employee of GC shall hold or be a candidate for public or political elective office at the state or federal level while in the employ of GC. Employees of GC may not take part in a political campaign while on duty to perform services for which he/she receives compensation.

## **Conflicts of Interest**

An employee of GC should avoid actual or apparent conflicts of interest between their obligations and outside activities. State law also requires employees and family members to report any business transactions with the state each calendar year.

Business transactions do not have to be reported when the amount of each transaction is less than \$250 and the aggregate of all such transactions does not exceed \$9,000 for the calendar year. This includes consulting or other services provided to state agencies for which an employee is compensated through the GC payroll.

## **Automobile Registration and Parking**

All employees of GC are required to register their cars with Parking and Transportation Services and to display a current hanging tag/decal in order to park on university property. Those failing to do so will subject themselves to a fine. Parking is permitted in specified areas.

## **Authorized Use of State Vehicles**

GC owned vehicles are authorized for use in the performance of all essential travel duties related to the completion of state business. Remember when you are driving a state vehicle, it is clearly marked, and you are clearly identified as a representative of GC. As an employee of GC you have certain responsibilities which include caution and discretion at all times.

## **Unauthorized Use of State Vehicles**

University vehicles are not authorized to be used for personal trips unrelated to GC business for which they are assigned.

Transport of families, friends, associates or other persons who are not employees of the University System of Georgia or serving the interest of the state is unauthorized.

Attempting tasks which are beyond the vehicle's capabilities are unauthorized.

Be advised that any unauthorized use of university vehicles will result in immediate disciplinary action. Such action may include suspension of all privileges to operate a university vehicle, and in some cases, dismissal. Further, be advised that you are not covered by liability insurance when engaging in unauthorized use of university vehicles.

## **Identification Cards**

Identification cards are available for all regular employees of the institution and are processed through the Office of Human

Resources and the Bobcat Card Office. These cards may be used for admission to certain events, for use of some university facilities,

and may be honored at selected businesses for discount purposes. At the supervisors discretion employees may be required to wear their identification cards. These cards must be surrendered to the Office of Human Resources upon termination of employment.

## **Harassment**

GC will not tolerate harassment of any individual because of that person's sex, race, religion, color, age, national origin, veteran status, disability, or any other status protected under applicable federal, state and local laws. Such harassing behavior should be avoided because conduct appearing to be welcomed or tolerated by one employee or student may be offensive to another employee or student. Respect for the dignity and worth of others should be the guiding principle for our relations with each other.

Harassment may include display or circulation of written materials or pictures degrading to either gender or to racial, ethnic or religious groups; verbal abuse or insults directed at or made in the presence of members of a racial, ethnic or minority group. Harassment may also include behavior, which is personally offensive, creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment, or interferes with the work performance of other employees or students.

Complaints of harassment in any form should be reported promptly to the immediate supervisor. Should the complaint be about the supervisor, it should be reported to the next level supervisor or the Chief Human Resource Officer. Complaints will be investigated and corrective action taken as determined appropriate by the university. GC strives to provide a community in which students, faculty, administrators, staff and other members of the community can work and live together in an environment free of all forms of harassment, exploitation, intimidation and discrimination. Harassment is demeaning to all persons involved, and subverts the mission of the university. It is unacceptable conduct and will not be tolerated.

## **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment of employees at GC is prohibited and shall subject the offender to dismissal or other sanctions after compliance with procedural due process requirements. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitutes sexual harassment when:

- Submission to such conduct is made explicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or academic standing; or
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment or academic decisions affecting an individual; or
- Such conduct unreasonably interferes with an individual's work or academic performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or academic environment.

The following are examples of sexual harassment:

- Verbal: sexual innuendo, suggestive comments, insults, threats, jokes about gender-specific traits or sexual propositions
- Non-Verbal: suggestive or insulting noises, leering, whistling, or obscene gestures
- Physical: touching, pinching, brushing the body, coercing sexual intercourse, or assault.
- Visual displays, in the workplace, such as pictures, posters, magazines or pornography on the internet..

