

PANOLA COLLEGE

CARTHAGE, TEXAS



EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Special Notification

Please note that this handbook does not in any way purport to function as a contract or quasi-contract for employment; it should be used as no more than a source of general guidelines for the employee. This handbook may be changed without prior notice.

Updated August, 2024

PANOLA COLLEGE EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Table of Contents	Page
INTRODUCTION	
Purpose of Handbook	5
Definition of Employment Status	5
Statement of Mission	5
Statement of Vision	6
Statement of Values	6
College Goals	6
Accreditation	7
Statement of Administrative Policy and Commitment to Affirmative Action	7
Statement of Nondiscrimination	7
GENERAL INFORMATION	
Governance	8
Administrative Management	8
Panola College Foundation	8
Contributions to the College (Gifts, Endowments, etc.)	8
HUMAN RESOURCES – PERSONNEL BENEFITS AND INFORMATION	
Personnel Records	9
Payrolls	9
Payroll Direct Deposit	9
Fitness Center	9
Length of Service	9
Outside Employment	10
Jury or Court Duty	10
Holidays	10
Vacation	10
Sick and Personal Leave	11
Free Tuition and Fees at Panola College	12
Retirement Programs and Ceremonies	13
Tax-Deferred (Sheltered) Annuities	13
Group Medical Insurance	14
Dental Insurance	14
Basic Life Insurance	14
Other Insurance Coverage	15
Pre-Tax (IRS Sec. 125, Cafeteria Plan, TEXFLEX) Deductions	15
COBRA Insurance	15
Admission to College Sponsored Activities	15
Workers' Compensation	15
Family and Medical Leave Act	16

Pregnant Workers Fairness Act	16
Providing Urgent Maternal Protections For Nursing Mothers Act	16
Catastrophic Sick Leave	16
Employee Complaints	16

BUSINESS OFFICE POLICIES AND INFORMATION

Annual Budget	17
Campus Security	17
Reporting Crimes and Emergencies	17
Property Insurance – Risk Management	17
Property Taxes and Tax Collection	17
Inventory of Equipment	18
Payment of Amounts Due to Panola College	18
Employee Use of College-Owned Equipment and Facilities	18
Employee Use of College-Owned Vehicles	18
Outsiders’ Use of College-Owned Furniture and Equipment	19
Lost and Found Items	19
Procedures for Requisitioning Professional Supplies	19
Purchasing Procedures	19
Travel	20
Use of College Facilities	21
Competitive Bidding	22
Campus Mail	23

EMPLOYEE PERSONNEL POLICIES

Children in the Workplace	23
Recruitment	24
Promotion and Transfers	24
Rest Periods	25
Payroll Deduction	25
Overtime Pay	25
Compensatory Time Off	25
Disciplinary Action	26
Resignation	26
Dismissal or Suspension	26
Due Process for Employees	26
Layoffs	27
Personnel Action Form	27
Dress Standards	27
Immigration and Naturalization Service (Form I-9) and E-Verify	28
Employee Standards of Conduct: Sexual Harassment	28
A Drug Free College	31
A Tobacco Free College	31
Sexual Assault Policy	31
Title IX	31
Electronic Communications Policy	31
Periodic Review of User Access Privileges	31

Express Breast Milk for Nursing Mothers	31
Campus Carry Regulations – Possession of Firearms	32
College Communications and News Media	32
Employee Standards of Conduct – Moral Turpitude	32
Statement on Students Rights and Responsibilities of Expression	33
Infectious/Communicable Disease Policy	34
Wellness Program	34

PERSONNEL CLASSIFICATION

Administrative Officials	35
Classification System	35
Basis for Classification	36
Job Descriptions	36
Employee Placement and Classification	36
Purpose and Components of the Compensation Plan	37
Reclassification of Employees	37
End	37

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF HANDBOOK

This statement of employee personnel rules and regulations has been prepared to serve as a guidebook for the College in the dissemination of policy information to employees. Should an employee need further information, he/she may inquire of his/her immediate supervisor. If there is a conflict between statements in this handbook and those covering the same subject in the Board Policy Manual, then the President of the College shall decide on which document to base a decision.

DEFINITION OF EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Employees are assigned a level (status) of employment such as full-time, part-time, or temporary. The levels may have different meanings when related to benefits as explained below:

1. Teacher Retirement System Participation: Full-time status to meet eligibility requirements means that an employee is employed for one-half or more of the standard work load at a rate comparable to the rate of compensation for other persons employed in similar positions. This is the eligibility test used to determine if an employee qualifies for insurance benefits provided by Employees Retirement System.
2. Eligibility for Panola College Benefits:
 - i. Vacation Leave - Only employees who have employment covering a full twelve (12) months are eligible for paid vacation leave.
 - ii. Sick Leave, Personal Leave, and Holidays - Only employees who have employment covering a minimum of nine (9) months are eligible for paid time off for illness, personal time, or holidays.

Generally, full-time employees are those who have employment from nine (9) months to twelve (12) months. Part-time and temporary employees are all of those whose terms of employment cover less than nine (9) months.

PURPOSE OF PANOLA COLLEGE

STATEMENT OF MISSION

Panola College is dedicated to providing excellence in education. The range of educational offerings includes university transfer programs, workforce programs, instruction designed to increase academic

proficiencies, and continuing education to enrich lives and improve skills. Our aim is to engage students to achieve success.

STATEMENT OF VISION

Panola College is committed to excellence in instructional programs, student services, service to community, and leadership in economic development and cultural enrichment in the region.

STATEMENT OF VALUES

- Commitment to learning: We believe in the importance of lifelong learning and will teach all students to obtain, to evaluate and to use information.
- Commitment to citizenship: We are committed to improving the human condition through learning, and we strive to be a model for individuals of the community.
- Commitment to diversity: We believe the College should provide access to programs and services to a diverse community of men and women of all races, religions, origins, backgrounds, interests, and abilities.
- Commitment to the concept of global community: We will cultivate in our students an understanding of the people of all cultures of the world.
- Commitment to fiscal responsibility: We believe in fulfilling the College's mission and its obligations to its students, faculty, staff, and community at-large with policies that ensure fiscal responsibility.
- Commitment to faculty and staff: We recognize the importance and contribution of all individuals who collectively create a learning environment and believe that all members of the college community should have the opportunity to obtain purposeful, gratifying, and productive lives.
- Commitment to a quality campus environment: We recognize the importance of providing a work and learning environment which is characterized by integrity, clear communications, open exchange of ideas, involvement in decision making, and respect for all individuals.

