



Personnel Handbook/Policy Manual

I. INTRODUCTION

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE MANUAL

This manual serves as one of the sources of information which promotes the mission of the College and guides the work of faculty, staff, and administration toward accomplishing the objectives of the College. It contains guidelines developed in support of the Alabama Community College System Board of Trustees policies. These guidelines include statements about benefits, employment, evaluations, instruction, and services. This manual also contains several specific Alabama Community College System Board of Trustees policies about which inquiries often arise. The Appendix includes samples of various forms used in the daily operation of the College.

This manual is to be construed as a resource to foster the smooth operation of the College. It is not intended to be a contract between the College and employee. In addition, statements inadvertently in conflict with federal or state statutes or Alabama Community College System Board of Trustees policies have no legal force or effect.

Any policy found in this manual which is contrary to the language or intent of policies found in the current edition of Policies, Procedures, and Regulations Governing Alabama Community College System Institutions is null and void. Any policy in this manual which is contrary to federal law is null and void. If there is a discrepancy between this manual and any policy found in the College catalog, the current college catalog shall prevail.

It is the official policy of the Alabama Community College System, under the control of the Board of Trustees, that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, handicap, gender, religion, creed, national origin, or age, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program, activity or employment.

The Title IX and 504 Coordinators are:

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Manual Changes

Please notify the Office of Human Resources in writing of any possible errors in this manual. Any changes needed in policies or procedures should be addressed with the person or committee with primary responsibility for that section and the appropriate Dean Level Supervisor, Vice President, or the President. To incorporate such changes, the assigned person or committee should submit to the Office of Human Resources an edited section of the manual or replacement pages, with the source of approval noted. New policies or procedures will be communicated to the employees through memorandum by the President. The Office of Human Resources will be responsible for the inclusion of new policies and procedures into the handbook and will issue page updates online as new policies or revisions occur.

Revisions that need to be made to the manual due to policy changes made by the Alabama Community College System Board of Trustees will be made by the Office of Human Resources. These revisions will be prepared and page updates will be made to the Personnel Handbook/Policy Manual online as revisions occur as well as updated pages provided to those offices that house hard copies. However, the President will notify employees of Board of Trustees policy changes immediately through memorandum.

The Personnel Handbook/Policy Manual is available on the NW-SCC Intranet. <http://intranet.nwscc.edu>

I.A. THE COLLEGE CAMPUSES

Northwest-Shoals Community College, composed of two (2) campuses, has adequate physical facilities to support an environment in which academic, social, physical, and emotional development may be fostered. The two (2) campuses are located in Muscle Shoals and Phil Campbell. The campus in Muscle Shoals is designated as the Shoals Campus. The College serves Lauderdale, Colbert, Franklin, Lawrence, and Winston counties.

The 110-acre Shoals Campus houses academic transfer and technical/occupational programs. The multipurpose center and gymnasium offers the largest seating capacity in Colbert County. Athletic fields, tennis courts, and a fitness center provide opportunities for intramural athletics or wellness activities for the student body and community. A day care center is available to students and the community with a qualified staff to care for the children. Also, housed on the Shoals Campus are allied health programs, science labs, special programs such as adult basic education, and the Bevill Center for Advanced Environmental Technology.

The Phil Campbell Campus is located approximately 30 miles south of the Shoals Campus. It is easily accessible from either U.S. Highway 43 or Alabama Highway 5. Located on a scenic 100-acre site one-mile southwest of the town of Phil Campbell, the campus provides academic transfer and technical programs and a full complement of student and community services. The Lou Bevill Fine Arts Center is among the premier cultural centers in northwest Alabama and the home of numerous concerts, musicals, and special events for both the College and local communities.

I.B. SERVICE AREAS -- NORTHWEST-SHOALS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

- **Lauderdale** -- Entire County -- All School Systems
- **Lawrence County** -- (eastern one-third shared with Calhoun) -- Lawrence County is shared by both Northwest-Shoals Community College and Calhoun Community College. Both Colleges share the east of a line drawn north/south through Moulton. Northwest-Shoals Community College has the area west of the line drawn north/south through and including Moulton. Moulton is served exclusively by Northwest-Shoals Community College.
- **Colbert** -- Entire County -- All School Systems
- **Franklin** -- Entire County -- All School Systems
- **Winston County** -- (Haleyville School System) -- Northwest-Shoals Community College has the area west of the line drawn north/south through the point intersecting Highway 60 and the northern boundary of the county and the north line drawn east/west through Double Springs. Bevill has the area west of the line drawn through the point intersecting Highway 60 and south of the line drawn east/west through and including Double Springs. Wallace Hanceville has the area east of the line.

NOTE: NW-SCC has been directed by the Chancellor to conform to the college service area established by the Alabama State Board of Education in 1995. The Chancellor also stated that for institutions to extend services outside its designated service area, a written agreement must be signed by presidents involved and approved by the Chancellor. At the present time, the Chancellor has not made any exceptions to our service area.

SOURCE: President's Memo, dated 1/24/03 and DPSE Memo, dated 10/25/02.