Employees who feel that they have suffered any form of harassment or retaliation must immediately report the alleged conduct to their supervisor or department head so a confidential investigation of the complaint can be undertaken. Alternatively, the employee may report the alleged conduct to the Chief Human Resource Officer or the Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity. Further, any employee who observes conduct by another employee, which he/she believes to be harassing, retaliatory, or discriminatory, must report such conduct as outlined above. All complaints of harassment will be treated confidentially and will be investigated promptly and thoroughly.

Any individual found by the university to have harassed another

employee is subject to appropriate disciplinary action ranging from a written warning in his/her file up to and including termination. Retaliation or discrimination against an employee for reporting or complaining about harassment is prohibited and will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

However, employees should realize that false accusations of harassment could have serious effects on innocent individuals. Making accusations which are known by the accusing person to be false is a form of misconduct which will likely result in serious impairment of the university's efforts to administer this policy properly and effectively for the benefit of all employees. Accordingly, such misconduct will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

We trust that all university employees will continue to act in a responsible and professional manner to establish a pleasant environment free of discrimination and harassment.

## **Internal Investigations**

All employees of the university shall cooperate to the fullest extent possible in any internal investigation when directed to do so by their immediate supervisor or other persons given investigative authority by the president. Failure to cooperate shall be grounds for adverse personnel action, including possible termination of employment.

## **Random Drug/Alcohol Testing**

Some employees are subject to random drug/alcohol testing, on a regular basis for evidence of illegal drug/alcohol use. Random testing means a process by which the names of employees to be tested are chosen purely by lot.

Refusing to be tested, failing to report for testing after being directed to do so, purposely disrupting or interfering with test results, or a positive result from the split sample drug test, will result in immediate termination. Positive results on an alcohol test will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

All new employees who are required to have random drug/alcohol testing are required to attend new employee orientation within the first 30 days of employment. At that time, additional information will be provided regarding the drug and alcohol testing procedures.

## EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

### Holidays

The university observes twelve paid holidays each year for regular employees working one-half time or more. Employees working less than full-time shall receive holiday pay equivalent to the work commitment. Temporary employees will not be paid for holidays. The university publishes a schedule of holidays each year.

If a holiday should fall on a day not normally scheduled as a workday for an employee, the employee will be granted another day as the holiday.

Holiday pay for non-exempt employees who are required to work on a holiday shall be paid (in addition to pay for his/her regular holiday leave) at one time his/her regular rate of pay for each hour of work performed on such holiday, or a total of two times base pay.

To receive holiday pay, an employee must work on the last day before the holiday and on the first work day after the holiday, unless the employee is ill or excused in advance. The supervisor may require proof of illness.

A terminating employee will not be paid for any official holiday occurring after the last working day of employment. Any employee on approved leave without pay will not be paid for an official holiday.

### Vacation

Regular employees working one-half time or more earn vacation in accordance with the following schedule:

- One and one-fourth (1 1/4) working days per month (ten hours) for one to five years of continuous employment
- One and one-half (1 1/2) working days per month (twelve hours)
  - for five to ten years of continuous employment
- One and three-fourths (1 3/4) working days per month (fourteen hours) for ten or more years of continuous employment

In all cases, a day of vacation will be computed for purposes of

pay and time off on the basis of the employee's regular workday.

Regular employees who work one-half time or more but less than fulltime shall earn and accrue vacation in a ratio equivalent to the percentage of hours worked.

On December 31 of each year, each employee's leave record will be adjusted to show not more than forty-five days (360 hours) accrual.

The university reserves the right to require employees to take vacation time in conjunction with a holiday shutdown period or an officially declared shutdown period. Employees not having accrued vacation leave to cover such periods will be charged leave without pay.

Any vacation time taken by employees must be mutually acceptable to the employee and their supervisor.

All unused accrued vacation time (not to exceed forty-five days or 360 hours) will be paid to the employee upon termination of employment. Terminating employees will not accrue vacation leave after the last day of their employment.

Temporary employees and regular employees working less than one half time do not earn vacation or sick leave.

No employee will be allowed to take leave without pay unless all vacation leave has been exhausted.

## **Sick Leave With Pay**

Regular employees working one-half time or more will accumulate sick leave at the rate of one working day for each calendar month of service.