COLLEGE GOALS

1. Provide excellence in teaching, student engagement and adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of the community.
2. Provide support services that enhance student success, college systems, and public accountability.
3. Foster partnerships for cultural and economic development in the College community.

4. Provide appropriate facilities that contribute to an effective and productive learning and work environment.

ACCREDITATION

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges is the regional body for the accreditation of degree-granting higher education institutions in the Southern states. It serves as the common denominator of shared values and practices among the diverse institutions in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and Latin America and other international sites approved by the Commission on Colleges that award associate, baccalaureate, master's, or doctoral degrees. The Commission also accepts applications from other international institutions of higher education.

Panola College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award Certificates and Associate Degrees. Contact the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of Panola College.

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY AND COMMITMENT TO AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Panola College is an Equal Opportunity Institution that provides educational and employment opportunities on the basis of merit and without discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, veteran status, genetic information, or disability.

Panola College is committed to a strong program of affirmative action as set forth in its Affirmative Action Plan adopted by the Board of Trustees. A plan was first approved for the College on February 11, 1974, and it has been revised and updated since its inception.

STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

Panola College prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against any employee on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by law. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of College District policy

Discrimination against an employee is defined as conduct directed at an employee on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by law, that adversely affects the employee's employment.

For more information, employees should reference Panola College's Board Policy found online under the Human Resources webpage.

GENERAL INFORMATION

GOVERNANCE

Panola College is governed by a seven-member board of trustees elected by the people of Panola County for six-year terms. The Board names its own officers, including a Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary. The Board usually meets on the fourth Monday of each month in sessions open to the public as required by the Texas Open Meetings Act. It may also be called into special or emergency sessions. The Board of Trustees is the ultimate governing authority for the College.

The function of the Board is primarily that of policy-making. It also considers such official actions as the sale of property, authorization of new building programs, adoption of the annual budget, new degree-granting programs, and faculty elections.

The Board is kept informed on broad institutional developments as well as on specific matters requiring its collective judgment. Board members periodically attend continuing education courses to keep them fully informed of their responsibilities, current legislation, and trends affecting higher education. The Board assesses the needs of the College and diligently seeks to provide as many educational opportunities as feasible for the citizens residing within the College's service area.

ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT

The President of the College is employed by the Board of Trustees as chief executive officer, and he/she is responsible for all phases of College operations. The operations of the College are divided into five functional areas: 1) Instruction, 2) Fiscal Services, 3) Student Services, 4) Institutional Advancement, and 5) Human Resources, each under the leadership of a senior administrator who is responsible for the performance of his/her functional area. The specific responsibilities and reporting relationships of the Board of Trustees, President, and administrators are identified in organizational charts that may be obtained from the Panola College website at www.panola.edu.

PANOLA COLLEGE FOUNDATION

The Panola Junior College Development Corporation, now known as the Panola College Foundation was chartered and incorporated in 1982, as a non-profit, tax-exempt foundation to assist in the development of scholarships, endowments, and other resources to assure a stable and growing financial base for the College.

Gifts from friends of the College provide financial resources for scholarships and other enrichment programs.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE COLLEGE (GIFTS, ENDOWMENTS, ETC.)

Private contributions to the College are earnestly solicited and gratefully received. They must be irrevocable. They may be given with or without stipulations regarding their use. The College reserves the right to determine the appropriate use of such gifts. The Panola College Foundation is authorized to accept endowment funds for development purposes. Anyone who wishes to make a gift or contribution

to the College should contact the Office of Institutional Advancement. Contributions are tax deductible, but the grantor should seek professional legal, financial and tax advice before making a commitment.

HUMAN RESOURCES - PERSONNEL BENEFITS AND INFORMATION

PERSONNEL RECORDS

The personnel records on employees, which are kept in the Office of Human Resources include, but are not limited to the following: employment application, resume, transcripts, personnel action and payroll authorizations, employment wage statements, TRS participation, employee information and emergency contact, direct deposit authorization, form I-9, e-verify, federal W-4, worker's compensation notice, disclosure of personal data, substance abuse/AIDS/discrimination/harassment notifications, FERPA training, general safety rules, insurance and retirement related forms. It is the responsibility of the Office of Human Resources to keep these files up to date. It is the responsibility of each employee to report changes in his/her personal status to the Office of Human Resources (address changes, marriage status, etc.).

PAYROLLS

Support staff employees are generally paid bi-weekly (every other Friday) for the hours reported on time cards or time sheets three weeks prior to the date of payment. Professional employees are generally paid monthly (on the 15th of each month) for the hours within the month being paid. Faculty members are generally paid monthly (on the 15th of each month) for the previous four weeks worked. The person in the Business Office who is responsible for preparation of the College payroll will issue a schedule at the beginning of each fiscal year specifying the payroll dates. If the normal Friday pay date falls on a bank holiday, generally payroll will be processed on the previous Thursday. Regarding overtime, employees are paid for time worked in excess of forty (40) hours per workweek at the rate of one and one-half times their normal hourly rate; this is referred to as overtime pay.

PAYROLL DIRECT DEPOSIT

Automatic direct deposit for payroll checks is required for all employees of the College. Direct deposits are processed and wired directly to the employees chosen banking institution on the specified payroll dates. Employees may choose a variety of deposit options and should contact the Payroll Office in the Business Office or the Office of Human Resources for further information.

FITNESS CENTER

The use of the Fitness Center is free for Panola College full-time employees, their spouses and children. Information on the Fitness Center can be found on the College's website.

LENGTH OF SERVICE

Length of service at the College is subject to the following conditions:

1. If all service has been continuous except for sick leave, authorized absences, or temporary interruptions of less than six months duration due to the College's temporary lack of need for the employee's services, the length of service shall be calculated from the initial date of employment.
 - a. If an employee is rehired following an earlier termination, he/she is classified as a new employee with regard to eligibility for vacation leave and sick leave.
 - b. In the event that an employee transfers or is promoted from one classification to another, continuous credited service accumulated under the prior classification is counted under the new classification.

OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

The primary employment responsibility of a Panola College employee is to the College. Employees are required to submit a written request to his/her immediate supervisor prior to the acceptance of outside employment. This policy does not apply to work performed for pay during holidays or vacation periods.

JURY OR COURT DUTY

Employees of the College will generally be granted paid leave time to serve on ordered jury duty or to serve as a subpoenaed witness. Such duties should be reported to the immediate supervisor. Copies of these summonses must be forwarded to one's supervisor. Employees are entitled to retain all compensation received for such services. No deductions may be made in regular compensation for a reasonable period of time spent absent from duty in performing these civic responsibilities.

HOLIDAYS

Legal holidays for nine-month to twelve-month employees are listed in the official College calendar, which is published on the College's website. Holidays, which are typically observed during the fiscal year, are New Year's Day, Martin L. King Jr. Day, Good Friday, Spring Break (5 days), Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving (5 days), and Christmas (a minimum of 10 days).

VACATION

Generally, all twelve-month employees are allowed ten (10) working days, or eighty (80) hours, of paid vacation leave annually. This time actually begins to accrue on the date of employment, but the employee is not entitled to any paid vacation leave during the first six months of employment. In the seventh month of continuous employment the employee is retroactively credited with five (5) days of vacation leave and may begin using such time pending approval from his/her supervisor. Time is then earned and credited to the employee at the rate of one-day (8 hours) for each full month of continuous employment for the next six (6) months. Therefore, if the employee used no vacation leave for the first twelve continuous months of employment, then he/she would have ten (10) working days available on his/her first anniversary date. No more than five vacation leave days may be accrued in any six-month period.

Annual accumulation of vacation leave shall not exceed 12 work weeks (60 days). Holidays recognized by the College District that occur during a vacation period shall not be counted against vacation leave. An

employee may not accrue vacation leave continuously; vacation periods must be scheduled during the College District's current fiscal year. It is the responsibility of the employee and the employee's supervisor to insure the accumulated time does not exceed the maximum.

The Business Office accounts for vacation time based upon the accrual policies, time cards, absence requests, and other documentary records; however, employees are urged to maintain their own records to help resolve any disputes. In the event an employee has taken more vacation leave at the time of termination than he/she would have accrued, the unpaid payroll time may be reduced by those excess hours.

Upon termination, including retirement, employees are usually paid for any accrued vacation hours. However, if the employee has any indebtedness to the College, he/she must agree to repay the debt through payroll deduction or reduction. The actual number of days paid for upon termination is based strictly on the accrual method explained previously in this section.

Also, please note that employees are encouraged to use their vacation leave; therefore, if all vacation time for an employee hired on September 1 has been used as of August 31, and the employee has served twelve full months of continuous employment, then he/she is entitled to take ten days (80 hours) of vacation leave for the upcoming fiscal year. However, if this employee terminates after his/her anniversary date, September 1, then he/she is not entitled to payment for ten working days (80 hours); instead, he/she will be restricted to the number of hours accrued, but not used, between the last September 1, and the date of termination.

Vacation leave does not apply to employees whose terms of employment equal less than twelve (12) months.

Any conflicts in policies between those stated in this Employee Handbook and the Board Policy Manual will be resolved by the President of the College.

SICK AND PERSONAL LEAVE

Generally, all nine- to twelve-month employees are entitled to sick and personal leave, which he/she receives at the beginning of each academic year. Personal leave is handled in a similar fashion to sick leave, and it may be carried over annually as a part of the maximum sick leave carryover of ninety (90) days. The annual sick and personal leave allowances are as follows:

Nine-month employee	9 days (including 2 personal days)
Ten-month employee	10 days (including 2 personal days)
Eleven-month employee	11 days (including 2 personal days)
Twelve-month employee	12 days (including 2 personal days)

In the case of twelve (12) month employees, sick leave is earned at the rate of one day for each month of full continuous employment, not to exceed five days in any six-month period. The sixth month is always the month of non-accrual. Accruals begin on the date of employment; however, no sick leave or personal

days may be used during the first six months of employment. At the end of the six-month period, the employee will be credited with five sick days and one personal day.

To record the amount of sick leave when the employee has worked part of a day, deduct the amount of time worked from eight hours, and this is the amount of sick leave to be charged to the employee. Sick leave is a daily calculation so the employee is not allowed to make up hours at the end of the week as a means of obtaining additional compensation.

Sick leave may be used for personal illness/disability and catastrophes involving the employee's immediate family as defined in Board Policy DEC (LOCAL).

Employees who terminate employment for any reason are not entitled to compensation for unused sick or personal leave.

TUITION AND FEES SCHOLARSHIP AT PANOLA COLLEGE

Panola College Board policy allows for the tuition for all full-time employees and their dependents to be paid through college funds. The employee or qualified dependents may be required to pay certain fees, such as those normally charged for applied music and various physical education classes. Textbooks may be loaned to qualified individuals for the duration of the course. The College may waive one-half of the tuition charged in non-credit community service courses for full-time college employees.

The following scholarship policies were developed by the Scholarship/Fees Committee and approved by the College President and became effective October 2021.

Full-Time Employees/Dependents Scholarships

1. Spouse/dependent children:

- a. Must maintain a 2.0 GPA each semester.

2. Eligible dependents:

- a. Your lawful spouse
- b. Dependent children, including step-children; foster children; children that you are in the process of adopting or have legally adopted; or children for whom you are seeking, or have obtained, legal guardianship or conservatorship
- c. Grandchildren that you are in the process of adopting, or have adopted or obtained guardianship or conservatorship
- d. Adult dependent children to the age of 26
- e. Children over age of 26 who are disabled
- f. May not have exceeded 90 attempted hours at Panola College.

3. The scholarship will pay 100% for all state funded courses. and 50% for all non-state funded courses taught by Panola College. This excludes and will not scholarship any courses or programs that are taught by a third party that has been contracted by Panola College to teach, for example: truck driving, real estate, and DigiTex. The scholarship will also not cover any athletic, performing arts, or continuing education classes that are labeled camps, clinics, fundraising events, or Kids College through CE

4. The appropriate Vice President must approve any exceptions.

5. Employees/spouses/dependent children will receive tuition, fees and book loans. Book loans cover required lab books and access codes for the class only. It will not include optional or recommended items, such as study guides or extra books. The recipient must purchase optional or recommended items on their own. **All books must be returned to the College Store during the book buy back period during finals each semester**, or, books may be purchased at the buy-back rate during the book buy back period at the end of each semester.