I.C. INTRODUCTION TO THE COLLEGE

Northwest-Shoals Community College is a comprehensive two-year public institution of higher learning providing career/technical, health science, academic, and lifelong educational opportunities for the northwest Alabama region. The College is part of the Alabama College system, a statewide system of postsecondary colleges, governed by the Alabama Community College System Board of Trustees. Northwest-Shoals derives its original charter from the Alabama legislature through the Alabama Trade School and Junior College Authority Act of 1963.

The Northwest-Shoals service area is comprised of the counties of Colbert, Franklin, Lauderdale, Lawrence, and the western portion of Winston. The College operates two (2) campuses – the Shoals Campus in Muscle Shoals, and the Phil Campbell Campus in Phil Campbell.

I.C.1. History

Northwest-Shoals Community College possesses a rich tradition of meeting the educational needs of this region. The merger of Northwest Community College and Shoals Community College combines the strengths of two (2) outstanding community colleges in the Alabama Community College System.

The Phil Campbell Campus was founded in 1963 as Northwest Alabama State Junior College to provide access to postsecondary education for citizens of the rural counties of northwest Alabama. It was the first public junior college in what was to become the Alabama Community College System and was accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in 1967. The Shoals Campus, founded in 1966 as Joe Wheeler State Trade School, provided occupational and technical training.

Both institutions recognized that the narrowness of their focus did not meet their constituents' educational needs. In 1973, Muscle Shoals State Technical Institute enhanced its curriculum and obtained accreditation from the Commission on Occupational Education Institutions. In 1977, with the approval of the Alabama State Board of Education, Northwest Alabama State Junior College established a branch campus in Tuscumbia primarily to offer first- and second-year college courses.

In 1989, the Alabama State Board of Education created Northwest Alabama Community College through the consolidation of Northwest Alabama State Junior College in Phil Campbell and Northwest Alabama State Technical College in Hamilton. Shoals Community College was created through consolidating Muscle Shoals State Technical College and the Tuscumbia Campus of Northwest Alabama State Junior College. The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools granted accreditation to Northwest Alabama Community College in 1990. Shoals Community College received its accreditation in 1991.

Northwest-Shoals Community College was formed in 1993 by the Alabama State Board of Education through the merger of Northwest-Alabama Community College Phil Campbell Campus and Shoals Community College. The merger was enacted in order to provide more effective and efficient educational services to residents of rural northwest Alabama and the Shoals area.

The merger provided business and industry with a single focal point for addressing educational and training needs, and provided a single workforce development center to assist communities with economic development activities. The College has developed into a state of the art facility offering technology and distance education opportunities for its constituents.

I.C.2. Accreditation

Northwest-Shoals Community College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award the Associate in Arts, Associate in Science, Associate in Applied Science and Associate in Occupational Technology degrees as well as certificates and short-term certificates in occupationally specific areas.

I.C.3. Policy for Reporting Substantive Changes

Introduction

Northwest-Shoals Community College (NW-SCC) welcomes and encourages the expansion of educational opportunities through the development of new programs, innovative instructional delivery methods, and the availability of program offerings on and off-campus.

In the pursuit of expanding educational opportunities, NW-SCC is committed to full compliance with all policies and procedures mandated by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Commission on Colleges (COC), its accrediting body.

This policy states the institutional responsibilities for compliance with the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and details the internal processes that guide the notification and approval process.

Definition of Substantive Change

Northwest-Shoals is required to file a Substantive Change Request with the SACSCOC whenever changes are planned that qualify as substantial in nature as defined by the Commission.

Substantive changes may occur at any time and are not tied to, nor an integrated part of, the 10-Year Reaffirmation of Accreditation or of other reports due to the SACSCOC on a regular basis. Substantive change as defined by the SACS-COC is a “significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution”. The Commission considers many different types of change to be substantive and therefore, review and approval prior to the proposed change is required. (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges Policy Statement, page 1).

Under federal regulations, substantive change includes:

- a. Any change in the established mission or objectives of the institution.
- b. Any change in legal status, form of control, or ownership of the institution.
- c. The addition of courses or programs that represent a significant departure, either in content or method of delivery, from those that were offered when the institution was last evaluated.
- d. The addition of courses or programs of study at a degree or credential level different from that which is included in the institution’s current accreditation or reaffirmation.
- e. A change from clock hours to credit hours.
- f. A substantial increase in the number of clock or credit hours awarded for successful completion of a program.
- g. The establishment of an additional location geographically apart from the main campus at which the institution offers at least 50 percent of an educational program. (An educational program is defined as a coherent course of study leading to the awarding of a credential such as a short-term certificate, career certificate, or degree.)
- h. The establishment of a branch campus.
- i. Closing a program, off-campus site, branch campus or institution.
- j. Entering into a collaborative academic arrangement such as a dual degree program or a joint degree program with another institution.

- k. Acquiring another institution or a program or location of another institution.
- l. Adding a permanent location at a site where the institution is conducting a teach-out program for a closed institution.
- m. Entering into a contract by which an entity not eligible for Title IV funding offers 25% or more of one or more of the accredited institution's programs.

