

[RIC > Office of Student Life](#)**OFFICE OF
STUDENT LIFE****STUDENT BILL OF RIGHTS****Services We
Provide**

- [Preamble](#)

**Early Intervention
Form**

- [Article I: Freedom of expression and association](#)

**Campus Security
Report**

- [Article II: Freedom of communication](#)

**Student Bill of
Rights**

- [Article III: Freedom from discrimination](#)

Student Handbook

- [Article IV: Student participation in campus governance](#)

- [Article V: Notice of rules](#)

- [Article VI: Freedom from disciplinary action without due process](#)

- [Article VII: Violation of law and College discipline](#)

- [Article VIII: Privacy](#)

- [Article IX: Freedom from improper disclosure](#)

- [Article X: Freedom in the classroom](#)

- [Article XI: Protest](#)

- [Article XII: Amendments](#)

- [Article XIII: Ratification](#)

Preamble

We, the student body of Rhode Island College, create this document in order to ensure and protect the rights of all students. All students on this campus possess and retain the inalienable rights granted them by the United States Constitution. Attendance at Rhode Island College does not revoke any of these rights. This academic and social institution shall not deny those rights to any student. We, therefore, establish this Student Bill of Rights.

[Back to Top](#)**Article I: Freedom of expression and association**

- **Section 1.** Students shall be free to examine and discuss all questions of interest to them and to express opinions publicly and privately. They shall always be free to support causes by orderly means (such as: assembly and petition) which do not disrupt the regular and essential operation of the institution. Such actions as disrupting class, damaging/defacing property, or racial/sexual attacks and illegal harassment will not be tolerated.
- **Section 2.** Students shall have the right to assemble and to use the facilities of the College in accordance with its rules. In their public expressions or demonstrations students speak only for themselves, and do not represent the views of the institution, the rest of the student body, or of the Rhode Island College Student Community Government, Inc.
- **Section 3.** Students may invite and hear any person of their own choosing. Those routine procedures required by the College for the appearance of a guest speaker on campus shall be designed only to insure that there is orderly scheduling of facilities and adequate preparation and security for the event. Sponsorship of guest speakers does not imply approval or endorsement of the views expressed, either by the sponsoring group, the institution, the rest of the student body, or of the Rhode Island College Student Community Government, Inc.
- **Section 4.** Institutional control of campus facilities shall not be used as a device of censorship.

[Back to Top](#)

Article II: Freedom of communication

- **Section 1.** Student publications and means of communication (such as, but not limited to: The Anchor, The Exodus yearbook, WXIN radio, RIC TV, the SCG TV system, Student Web pages, and Shoreline literary magazine), which are legitimately accessible to students, shall be subject to existing laws governing public communication and electronic media.
- **Section 2.** The editors and managers such as, but not limited to the aforementioned groups shall not be arbitrarily suspended because of student, faculty, administration, alumni, or community disapproval of editorial policy or content. The editorial freedom of student editors and managers entails corollary responsibilities to be governed by the canons of responsible journalism and applicable regulations of the Federal Communications Commission.
- **Section 3.** All student communications shall explicitly state that the opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the institution, the rest of the student body, or of the Rhode Island College Student Community Government, Inc.
- **Section 4.** Students may distribute written material on campus without prior approval providing such distribution does not interfere with the rights of others or disrupt the regular and essential operation of the institution.

[Back to Top](#)

Article III: Freedom from discrimination

- **Section 1.** Pursuant to the philosophy of the Board of Governors for Higher Education, Rhode Island College and its administration, the College does not illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national or ethnic origin, gender, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation, disabled veteran, veteran of the Vietnam Era, or citizenship status. This non-discrimination policy encompasses the operation of the College's educational programs and activities including admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, athletic and all other programs; it also encompasses the employment of College personnel and contracting by the College for goods and services. Rhode Island College is committed to taking affirmative action to ensure that this non-discrimination policy is effectively observed in all the College's endeavors.
- **Section 2.** Membership in all institution-related organizations shall be open to any member of the institution community who is willing to subscribe to the stated goals and meet the stated obligations of the organization.