6. The Business Office will notify the employee regarding any books on loan which are not returned at the end of the semester.

7. This scholarship does not cover schedule change or late registration fees, damaged or lost textbooks, private music lessons, housing deposit, facility rental fees, or traveling fees for courses with field trips, or 3 peat class fees.

RETIREMENT PROGRAMS AND CEREMONIES

All employees are required to participate in the Teacher Retirement System (TRS) or the Optional Retirement System (ORP) if he/she works at least half of the time normally required for his/her position.

All College employees are covered by Social Security. The necessary salary deductions are made each pay period and employees are entitled to all benefits of Social Security.

There shall be one official retirement ceremony per calendar year. All employees who are retiring during the calendar year will be officially honored on that occasion. The ceremony is held during the spring semester each year. Any employee who retires during the course of the year will be recognized at the spring ceremony. In order to qualify for official retirement from Panola College, an employee must meet the necessary requirements of the Teacher Retirement System (TRS) or an optional retirement program (ORP). To be eligible for a retirement ceremony, a person must be at least 55 years of age and have been employed for at least ten years with the College. Employees who meet the above criteria shall be presented with a retirement gift from the College.

TAX-DEFERRED (SHELTERED) ANNUITIES

Under the provisions of public law, full-time employees of the College may elect to purchase a tax-deferred (Sec. 403(b) salary reduction) retirement annuity. While the annuity is being purchased, the employee does not pay current federal income taxes on the amount deducted from his/her salary for the annuity premium. Taxes will be paid on the deferred annuity at retirement or whenever the individual chooses to withdraw the account.

In the event that an employee signs a contract for a tax-deferred annuity, his/her annual earnings are reduced by the annual contractual amount. This procedure is defined as a reduction rather than a deduction to comply with current tax regulations. Interested employees may obtain information on tax-deferred annuity programs from the Office of Human Resources.

GROUP MEDICAL INSURANCE

Group medical insurance is provided for all active and retired employees who meet the eligibility requirements for participation in the Teacher Retirement System. The College pays the cost of medical coverage for each active and retired employee subject to state appropriations.

New employees must apply for coverage within thirty days after the initial date of employment. Health coverage for the employee begins 60 days after the first active duty date of employment. A new enrollment period begins each September 1, and eligible employees are requested to review his/her coverage's during the annual summer enrollment period so the insurance coverages for the coming fiscal year will represent that to which he/she is entitled and prefer.

Those employees who choose dependent coverage's must pay for the additional insurance through a payroll deduction at the first of each month. Full information on medical coverage is available from the Office of Human Resources or at <http://www.panola.edu/human-resources/benefits.html>.

Prior to termination or retirement, employees should contact the Office of Human Resources and complete any necessary paperwork. If an employee leaves after the first of a month, coverage's will generally continue through the end of the month of termination. Under Federal law, the college must make health insurance available to employees for at least eighteen (18) months after termination unless the reason for termination is gross misconduct. Under these COBRA provisions, the employee must pay the monthly premiums. See the Office of Human Resources for details.

Employees are requested to keep the Office of Human Resources informed of any changes, which might affect his/her coverage (address, phone numbers, dependents, newborns, etc.).

DENTAL INSURANCE

Group dental insurance is available for full-time employees and begins on the first day of employment if selected. Eligible employees may select from several dental plans which are administered through the Employees Retirement System and third-party administrators. The employee is responsible for 100% of the premiums and may cover eligible dependents as well. Group dental insurance is provided for all active TRS-eligible employees hired on, or prior to, May 26, 1998 up to a monthly amount of \$20.00; these employees upon retiring from the College will be eligible for dental premium reimbursement of \$20.00 monthly if he/she satisfies the criteria established by Resolution 9798-04. Employees hired after May 26, 1998 will not be reimbursed for his/her dental premiums upon his/her retirement.

BASIC LIFE INSURANCE

Basic term life insurance (a minimal amount) is provided for each employee who qualifies for health insurance provided by the College. The College pays the full amount of the premium. Generally, coverage is effective upon the initial date of employment. This policy is subject to change according to the conditions imposed by the insurance carrier.

OTHER INSURANCE COVERAGES

Employees who qualify for group medical coverage also may elect to purchase other forms of insurance such as vision, optional life, dependent term life, accidental death and dismemberment, and disability. The premiums will be deducted as payroll deductions.

PRE-TAX (IRS SEC. 125, CAFETERIA PLAN, TEX FLEX) DEDUCTIONS

Employees may elect to reduce their Federal tax liability on their earnings by having their monthly insurance premiums deducted from their gross earnings before the applicable Federal income taxes are withheld. This feature is referred to as Premium Conversion.

Also, employees may have amounts deducted from earnings to contribute to Health Care Reimbursement Accounts and/or Dependent Care Reimbursement Accounts. These deductions are also pre-tax and are used by the employee to assist in paying for unreimbursed health care costs and child day care costs. These are referred to as "TexFlex" deductions by Employees Retirement System.

For more information, employees should visit the TexFlex website: <http://ers.texas.gov/Programs/TexFlex>

COBRA INSURANCE

On April 7, 1986, a federal law was enacted (Public Law 99-272, commonly called "COBRA"). This law requires the State of Texas to offer employees and dependents covered under the Uniform Group Insurance Program (UGIP) the opportunity to temporarily extend their health and dental coverage at the group rates. Continuation coverage is available only when certain qualifying events cause coverage under the UGIP to end. Coverage under COBRA is limited to the health and dental coverage in effect at the time of the qualifying event. For more information concerning COBRA, please contact the Office of Human Resources.

ADMISSION TO COLLEGE-SPONSORED ACTIVITIES

All current and retired employees and their immediate families as defined in the section of this handbook entitled "Sick and Personal Leave" will usually be admitted free to athletic events, dramatic productions, musical concerts, and other official on-campus activities sponsored by Panola College. In some cases where meals are involved, employees may be required, if they attend, to purchase tickets.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Worker's Compensation regulations require the injured employee to report promptly to his/her supervisor any injury sustained during the performance of official duties. The employee will need to assist the Office of Human Resources in completing the necessary paperwork. Failure to do so may result in disqualification of coverage and may result in a liability for the employee and/or the College.

FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT

Under the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, employees who have worked for a covered employer for at least twelve months and have performed at least 1,250 hours of work during the last twelve months may under certain circumstances give at least thirty (30) days advance notice to his/her employer and receive up to twelve (12) weeks of family or medical leave without pay. Any employee who needs such leave should consult with his/her immediate supervisor and the Office of Human Resources to be sure that he/she is eligible and that all of the provisions of the law are complied with.

If any employee leave policies contradict the provisions of this act, the provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 shall prevail.

PREGNANT WORKERS FAIRNESS ACT

The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, PWFA, requires covered employers to provide “reasonable accommodations” to a worker’s known limitations related to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions, unless the accommodation will cause the employer an “undue hardship.”

PROVIDING URGENT MATERNAL PROTECTIONS FOR NURSING MOTHERS ACT

Providing Urgent Maternal Protections for Nursing Mothers Act, PUMP Act, requires employers to provide a reasonable amount of break time and a space to express milk as frequently as needed by the nursing employee, for up to one year following the birth of the employee’s child. The frequency of breaks needed to express breast milk as well as the duration of each break will likely vary. The space provided by the employer cannot be a bathroom and it must be shielded from view and free from intrusion by coworkers or the public.

CATASTROPHIC SICK LEAVE

The Catastrophic Sick Leave Pool is funded “by employees for employees” and is administered by the Office of Human Resources. The sick leave pool exists and continues through the generosity and deposits of full-time Panola College employees. The pool is a secondary source of paid sick leave available to full-time employees who have exhausted all other paid leave (i.e. vacation, sick, etc). Employees may reference the College’s website for more details.

EMPLOYEE COMPLAINTS

Employees wishing to file a complaint should reference Panola College Board Policy DGBA (LOCAL) through the on-line policy. The policy may be found on the Human Resources page of the Panola College web site at www.panola.edu.

BUSINESS OFFICE POLICIES AND INFORMATION

ANNUAL BUDGET

College revenues and expenditures are measured by an annual budget, which is prepared and developed by the College President with assistance from all levels of the College's employees including faculty, staff, and administration. The annual budget is submitted to the Board of Trustees prior to the beginning of each fiscal year for its approval, modification, or rejection. The annual budget is adopted at a regular meeting of the Board of Trustees, which is open to any citizen or taxpayer residing within the College tax district.

CAMPUS SECURITY

Panola College is vitally concerned with the safety of its employees and students or anyone else using its facilities. For this reason, the College employs State of Texas certified Police officers to establish and maintain a security system, which is designed to provide security for those who use College facilities. Campus police are available 24 hours a day for seven days a week. The Vice President of Fiscal Services is the administrative officer who manages this function. Annual reports are published which specify the number and type of crimes committed and investigated on campus and may be found on the College's website under Campus Police.

REPORTING CRIMES OR EMERGENCIES

The College has no health facility on campus. If an accident or emergency occurs on campus, first aid will be administered, and, if deemed necessary, emergency assistance will be requested. Depending on the severity of the emergency, consider calling 911 immediately.

In the case of fires, hostage situations, bomb threats, etc., and other emergencies, dial 911 immediately and dial 903.693.1100 to reach Panola College Emergency Services. In non-emergency situations such as theft and/or auto accidents with no injuries, call Campus Police at 1111 or 903.693.1111.

PROPERTY INSURANCE (RISK MANAGEMENT)

All College buildings and their contents, College-owned vehicles, and other College properties are insured by companies licensed to write insurance coverage in the State of Texas. Insurance coverage must be provided through an agency, which has been reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees.

PROPERTY TAXES AND TAX COLLECTION

The Board of Trustees levies an annual property (ad valorem) tax sufficient to operate the College considering all other sources of revenue and the necessary levels of expenditures, both operating and capital. The County of Panola collects the taxes for the College. The tax rolls prepared by the Panola County Tax Appraisal District constitute the official tax roll of the College.

INVENTORY OF EQUIPMENT

The College has a computerized inventory of all equipment. In order to properly maintain an accurate inventory of these items, periodic audits will be performed by the Business Office. The Business Office requests that College employees report to them the status of the equipment in their area. (i.e. damages, transfers, obsolescence, etc.)

PAYMENT OF AMOUNTS DUE TO PANOLA COLLEGE

All amounts due to Panola College for goods and services purchased from the College must be paid within thirty (30) days unless other arrangements are made with the Vice President of Fiscal Services.

EMPLOYEE USE OF COLLEGE-OWNED EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES

Equipment owned by the College may not be borrowed, rented, or used for private purposes by any College student or employee. Such actions jeopardize the insurance coverage maintained by the College. Also, the private use of public property is a violation of law.

POLICY FOR EMPLOYEE USE OF COLLEGE VEHICLES

Panola College vehicles must be used **ONLY** for official college business. Every driver must be at least 21 years of age with a valid driver's license. Vehicles are not to be kept overnight or over the weekend unless approved by the administration. A person's driving record may be checked through the applicable state's motor vehicle department. Anyone driving a vehicle must have approval and clearance from the Business Office prior to driving a college vehicle. Prior to driving, a pre-driving safety check must be performed by completing the following steps:

1. Walk-around inspection to make sure there's nothing behind or underneath that you might run over.
2. Tires – see if any are losing air or if any debris has been lodged into the threads.
3. Check for leaks under the vehicle
4. Windows clean with nothing blocking vision
5. Mirrors properly adjusted
6. Lights working properly

Drivers must abide by the following rules:

1. Do not drive while impaired by alcohol, drugs, or fatigue.
2. Drivers are not to use cell phones or other distracting devices while vehicles are in motion or waiting at stoplights, stop signs, traffic jams, etc. Cell phones are only to be used by passengers or by drivers who have pulled over and stopped in a safe location. Drivers of personal vehicles may use a hands free device, following applicable state law.
3. While a driver is operating a vehicle, all occupants of the vehicle must use seatbelts as they were designed to be used.
4. Drivers are required to comply with all local, state, and federal traffic laws and regulations.
5. Drivers must comply with all speed limit laws without exception.
6. Drivers must promote courteous, defensive driving.