Procedures for Reporting Substantive Changes

SACS-COC stipulates three procedures for addressing the different types of substantive change as follows:

- a. Procedure One for the Review of Substantive Changes Requiring Approval Prior to Implementation (Notification may also be required.)
- b. Procedure Two for the Review of Substantive Changes Requiring Only Notification Prior to Implementation (some changes also require submission of additional documents).
- c. Procedure Three for Closing a Program, Site, Branch Campus or Institution.

Substantive Change Requests

Substantive Change Requests are submitted to SACSCOC by the President of Northwest-Shoals Community College via a Notification Letter detailing the proposed change and the accompanying Substantive Change Prospectus. The Accreditation Liaison supports the requesting unit or program by handling the interaction with the Commission and working to clarify SACSCOCs expectations for each specific situation.

Pursuant to SACSCOC Substantive Policy, the following actions should be taken as appropriate.

- a. All institutional procedures appropriate to the specific change for which notification and/or approval is sought must be followed. Approval of the proposed change by the appropriate senior level official should be obtained in writing prior to the development of the Substantive Change Prospectus by the Accreditation Liaison and the initiation of a Substantive Change Request.
- b. Department Chairs will work with the Accreditation Liaison and the Office of Institutional Research to complete the Substantive Change Prospectus.
- c. Submission of the Substantive Change Prospectus to SACSCOC must be made via Certified Mail and include the following in the order listed:
 - 1. Transmittal letter signed by an institutional representative which briefly explains the submission.
 - 2. "Cover Sheet for Submission of Substantive Changes Required Approval" form (available on the Substantive Change webpage at www.sacscoc.org/SubstantiveChange.asp).
 - 3. Name, telephone number, and email address of the person who may be contacted concerning questions about the prospectus.
 - 4. A list of degrees and majors which the institution is authorized to grant (photocopy from the catalog is acceptable)
 - 5. A list of existing approved off-campus sites and their addresses. Note: an approved site is one for which a prospectus has been submitted and with SACSCOC has approved to offer 50% or more of a program. A site where 25-49% of a program is offered is not considered to be an "approved" site; it is a site for which only notification has been accepted by SACSCOC.
 - 6. Prospectus (should be no longer than 25 pages plus appendices)
 - Submit only one copy of the above materials to the President of SACSCOC at the address listed on the Cover Sheet

- The Transmittal Letter and Cover Sheet are to be submitted in hard copy (paper).
- The body of the prospectus itself is to be submitted in hard copy (paper), flash drive, CD, or DVD.

OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION FROM SACSCOC IS REQUIRED PRIOR TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ANY PROPOSED CHANGE.

I.C.4. Institutional Mission

Northwest-Shoals Community College provides career technical, academic, and lifelong educational opportunities using varied delivery systems; promotes economic growth; and enriches the quality of life for people of the Northwest Alabama region.

I.C.5. Institutional Goals

The College's institutional goals are:

➤ **Goal 1**

To ensure access to education for all people throughout their lives with special efforts made to seek diversity of population and to support the historically under-served;

➤ **Goal 2**

To continuously improve the quality of our varied educational offerings which lead to certificates, associate degrees, transfer to baccalaureate institutions, the general educational development of students, and immediate employment in an occupational field, the College strives to meet the following general educational outcomes. *

1. Students will demonstrate proficiency in written communication.
2. Students will demonstrate proficiency in problem-solving skills.
3. Students will demonstrate proficiency in quantitative reasoning.

****These outcomes are used to assess the general education competencies for all students.***

➤ **Goal 3**

To build community partnerships which support economic development;

➤ **Goal 4**

To keep the curriculum current in order to strengthen the bridge for students to pursue further education and/or the workforce;

➤ **Goal 5**

To meet the needs of a variety of community based populations by designing credit, non-credit, and CEU courses, using varied delivery systems and by making available services, activities, and other resources of the College;

➤ **Goal 6**

To offer support services and extracurricular activities which enrich the student learning experience and help students in formulating and achieving their goals;

➤ **Goal 7**

To establish an environment which is safe, healthy, aesthetically pleasing, accessible to students, and otherwise learning centered;

➤ **Goal 8**

To develop faculty and staff who are proficient, professional, and enthusiastic in advancing the mission of the college; and

➤ **Goal 9**

To become a model of institutional effectiveness and advancement through decision-making based on research, planning, on-going assessment, and adequate and equitable budgeting and distribution of funds.

I.C.6. External Grants and Contracts

In all cases of external grants and contracts, Northwest-Shoals Community College will maintain full control of instructional and other institutional activities. All external grants or contracts shall comply with the overall purpose of the institution, and Northwest-Shoals Community College will comply with all pertinent state and federal regulations, legislation, and procedures. Northwest-Shoals Community College shall in no way compromise its commitment to maintain legal and ethical administrative practices as well as accreditation standards.

All reports of any nature to grant agencies and fiscal school correspondence and reports to external accrediting agencies must have the approval of the President and/or the Vice President prior to mailing.