[Back to Top](#)

Article IV: Student participation in campus governance

- **Section 1.** As constituents of the academic community, students shall be free, individually and collectively, to express their views on issues of institutional policy and on matters of general interest to the student body. The students shall have clearly defined means and appropriate representation in the formulation and application of institutional policy affecting academic and student affairs. The role of the Rhode Island College Student Community Government and both its general and specific responsibilities shall be made explicit, and the actions of the Rhode Island College Student Community Government within the areas of its jurisdiction should be reviewed only through orderly and prescribed procedures.

[Back to Top](#)

Article V: Notice of rules

- **Section 1.** No sanction may be imposed for violations of rules and regulations for which there is not actual or constructive notice. Those rules and regulations, including the range of punishment that may be imposed, must be published and be made available. The college community shall be informed that such rules and regulation are available, in the Student Handbook, which is available on the college web site through the Office of Student Life and/or SCG, Inc.

[Back to Top](#)

Article VI: Freedom from disciplinary action without due process

- **Section 1.** When misconduct may result in serious penalties, the student is entitled to a formal hearing before the established College judicial system. In all situations, procedural fair play requires that the student be informed of the nature of the charges and be given a fair opportunity to refute them, that the institution not be arbitrary in its actions, and that there be provision for appeal of a decision. The rules and procedures of the established College judicial system are published in the Student Handbook which is available on the college web site through the Office of Student Life and/or SCG, Inc. The college community shall be informed that a statement of such rules and procedures is available.

[Back to Top](#)

Article VII: Violation of law and College discipline

- **Section 1.** If the student is charged with, or convicted of an off-campus violation of law, the matter shall be of no disciplinary concern to the College, except as provided in Section 5, Section 6, or Section 7 of this Article. In any event, the student is subject to the academic regulations of the College.
- **Section 2.** If the student is accused of violating a federal, state or local law on campus, charges may be instituted against the student through the established College judicial system and/or through the civil and criminal courts.
- **Section 3.** If the student is accused of violating a campus regulation, charges will be instituted through the established College Judicial system.
- **Section 4.** No student shall be punished for an action, if such an action was committed before the College instituted regulations which prohibited said action.
- **Section 5.** Absent extraordinary circumstances, the status of a student shall not be altered, nor shall the student's right to be present on campus to attend classes and to participate in college activities be suspended until disposition of charges are made, except when the student's continued presence on campus poses imminent danger to the safety of that student or to the safety of other members of the college community or to college property. Any such exceptions shall be in accordance with the established college judicial procedures which shall provide for an appeal.
- **Section 6.** If abuse of computing resources occurs on the networks to which the college belongs or the computers at other sites connected to these networks, the College will treat this matter as an abuse of Rhode Island College's policy for responsible computing. The aforementioned does not preclude prosecution under Federal and State statutes.
- **Section 7.** Illegal off-campus activity will not normally be noticed by the College, but when

such conduct imperils the integrity and values of the academic community, it may also result in disciplinary action by the college.

[Back to Top](#)