7. Picking up hitchhikers is prohibited.
8. No driver shall transport more passengers in a vehicle than the vehicle is designed to carry. In most cases, capacity is the same as the number of factory-installed seat belts in the vehicle.
9. Employees not following this policy are subject to disciplinary action.

OUTSIDERS' USE OF COLLEGE-OWNED FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT

As a general rule the College will not allow the use of College-owned furniture and/or equipment by outside individuals or groups. Only recognized non-profit community organizations or service groups may borrow them for special purposes. The President and Vice President of Fiscal Services of Panola College reserve the right to approve or disapprove the use of College-owned furniture and equipment to outside individuals and groups.

LOST AND FOUND ITEMS

Lost and found items should be turned over to the College Business Office as soon as possible. The Vice President of Fiscal Services or his appointed representative shall be responsible for determining the status of items, which remain unclaimed after a six-month period.

PROCEDURES FOR REQUISITIONING PROFESSIONAL SUPPLIES

Supplies, which are not available in the College Store, should be requisitioned by completing a Purchase Requisition through the accounting system. The requisition must be approved by a Director or Department Chairperson and a Dean or Administrative Officer. If approved, a Purchase Order will be issued from the Business Office, and the order may be placed by the requisitioner. If the cost of an item is \$10,000 or more, the requisitioner is required to get three quotes. The requisitioner should maintain his/her copy of the Purchase Requisition with the issued Purchase Order until the goods are received. The Accounts Payable Specialist will send the original copies of the Purchase Order and Purchase Requisition to the selected vendor. When goods are received, the recipient should sign the packing slip and write the Purchase Order number on it. Then send the packing slip to the Accounts Payable Specialist in the Business Office. If the goods are not acceptable, the requisitioner should return them as soon as possible and notify the Accounts Payable Specialist of the return shipment.

PURCHASING PROCEDURES

Purchase Requisition and Order forms for ordering supplies and equipment are available on the Panola College Business Office web site or through the accounting system. Individuals should observe the following procedures in ordering supplies and equipment:

1. A Requisition must be completed by the person wanting to order supplies, and it must be approved by a Director or Department Chairperson and a Dean or Administrative Officer. After approval, the DPS Requisition is sent to the Business Office for a Purchase Order to be issued.
2. All purchases must be made by means of a properly executed Purchase Order. This form must be approved by the Vice President of Fiscal Services. All blanks (i.e. budget account number, description of items ordered, quantity, etc.) must be filled in. The Vice President of Fiscal Services

reviews for accuracy and verifies available funds in accounts to be charged. No Purchase Order will be approved when budgeted money is not available. Three quotes must be received for purchases exceeding \$10,000.00. The requisitioner should allow ten working days for all Purchase Orders to be processed. Copies will be distributed as follows:

3. Administration should observe the following guidelines in regard to purchase requisitions:
 - a. Careful review of purchase requisitions by administration will assure a strong degree of control over purchases.
 - b. Purchase orders must be completed by the Business Office.
 - c. The proper approval signatures must be placed on all purchase requisitions.
 - d. Purchase order numbers will be issued by the Business Office after all proper signatures are verified on the Purchase Requisition.
4. Packing slips for goods received should be initialed and dated by whoever receives and verifies shipments received. The third copy of the purchase order may be checked and signed by the recipient if no packing slip is available. This copy of the signed and dated packing slip will be forwarded to the Accounts Payable Specialist, matched with the original, and the invoice when received. Invoices will not be paid without adequate proof of the receipt of goods.
5. If supplies or equipment are returned to the supplier, a copy of the purchase order should be prepared with "RETURNED" printed across the bottom in large letters. A copy should be forwarded to the Accounts Payable Specialist.

TRAVEL

Panola College supports its employees by providing opportunities to participate and attend professional meetings. The college provides this support through annual budget allocations, release time to attend programs, seminars and meetings, and by providing rental vehicles. All travel must be approved in advance by submitting a completed *Request for Authorization for Travel* form found in the Employee Portal to your immediate supervisor. Five working days prior approval is required.

General Reimbursement Guidelines for Travel

All travel is to be conducted on a reimbursement of cost basis. Travel advances will not be issued unless it is demonstrated that a lack of an advance will prohibit travel or create an undue hardship on the employee. The following reimbursement rates have been established by the institution.

1. Personal Mileage – Set at the rate adopted by the State of Texas. NOTE: Mileage is reimbursed based upon official distances between cities of origin and destination as published by the Texas Department of Transportation.
2. Hotel Charges – Actual rate charged by the hotel, subject to approval by the appropriate budgetary head. NOTE: Receipts must be submitted for reimbursement to be approved. Additionally, Panola College is exempt from State of Texas sales tax. It is the employee's responsibility to obtain a hotel tax exemption form from the Business Office prior to travel. State of Texas sales tax will not be reimbursed.
3. Food Charges – Employees will be reimbursed for their actual expenses up to a maximum of \$50.00 per day. NOTE: Receipts must be submitted for reimbursement to be approved.

4. Other Charges – All other expenses submitted for reimbursement must be considered as necessary for travel and receipts must be submitted for reimbursement to be approved.

USE OF COLLEGE FACILITIES

DEFINITION: FACILITIES:

The term facilities wherever used in relation to Panola College shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, all personal and real properties as defined by law which are currently owned, leased, or occupied with the expressed permission of the owner(s) of such property.

GENERAL POLICY

The facilities of Panola College whether owned, leased or occupied with the expressed permission of the owner(s) of the property exists for the primary purpose of providing educational services to students. College related activities shall therefore receive first priority in matters of facility usage. When facilities are not otherwise committed or scheduled for use by the College or affiliated clubs and organizations, they may be made available at reasonable rates. The purpose of the activity will be a major factor in determining whether an organization is allowed to use College facilities.

Should an outside organization desire to have a meal served, the College recommends that the organization use the contract food service provider for the College, and the rental fee will be included in the price. An exception may be made for covered dish suppers, or when the size of the group is so large as to require an outside caterer. The cost of meals will be determined on an individual basis by the contract service manager and the College's President or Vice President of Fiscal Services. No alcoholic beverages may be served or brought on campus by anyone using College facilities. College buildings are public property and may not be used for religious or political purposes except those specifically approved in advance by the College President. The President or her duly-appointed representative must approve in advance any activities which are to take place on or originate from any location owned, leased, or occupied with the expressed permission of the owner(s) of the property.

