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## Student Rights

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### POLICY STATEMENT

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Delta State University provides an atmosphere conducive to the pursuit of knowledge within the following sets of rights.

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### DEFINITIONS

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None

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### PROCEDURES and RESPONSIBILITIES

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#### General

Delta State University is an academic community formally opened in 1927 which strives to preserve the rights of individuals. In order to provide an atmosphere conducive to the pursuit of knowledge, basic rights and responsibilities must be understood, guaranteed, and reinforced by every member of the University community. The broad purpose of disciplinary standards is to order University living so that interests of the University community and the individual are best served. The University's responsibility extends to all students enrolled. Students apprehended and determined guilty of serious or repeated violations of University standards may receive a maximum penalty of dismissal from the University.

The policies on "Student Rights" and "Student Responsibilities" are not intended to restrain the activities of students and members of the University community. They are intended, however, to assure an orderly fashion of life on the University campus and to give every student an equal and orderly opportunity to pursue an education. Additionally, they are ordered to ensure that students have fair and impartial hearings in discipline and to maintain due process.

#### Students Rights

All members of the Delta State University community have certain rights and responsibilities. These include:

1. The right to privacy of personal information. Public information released to anyone upon request includes student's name, address, telephone listing, academic major, dates of attendance, awards received, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, and weight and height of athletic team members.
  - a. To a student who is financially dependent upon parents as defined by the IRS code, the burden of identifying such dependency rests with the student or the parent. Students, who are no longer financially dependent upon the parent as defined by the IRS code, should inform the Office of Student Financial Assistance; otherwise, the student's parents will receive public information as described above. Additionally, parents of enrolled students can be notified of disciplinary action taken against the student.
  - b. Information concerning application for or receipt of financial aid may be released to official agencies involved in aid allocation.
  - c. Information may also be released to University officials with legitimate educational interests, to federal or state agencies as provided by law, and in compliance with lawful subpoenas. In

cases of emergencies, information may be released as authorized by the Department of Education and regulations to protect the health and safety of the student or other persons.

2. The right to be secure from unreasonable or unauthorized search and seizure.
  - a. The University reserves the right to inspect the living quarters of any student residing in University property at any time that its administrative officials or their agents shall deem such inspection to be in the best interest of the University. Except for cases involving use of legal search warrants and for situations relating to fire hazards, mechanical malfunctions, energy consumption, general maintenance of physical facilities, property control, and personal safety of the residents, no person's room will be entered when there are no occupants present. Courtesies will be observed in any case, with proper respect for the privacy of each resident. With these guidelines in mind, periodic inspections may be made that will be concerned with fire and safety, general cleanliness, property accountability, disorderly conduct, and excessive noise.
3. The right to conduct social affairs.
  - a. Student social affairs operate under policies established by the University Student Organizations Committee and the Vice President for Student Affairs. Responsibility for the conduct of social affairs rests with the sponsoring organization. All organizations, social or otherwise, are required to adhere to regulations or standards of conduct prescribed by the University Administration. A Handbook for Student Organizations is available in the Office of Student Development.
4. The right to dissent. In other words, to carry on individual or organized activity which expresses grievances held against, or changes desired. This activity is carried on within the limits of the democratic process of freedom of speech, assembly, and petition.
5. The right to an environment that is free of harassment or any other unreasonable interference with the student's performance.
  - a. Delta State University provides a mechanism to redress grievances that may arise over sexual harassment or alleged discrimination on the basis of race, sex, religion, veteran's status, age, national origin, or handicap as prohibited by Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, and Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This procedure is also designed to present grievances concerning students' rights of privacy and access to their educational records as articulated in the Family Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, commonly known as the Buckley Amendment.
  - b. The Student Grievance procedure is included in later in this policy.
6. The right to a smoke free environment. It is the policy of Delta State University to respect the rights of both the non-smoker and the smoker in buildings and facilities. When these rights conflict, students and employees should endeavor to find a reasonable accommodation. When such an accommodation is not possible, the rights of the non-smoker shall prevail.

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**RELATED DOCUMENTS**

None