Article VIII: Privacy

- **Section 1.** Students have the same rights of privacy as any other citizen and surrender none of those rights by becoming members of the academic community. These rights of privacy extend to premises occupied by students and the personal possessions of students (such as, but not limited to: residence hall rooms, lockers, and vehicles). Nothing expressed or implied in the institutional relationship or residence hall contract may give the institution or residence hall officials authority to consent to a search of a student's room by police or other law enforcement officials unless "probable cause" exists that the student is participating in an illegal activity or one which will endanger the student, the rest of the student body, or college property. When required by law, said officials must present a search warrant.
- **Section 2.** The institution is neither arbiter nor enforcer of student morals. Social morality on campus, not in violation of law or institutional rules, is of no disciplinary concern to the institution.
- **Section 3.** When the institution seeks access to a student's room in a residence hall to determine compliance with provisions of applicable multiple dwelling unit laws, College regulations, or for improvement or repairs, the occupant normally shall be notified in writing of such action not less than twenty-four (24) hours in advance except as specified in Section 5.
- **Section 4.** If a College employee or student has reason to believe that a search of a particular room or personal possessions of another student will yield evidence of violation of a College regulation by a particular student, that employee or student should contact the Hall Director or the Director of Residential Life and Housing. If the Hall Director or the Director of Residential Life and Housing, after hearing the employee's or student's statements, believes that a search of a particular student residence may produce evidence of a violation of College regulations, or evidence of the identity of a person committing such a violation, the Hall Director or the Director of Residential Life and Housing may apply to the Vice President for Student Affairs (or designee) for an administrative search warrant. The Vice President for Student Affairs (or designee) shall sign the administrative search warrant only if there is reasonable suspicion to believe that the item(s) described in the application and related to the commission of a violation is located as described in the application and that it is in the best interest of the College and its students to conduct an administrative search. Evidence found in the administrative search that indicates a violation of College policy may be used for internal College action.
- **Section 5.** The Hall Director, the Director of Residential Life and Housing, the Vice President for Student Affairs, or anyone specifically designated by the Housing Office may enter a student's room in a residence hall without consent when that person has a reasonable cause to believe that such entry is necessary on an emergency basis to protect the health or safety of persons or to make emergency repairs to College facilities to avoid damage to College or student property.

[Back to Top](#)

Article IX: Freedom from improper disclosure

- **Section 1.** Information such as but not limited to student views, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, and political associations that employees of the Counseling Center acquire in the course of their work is strictly confidential. Although instructors are not legally bound by the same health care confidentiality rules as employees of the Counseling Center, they are expected to honor student confidences absent extraordinary circumstances. Judgments of ability

and character may be provided under appropriate circumstances, with the knowledge or consent of the student.

- **Section 2.** To minimize the risk of improper disclosure, academic and disciplinary records shall be separate, and the conditions of access to each shall be set forth in an explicit policy statement. Transcripts of academic records shall contain only information about academic performance and current status of enrollment. Information from educational records for all students, and disciplinary files for students until their 18th birthday, shall not be available to unauthorized persons without the express written consent of the student involved except under legal compulsion or in cases of a health or safety emergency. Administrative staff and faculty members should respect confidential information about students that they acquire in the course of their work.

[Back to Top](#)

Article X: Freedom in the classroom

- **Section 1.** The instructor in the classroom and in conference should encourage free discussion, inquiry, and expression. Student performance should be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards. Students are protected through orderly procedures against prejudiced or capricious academic evaluation.
- **Section 2.** Students are free to express differences of opinion or to disagree with data or views offered in any course of study. However, they are responsible for maintaining standards of academic performance established for each course in which they are enrolled.

[Back to Top](#)

Article XI: Protest

- **Section 1.** The right to protest peacefully within the College community is granted. However, the College retains the right to ensure the safety of individuals, the protection of property, and the continuity of the educational process. Peaceful protest does not include obstruction of entrances to and exits from institutional facilities, willful disruption of campus activities, creation of conditions threatening to persons or property, or abusive conduct.

[Back to Top](#)

Article XII: Amendments

- **Section 1.** Amendments to this document shall become effective upon approval by the Rhode Island College Student Community Government, Inc., the Committee on Student Life, the Council of Rhode Island College, and the President of the College.

[Back to Top](#)

Article XIII: Ratification

- **Section 1.** This document shall be adopted upon approval by the Rhode Island College Student Community Government, Inc., the Committee on Student Life, the Council of Rhode Island College, and the President of the College.

[Back to Top](#)

This document revised as of February 18, 1999.

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