Employees should realize that sick leave is a privilege. It is not meant to be used simply to take additional time off the job. Abuse of this privilege is a serious offense and will be considered just grounds for termination.

Employees should notify their supervisor immediately if they are ill and unable to report to work. Employees who fail to notify their supervisor might have the absence charged against their vacation time or it might be considered as leave without pay,

depending upon the supervisor's recommendation. Employees suspected of abusing the sick leave privilege may be required to support each absence by a physician's statement prior to having it charged to sick leave.

Regular employees who work one-half time or more but less than fulltime shall earn and accrue sick leave in a ratio equivalent to the percentage of hours worked.

There is no maximum to the amount of sick leave an employee may accumulate. Sick leave may be granted at the discretion of the university upon approval of the employee's immediate supervisor for any of the following reasons:

- Illness or injury of the employee
- Medical or dental treatment or consultation
- Quarantine due to a contagious illness in the employee's household
- Illness, injury, or death in the employee's immediate family requiring the employee's presence. In the event of death in the immediate family, sick leave with pay may not exceed three working days. Immediate family is defined as mother, father, brother, sister, spouse, son, daughter, in-laws of any of the foregoing, and grandparents of the employee.

In all cases, a day of sick leave will be computed for the purposes of pay and time off on the basis of the employee's regular workday.

If sick leave is claimed for a continuous period in excess of one-week (five actual working days), a physician's statement may be required to permit further sick leave with pay. Accrued vacation leave will automatically be used when all accrued sick leave is exhausted.

A terminating employee will not accumulate sick leave or be entitled to receive paid sick leave after the last working day of employment nor be entitled to monetary compensation for any unused sick leave.

HB 203 has provisions to allow any member of Teachers Retirement System of Georgia (TRS) who retires July 1, 1998 or after to establish unused sick leave as a service credit under



TRS. Retiring employees must have at least sixty days of sick leave accumulated on their retirement date. For each twenty days of sick leave accumulated and unused, a retiring employee will receive credit for one month of service under TRS. Sick leave credit can be used to qualify for retirement but cannot be used to become vested under TRS.

## **Shared Leave Program**

Effective January 1, 2005 GC will implement a shared leave program. All employees of the university who earn or accrue annual or sick leave may voluntarily donate sick or annual leave to other employees who have exhausted all of their sick and annual leave and, because of a life threatening or medical emergency, are in need of additional sick leave. To obtain additional information about this program contact the Human Resources/Payroll Office.

## **Family Medical Leave Act**

In accordance with the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993, an eligible employee may be entitled to up to 12 work weeks of leave during any 12-month period for one or more of the following reasons:

- the birth and care of a newborn child of the employee;
- the legal placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care;
- the care of an immediate family member (defined as the employee's spouse, child, or parent) with a serious health condition; or
- a serious health condition of the employee himself/herself, which renders the employee unable to perform the duties of his/her job.

To be eligible for FMLA leave, the employee must have worked for the University System of Georgia:

- for at least 12 months total, and
- for at least 1,250 hours during the 12 month period immediately preceding the commencement of such leave.

## **Sick Leave Without Pay**

Any regular employee unable to return to work after exhausting all accumulated sick leave, vacation leave, and leave under the

Family Medical Leave Act, may request an extension of sick leave without pay for a period not to exceed one year. The employee's supervisor, the appropriate vice president and the President must approve such sick leave without pay. Approval for such unpaid sick leave is required and would allow the employee the right to elect continuation of group insurance benefits with the institution continuing its share of the cost. All other benefits are prohibited which would otherwise accrue to the employee while on unpaid leave.

### **Educational Leave Without Pay**

GC may grant educational leave without pay to regular employees for periods not to exceed one year at a time for the purpose of encouraging professional development. Such approved leave shall allow the employee the right to elect to continue group insurance benefits with the institution continuing its share of the cost. Annual and sick leave do not accrue while on any leave without pay.

### **Military Leave With Pay**

*Ordered Military Duty* For the purpose of this policy, ordered military duty shall mean any military duty performed in the service of the State or the United States, including but not limited to service schools conducted by the armed forces of the United States. Such duty shall be deemed "ordered military duty" regardless of whether the orders are issued with the consent of the employee.