RENTAL PROCEDURES

An outside group which desires to use any College facilities must sign a Facility and Equipment Use Agreement form furnished by the Office of the President of the College. This form should be completed and filed with the Office of the President at least two weeks prior to the date for which the facilities are being requested.

Reservation dates for the use of facilities shall be coordinated with the College calendar. The President and Vice President of Fiscal Services shall have the authority to consider and approve or disapprove requests for the use of facilities.

A copy of the Facility Use Agreement can be found at panola.edu. The President of the College shall designate a College employee to complete the form based on the requests of the outside group, but it must be signed by a representative of the requesting group.

The minimum fee for the use of any College facility by an outside organization may be incurred and applies to all facilities. The lighting system and sound system in the Q. M. Martin Auditorium must be run by College assigned personnel. A charge for this service may be incurred.

Additional charges may be made at the discretion of the College administration for furnishing supplies and equipment or for excessive cleanup. A \$120 damage deposit is required of all outside groups prior to

approval of the use/rental agreement. This deposit is refundable if approved by the Vice President of Fiscal Services after an inspection of the facilities, which were used.

ELIGIBLE GROUPS

1. Use of College facilities by area high school and College groups is encouraged. Generally, a faculty chaperon is required for each 35 students in attendance from the school involved.
2. Adult groups whose membership is countywide and whose primary objective is educational, civic, or cultural are eligible for facility usage.
3. Religious or political groups will generally not be booked for the use/rental of College facilities. This includes organizations whose membership is composed of predominantly college or high school students. The President and the Dean of Fiscal Affairs of the College must specifically grant permission for these uses.
4. Recreational adult groups are generally ineligible for consideration even though they may be slightly civic or cultural in their orientation. The President and Vice President of Fiscal Services of the College may grant permission based on a thorough evaluation of a request.
5. Groups deemed by the College administration as controversial, publicly distasteful, or whose presence on, or in, College facilities would demean the reputation or adversely affect the educational goals of the College are excluded from usage of facilities.
6. No regularly scheduled monthly meetings of any community organization will be allowed unless specifically approved by the President's office. Facilities are not available on an open rental basis.
7. In the event of the exclusion of a group from the use of College facilities, a representative of the group in question is entitled to appeal the exclusion at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees. The group must request to be listed on the agenda of the scheduled meeting at least five working days prior to the date of the scheduled meeting.
8. College vehicles are generally scheduled for College use only. However, an outside organization whose primary purpose is to promote the economic growth of the College district will be permitted to use College vehicles only at times when they have not been scheduled by College personnel or student organizations.
9. Organizations using College facilities on weekends must pay maintenance personnel overtime pay because a maintenance person must be on duty whenever a College facility is in use by an outside group or organization.

COMPETITIVE BIDDING

Estimates for equipment and supplies (personal property) costing over \$25,000 must be submitted under a competitive bid procedure as prescribed by guidelines adopted by the Board of Trustees, which comply with Texas state statutes.

CAMPUS MAIL

Mail and packages will be sorted and stored at the College Store, to be picked up daily or at least weekly. Inter-campus mail should be sent in standard campus mail envelopes.

EMPLOYEE PERSONNEL POLICIES

CHILDREN IN THE WORKPLACE

Panola College values family life and works to develop employment policies and benefits that are supportive of families. We seek to provide an environment open to work and family issues; however, the College cannot allow the reoccurring presence of children or minors (defined as persons below the age of eighteen years old) in the workplace for the following reasons: (1) the potential for interruption of work; (2) health and safety concerns; and (3) liability to the institution.

POLICY: This policy is established to avoid disruptions in job duties of the employee and co-workers, reduce personal and property liability, and help promote the learning environment of the institution.

PROCEDURES:

- Employees and supervisors must consider issues of safety, confidentiality, disruption of operations, disruption of services, disruption to other employees, appropriateness, and legal liability, as well as sudden emergency, posed by the presence of children in the workplace. As a general practice, Panola College employees are prohibited from bringing minor children on campus during working hours. For purposes of this policy, difficulty or inability in arranging childcare does not constitute an emergency.
- Children may be brought to the workplace by parent employees for exceptional times when common sense would dictate that it is more efficient for the employee to bring the child into the workplace (e.g., following or before a physician's appointment if child is not contagious. Provision for sick children should be made within the context of various forms of leave available to employees: leave relating to caring for a sick family member (sick leave), vacation leave, or unpaid leave.
- It is the responsibility of supervisors to ensure that the work of the campus is accomplished in an environment that promotes employee health and safety and minimizes work-related disruptions.
- Supervisors may grant exceptions for a temporary, unforeseen situation, but no parent or relative can have a child in the workplace without the supervisor's permission or use the workplace as an alternative to childcare or for any other purpose. When authorized, the accompanying adult must supervise the child at all times.
- Supervisors may direct an employee to remove a child from the workplace. In this event, the employee will be charged with leave for any time that he or she is absent from his/her assigned station. Any employee who brings a child to the work place and leaves him or her unattended will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

- No minor may ever be allowed into an area that is potentially hazardous. Such prohibited areas include workshops and laboratories, areas where chemicals are stored, etc.
 - No child can be left unaccompanied by an adult in the work place. An employee who brings a child to the work place and leaves him or her unattended will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.
 - Panola College does not accept any liability for injuries to children who are on campus in violation of this policy.
-

RECRUITMENT

To ensure equality of opportunity, the College actively recruits applicants for positions from all segments of the population. It is the policy of Panola College not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, veteran status, genetic information, or disability in any phase of employment from recruiting to termination.

An applicant for employment at Panola College will be selected on the basis of educational background and related work experience for the position to be filled. The applicant is required to meet minimum educational and experience requirements established for the position unless it is determined that the quantity and quality of the applicant's education and experience are otherwise acceptable.

When a vacancy exists for a position, the appropriate Departmental Supervisor, Dean or Director will notify the College President by completing the appropriate paperwork. Vacant positions will be filled by applicants who have been processed according to established College recruiting procedures. The immediate supervisor and his/her Dean or Director is responsible for the final selection of the prospective employee. An interview committee will be utilized to select a candidate. The President must approve the employment of all personnel. Hiring procedures may be found on the College's website under Human Resources.

PROMOTION AND TRANSFERS

The College seeks the highest qualified person for any position based on knowledge, skill, ability, and other qualifications actually needed for the job.

