

Student Rights and Freedoms

I. Purpose

This policy establishes the standards of academic freedom of DSCC students and student responsibility to the learning process consistent with TBR Policy 3:02:04:00.

II. Scope

This policy applies to all DSCC employees and students.

III. Policy

I. Preamble

- A. Academic institutions exist for the transmission of knowledge, the pursuit of truth, the development of students, and the general well-being of society. Free inquiry and free expression are indispensable to the attainment of these goals. As members of the academic community, students should be encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for truth. Following are standards of academic freedom of DSCC students.
- B. Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. The freedom to learn depends upon appropriate opportunities and conditions in the classroom, on the campus and in the larger community. Students should exercise their freedom with responsibility.
- C. The responsibility to secure and to respect general conditions conducive to the freedom to learn is shared by all members of the academic community. DSCC has developed policies and procedures which provide and safeguard this freedom. The purpose of this statement is to enumerate the essential provisions for students' freedom to learn.

II. Freedom of Access to Higher Education

- A. DSCC has developed admissions standards, approved by the Tennessee Board of Regents, which make clear the characteristics and expectations of students which it considers relevant to success in programs offered at DSCC.
- B. No student will be barred from admission on the basis of race. DSCC is open to all students who are qualified according to the DSCC admissions criteria. DSCC's facilities are open to all of its enrolled students, and services are available to all students with the exception of those services or programs restricted by federal, state, TBR or institutional mandates.

III. In the Classroom

- A. Faculty in the classroom and in conference should encourage free discussion, inquiry, and expression.
- B. Student performance should be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards.
 1. Protection of Freedom of Expression

- a. Students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.
2. Protection Against Improper Academic Evaluation
 - a. Students should have protection through orderly procedures against prejudiced or capricious academic evaluation.
 - b. At the same time, they are responsible for maintaining standards of academic performance established for each course in which they are enrolled.
3. Protection Against Improper Disclosure
 - a. Certain information about students is protected from public disclosure by Federal and State laws. Protection against improper disclosure is a serious professional obligation. Judgments of ability and character may be provided under appropriate circumstances.

IV. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

- A. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords students certain rights with respect to their education records.
 1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the College receives a request for access.
 - a. Students should submit to the Director of Records, Dean of Student Services, Vice President of the College, division deans or other appropriate official, written requests that identify the record(s) they wish to inspect. The DSCC official will make arrangements for access and notify the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. If the records are not maintained by the DSCC official to whom the request was submitted, that official shall advise the student of the correct official to whom the request should be addressed.
 2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the student believes are inaccurate or misleading.
 - a. Students may ask the College to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the DSCC official responsible for the record, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading.
 - b. If the College decides not to amend the record as requested by the student, the College will notify the student of the decision and advise the student of his or her right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the student when notified of the right to a hearing.
 3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
 - a. One exception which permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interest. A school official is a person employed by the educational institution in an administrative, supervisory, academic or research, or support staff position (including law enforcement unit personnel and health staff); a person or company with whom the educational institution has contracted (such as an attorney, auditor, or collection agent); a person serving on the Board of Trustees; or a student serving on an official committee, such as a

- disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.
- b. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.
 - c. Upon request, DSCC discloses education records without consent to officials of another school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.
4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by DSCC to comply with the requirements of FERPA.
- a. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
600 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-4605

V. Directory Information

- A. Under the provisions of FERPA, DSCC may disclose directory information to any person requesting it without the consent of the student. Directory information includes the student's name, address, telephone number, email address, date and place of birth, major field of study, photograph, participation in officially-recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, enrollment status, degrees and awards received, and the most previous educational agency or institution attended by the student.
- B. The College provides each student the opportunity to refuse to allow disclosure of any designated directory information. Students wishing to refuse disclosure should contact the Office of Admissions and Records.

IV. Compliance

All DSCC faculty, staff and students must adhere to this policy.

V. Definitions

FERPA - Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords students certain rights with respect to their education records.

VI. Revision History

Revised 2-28-2014; Revision approved by the Administrative Council 6-29-2017; Revision approved by the Administrative Council 6-17-2024; reviewed and approved by Administrative Council on March 26, 2026.