*Leave of Absence* An employee who received orders for active military duty shall be entitled to absent himself or herself from his or her duties and shall be deemed to have a leave of absence with pay for a period of such ordered military duty, and while going to and returning from such duty, not to exceed a total of eighteen (18) work days in any one federal fiscal year (October 1 – September 30) (as authorized by Georgia Law O.C.G.A. 38-2-279(e)). At the expiration of the maximum paid leave time, continued absence by the employee shall be considered as military leave without pay. The employee shall be required to submit a copy of his or her orders to active military duty.

*Emergency Leave of Absence* Notwithstanding the foregoing leave limitation of eighteen (18) days, in the event the Governor declares an emergency and orders an employee to State active

duty as a member of the National Guard, such employee while performing such duty shall be paid his or her salary or other compensation as an employee for a period not exceeding thirty (30) days in one federal fiscal year.

### **Military Leave Without Pay**

Periods of absence for military duty in the service of the state or the United States of America for thirty days or more, but not exceeding six calendar months shall be treated as leave without pay. No employee shall be entitled to absent himself/herself in excess of a total of six months during any four-year period, except in the case of declared emergency.

### **Maternity Leave**

Disability due to pregnancy shall be considered as any other disability and appropriate sick leave provisions shall apply.

### **Miscellaneous Leave**

Court duty leave with pay shall be granted to regular employees for the purpose of serving on a jury or as a witness. Such leave shall be granted upon presentation of official orders from the appropriate court.

### **Voting**

Employees of GC are encouraged to exercise their constitutional right to vote in all federal, state, and local elections. When normal working hours coincide with voting hours, employees shall be granted leave as stipulated by their immediate supervisor for the purpose of voting.

### **Military Physical Examinations**

Any regular employee required to take a military physical examination shall be paid for any time lost to take such an examination.

### **Personal Leave of Absence**

Upon the recommendation of the supervisor, the appropriate vice president and the president and after exhausting all accrued vacation leave, an employee may be granted a personal leave of absence without pay for periods not to exceed one year. Such approved personal leave shall allow the employee to elect to continue group insurance benefits.

## **Administrative Leave**

In the event of inclement weather or any emergency, the president of the university may declare leave with or without pay.

## **Retirement Income**

All regular employees of the university are eligible for retirement income provided the employee meets the length of service, income and age requirements:

*Teachers Retirement System of Georgia* – Beginning July 1, 1978, all regular administrative and professional employees, clerical, technical, skilled trade, and maintenance employees who work one-half time or more are required to participate in membership with the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia as a condition of employment. Membership requires an employee contribution based on her/his regular salary. The University helps fund TRS for current and future retirement benefits by its contribution to the system. Due to IRS regulations employees will be responsible for full tax liability at any time the contributions are refunded

The Office of Human Resources can provide you with general information concerning the Teachers Retirement System.

## **Credit Union Membership**

GC employees are eligible to join the MidSouth Federal Credit Union, 374 Hammock Rd. NW. Their telephone number is 452-0430.

Membership is offered to employees but the university does not regulate or decide policy for the credit union which is operated by a separate board of directors.

## **Tax-Sheltered Annuities**

Employees may wish to participate in various tax-deferred annuity programs wherein they invest a portion of their salary affording a current tax benefit. Income invested in such programs is not subject to federal and state taxes until it is withdrawn at a later date.

The university does not approve or disapprove any plan or underwriting company. Proper investigation of each program is the employee's responsibility. Further information concerning

tax-sheltered annuities may be obtained by contacting an insurance representative. Choices are limited to those companies presently approved by the university. The Office of Human Resources can provide a list of approved companies.

## **Group Life Insurance**

All regular employees of GC working one-half time or more are covered by basic life insurance with accidental death and dismemberment provisions. The basic life insurance of \$25,000 is provided to eligible employees at no cost to the insured.

Regular employees are eligible to purchase supplemental amounts of life insurance with accidental death and dismemberment provisions in amounts depending upon salary. The cost of this supplemental life insurance is borne entirely by the employee should he/she elect coverage.

Dependent life insurance is also available to regular employees. Participating employees pay the cost of this plan.

