Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities and Conduct

PREAMBLE

SUNY Potsdam is an academic community committed to the principles of civility and fairness in pursuit of a purposeful academic experience. It is a unique community, one that demands respect for the rights and dignity of all people. We draw strength and character from the diversity of our members. As such, members of this community strive to learn from people, ideas and ways of living that are different from their own experience.

The provisions that follow shall govern the students of SUNY Potsdam as members of this institutional community. Many of these stipulations are stated as rights. However, no community can enjoy the benefits of a stable existence without concern for and attention to those responsibilities implicit in rights. Students shall exercise their rights in a reasonable and prudent manner, acting at all times with consideration for others. The recognition and observance of that responsibility will insure a humane, civilized, and educational experience for all students.

As a community rooted in pluralism, acts of discrimination and harassment are not tolerated. Bigotry, in any form, violates the tenets of our community as expressed in the Potsdam Pledge and as such must be challenged and confronted. Acts of inappropriate behavior motivated by such bigotry will be subject to quick and firm disciplinary action.

It is the responsibility of each member of the SUNY Potsdam community-faculty, student, and staff-to discourage injustice and to keep the protection of the rights of all members foremost in our thoughts and actions. We affirm these ideals in our classrooms, residence halls, dining facilities, in all parts of our campus. Our collective concern for the rights of others is the common thread that binds this diverse and rich community.

I. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

When used in this Code

A. The terms "college," "institution," and "SUNY Potsdam" mean the State University of New York College at Potsdam, and collectively, those responsible for its control and operation.

B. The term "student" includes all persons taking courses at the College both full-time and part-time, pursuing undergraduate, graduate, or extension studies. Students who are members of a bargaining unit on this campus are excluded from this definition.

C. The term "instructor" means any person employed by the institution to conduct classroom activities.

D. The term "staff" means any person employed by the institution in any other capacity.

E. In certain situations a person may be both "student" and "instructor" or "staff." One's status shall be determined by the context of the particular situation.

F. The term "organization" means a number of persons who have complied with the formal requirements of institutional recognition.

G. The term "shall" is used in the imperative sense.

H. The term "may" is used in the permissive sense.

I. Member of the Institutional Community includes students, instructors, staff or organizations as defined herein.

J. Presenter shall be a member of the institutional community appointed by the Dean of Student Affairs or his or her designee to present cases herein. The presenter does not represent any one party involved but rather offers the basic information on the case at hand.

K. Advocates are an initial contact for students who feel they have been victims of a sexual offense or any discrimination. Advocates will guide students to, and if necessary through their
options, including the campus judicial system. An Advocate may serve as advisor to the victim during the actual proceedings of the judicial system.

L. Advisor is a person who can aid the victim or accused in the judicial process as set forth herein.

II. BILL OF RIGHTS

The enumeration of these rights shall not be taken to deny or disparage other rights retained by students as members of the institutional community.

a. Freedom of expression, inquiry and assembly are guaranteed to all students.

b. Students shall be free to pursue their educational goals. The institution shall provide reasonable and appropriate opportunities for learning.

c. All students shall be free, individually and collectively, to express their views on issues of College policy and on matters of interest to the student body.

d. Clearly defined means shall be provided for student participation in the formulation and application of College policy affecting academic and student life.

e. Students shall have the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the rules and regulations governing their behavior as members of the institutional community. The burden of providing students with such a reasonable opportunity to be informed rests with the institution.

f. A student accused of violating institutional rules shall have the right to a fair and impartial hearing.

g. Access to his or her academic record is guaranteed to every student, subject only to reasonable regulations as to time, place and manner.

h. The rights of students shall not be abridged or denied on the basis of race, religion, sex, age, creed, color, disability, marital status, national origin, sexual orientation or organizational affiliation.

III. CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE

a. In those courses in which discussion is appropriate, students shall have the right to express views on the course material different from those of the instructor.

b. Students shall have the right to a fair and accurate description of course requirements at the beginning of the course.

c. Students have the right to protection through orderly procedures against prejudicial or capricious academic evaluation.

IV. EXPRESSION

a. Discussion and expression of all views are permitted within the institution subject only to the requirements of the Rules of Maintenance of Public Order and this document. Support of any cause by orderly means which do not disrupt the operations of the institution shall be permitted.

b. Students and campus organizations may invite and hear any persons of their own choosing subject only to the requirements for use of institutional facilities.

c. Any student or organization may publish and distribute written material on-campus without prior approval providing such distribution does not disrupt the operations of the College. The College may impose reasonable restrictions on the posting, distribution or display of material.

d. The student press and the student electronic media shall be free from censorship. Sanctions shall not be imposed because of student, faculty, administration, alumni, or community disapproval of editorial policy or content. The student press and media shall exercise this freedom in a manner consistent with the canons of responsible journalism.

e. No individual, group or organization may use the College name without express authorization of the College except to identify institutional affiliation. The student media shall explicitly state on the editorial page or in broadcast that the opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the student body or the College.

V. STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

a. Organizations may be established within the institution for any legal purpose. Affiliation with an extramural organization shall not, in itself, disqualify the institutional branch or chapter from institutional privileges.

b. Membership in all institution related organizations shall be open to any qualified member of the institutional community who is willing to subscribe to the stated aims and meet the stated obligations of membership in the organization.

c. Membership lists are confidential and solely for the use of the organizations except that names and addresses may be required as a condition of access to College funds.

d. Institutional facilities shall be assigned to organizations for regular business meetings, for social programs, and for programs open to the public. The College may impose reasonable regulations on the use of facilities.

e. The Student Government Association shall require financial accountability for all allocated funds and shall further require that all expenditures be made in a manner consistent with student activity fee guidelines established by the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York.

VI. PRESERVATION OF STUDENT RECORDS

No student record may be preserved beyond graduation or other final departure from the institution except:

a. Academic records subject to the limitations of the Family Rights and Privacy Act of 1974.

b. Financial records of continuing obligations.

c. Medical and psychiatric records subject to the normal rules pertaining to privileged information.