## **Health Benefits**

GC provides eligible employees and dependents, through the Board of Regents, an Indemnity health care plan or a Preferred Provider Option which include hospitalization and other medical benefits. Details about these plans are available in the Human Resources/Payroll Department.

The coverage is optional with the employee paying a percentage of the premium cost and the university contributing a percentage of the premium cost.

Any employee who terminates employment, has a reduction in hours to less than one-half time, or is terminated for any reasons other than gross misconduct or for cause, is eligible to continue the healthcare coverage for a limited time under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) of 1986. Coverage under the COBRA provisions is also available to dependents that lose coverage due to divorce, death of the employee, or ceases to be eligible for coverage due to attaining maximum age limitation. The employee would assume 102% of the cost of the coverage. Details are available in the Human Resources/Payroll Department.

## **Dental Insurance**

GC offers a comprehensive dental plan for its employees and their dependents. The employee pays the full cost of the premium.

## **Long Term Disability**

GC offers a long-term disability insurance protection plan to employees. This insurance provides a monthly income in the event of total disability while employed at the university. This is a voluntary program with all premium costs paid by the employee. Additional information is available in the Human Resources/Payroll Department

## **Workers' Compensation**

All employees of GC are covered under the provisions of the Georgia Workers' Compensation Law. This law provides protection for employees and their dependents in the event of injury or death while performing services for the university.

In the event an employee sustains any injury, regardless of how small it may seem, it must be reported to the Office of Human Resources at once. Failure to report an injury promptly may result in non-payment of any medical claims.

## **Social Security**

All employees of GC, except those specifically excluded under an agreement with the Social Security Administration, are covered by the Federal Social Security Act. This act provides aid to dependent children, disability payments, retirement, and death benefits. Deductions are made from the employee's salary for the employee's share of the cost of providing this insurance. The university also contributes a percentage. The deduction is split between the old age insurance and Medicare.

## **Unemployment Compensation**

Regular employees of the university are covered by the provision of the Employment Security Act which guarantees continued income to employees who are separated from university employment through no fault of their own.

## **Flexible Spending Account (Dependent Care and Medical)**

GC employees may elect to set aside up to \$5,000 of annual

salary from pre-tax dollars in an account for dependent care expenses and/or up to \$3,000 for out-of-pocket medical expenses. Flexible Spending Accounts reimburse qualified expenses with dollars that are not taxed. This account is subject to applicable IRS regulations.

## **Athletic Facilities and Dining Services**

Athletic and recreational facilities are available to university employees and their families at certain times. Employees must present their university ID in order to use these facilities. Food services provided by Sodexo-Marriott are located on the upper level of Maxwell Student Union.

## **Service Awards**

Annual service award presentations will recognize the service of long-term employees. These awards will acknowledge certain periods of service to the university for both Faculty and Staff.

## **Tuition Remission and Reimbursement**

Tuition remission and reimbursement is available to all regular fulltime employees who have completed the six-month probationary period to take courses at GC (or other University System of Georgia institutions.) This is based, in part, on the availability of funds, space availability in the course, and the approval of the employee's immediate supervisor that the course is job related. A copy of the complete tuition remission and reimbursement policy, as well as applicable forms, are available in the Office of Academic Affairs.

## **Employee Development and Continuing Education**

*Auditing Courses:* In order to improve job performance, employees may attend classes as auditors but no credit shall be awarded for such attendance.

*Continuing Education:* Employee may participate in approved Continuing Education classes at no charge or for a small supplies fee on a space available basis.

In all cases, approval from the appropriate supervisor is required. The employee and the supervisor should arrange satisfactory work and class schedules so that office operations are not impaired.

## NOTES



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I hereby acknowledge receipt of the employee handbook and understand my responsibility to be aware of and understand all policies and procedures covered therein. I further understand that this employee handbook does not constitute a contractual obligation on the part of Georgia College as policies set forth are determined by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia and by the State of Georgia and/or the United States government through various executive orders and federal employment guidelines. I also understand that guidelines are subject to change.

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Employee Signature

Date

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Employee Name

Department







**Office of Human Resources**

Campus Box 028, Wooten-Garner House

Phone: (478) 445-5596

Fax: (478) 445-0491