When a position within the College becomes vacant, the College President or designee shall determine the appropriateness of advertising internally versus externally to fill the position. If the decision is made to advertise internally first, the position shall be posted for two weeks within the College before advertising externally. Only those employees who are fully qualified for the position shall be considered for a lateral transfer or promotion within the College District. However, the College President may reject all internal applicants and advertise externally when such would be in the best interest of the College.

The Board of Trustees recognizes the importance of internal promotions as a tool of personnel management and as a reward for good service by employees. Whenever current employees have the qualifications for promotion, it is the intention of the Board that they shall be given every consideration possible.

An employee is generally ineligible for promotion or transfer until he/she has completed one continuous year of service in his/her current position. Such a change must have the approval of the immediate supervisor and the President of the College.

For more information on promotions and transfers, refer to Board Policy DC (LOCAL).

REST PERIODS

Employees are allowed one rest period during the morning and afternoon shifts. No single rest period may exceed fifteen minutes absence from the employee's workstation. Personnel may not accumulate rest periods, nor may such time be utilized for late arrival, early departure, or handling off-campus personal business during working hours.

PAYROLL DEDUCTION

Statutory payroll deductions must be made from an employee's payroll check for federal income tax withholding, Social Security, and retirement contributions. Voluntary deductions are available at the employee's discretion for dependent hospitalization, tax sheltered annuities, credit union deposits, and other insurance such as cancer, disability, etc. Employees should inquire about those companies approved to offer insurance coverage to College employees before talking to company representatives.

OVERTIME PAY

Overtime is defined as all College-authorized time worked by a non-exempt hourly employee who is in excess of forty hours per normal workweek. A normal workweek is defined as a workweek without paid or unpaid time off. An employee must work in excess of any time off plus forty regular hours to begin receiving overtime pay. Overtime work is compensated at the rate of one and one-half of the employee's normal wage rates. Overtime pay regulations apply only to those employees classified as non-exempt. The normal workweek begins at 12:01 a.m. on Sunday and ends at 12:00 midnight on Saturday.

COMPENSATORY TIME OFF

Non-exempt employees may take compensatory time off in lieu of receiving overtime pay for hours worked under the following conditions:

1. The determination as to whether an employee shall receive pay or paid time off for overtime shall be made by the supervisor of the employee.
2. "Compensatory time off" will be earned at the rate of 1.5 hours per hour of overtime worked. Individuals can accumulate up to a maximum of 40 compensatory time off hours. Overtime earned above this 40 hour maximum shall be paid according to the procedures listed above. For accrued comp time, employees must submit a payroll time card or sheet to the appropriate supervisor that reflects the overtime worked and that indicates the desire to receive compensatory time. The supervisor shall authorize the awarding of compensatory time and forward the time sheet to the Business Office where all comp time shall be accrued and tracked.

3. Employees desiring to utilize accumulated compensatory time and regular time off shall follow the procedures in place to request authorization to be absent from duty and to report actual time taken off of work.

Exempt employees should receive supervisor approval for taking compensatory time off for hours worked over their normal schedule. Compensatory time off may not accrue beyond 40 hours and must be used within the duty year (fiscal year).

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Disciplinary action is the responsibility of the immediate supervisor and should be initiated when appropriate to the situation. Available types of disciplinary actions are verbal reprimand; written reprimand, change of assignment, demotion, suspension, and discharge or termination. Supervisors are required to report all steps of disciplinary action to their immediate supervisor as well as the Office of Human Resources.

RESIGNATION

When an employee intends to resign from a position at the College, the immediate supervisor should be given as much advance notice as possible so that satisfactory arrangements may be made for a replacement. Employees should put their resignation in writing and give at least two weeks advance notice.

Except in cases of sickness or emergency, an employee should not be absent from duty without authorized leave. Any employee who is absent for three consecutive workdays without an authorized leave is deemed to have abandoned his/her position and to have resigned from the College. An exception may be made by the immediate supervisor in the event of extenuating circumstances.

DISMISSAL OR SUSPENSION

Offenses which constitute gross misconduct and justify suspension or dismissal include, but are not limited to, the following: property theft; consuming intoxicating beverages during work hours or on campus grounds; inability to perform assigned duties satisfactorily because of alcohol intoxication or being under the influence of controlled substances; malicious damage to property, tools, or equipment; indecent or immoral conduct which violates common standards of decency; conviction of an offense involving moral turpitude; unauthorized absence; falsifying time-clock reports or other records; fighting; insolence or insubordination; negligence causing undue spoilage, waste, or delay; sleeping during duty hours; chronic unauthorized visiting or failure to perform assigned duties, or violation of the Drug-Free Workplace Policy.

Noncontractual employees have no property right in his/her employment and may be dismissed at will.

DUE PROCESS FOR EMPLOYEES

An employee will be offered due process to appeal his/her dismissal or suspension. The first level of appeal shall be the immediate supervisor. If the employee is not satisfied after appealing his/her case to the immediate supervisor, then each subsequent appeal shall be initiated with higher levels of administrative management personnel such as Directors, Deans, etc. If the situation cannot be resolved at

these levels to the satisfaction of the employee, he/she may request a hearing with the President of the College. In a hearing granted by the President, all pertinent evidence, either verbal and/or written may be presented by the employee, supervisors, and administrators to the President. The President shall render a decision based on the preponderance of the evidence and shall issue a written decision based solely on the evidence presented at the hearing within ten working days after the date of the hearing.

LAYOFFS

When it becomes necessary to reduce personnel within a work area, the immediate supervisor should consider all pertinent factors in objectively determining the nature and extent of reductions. These factors should include, but not be limited to, reviews of employees' work effort for quality and output. In the event that all factors are deemed equal, the employee with the least seniority (length of service) shall be terminated first, and additional lay-offs shall be made according to the ascending length of service beginning with those with the shortest period of employment.

There are no "bumping rights" for any employee, and lay-offs are determined by administrative supervisors with approval from the President of the College. When possible, administrators will give fourteen calendar days notice prior to commencing reductions. Whenever possible and applicable, personnel who have been laid off will be recalled before new personnel are employed.

PERSONNEL ACTION FORM

Whenever an employee resigns or is dismissed, the immediate supervisor should notify the Director of Human Resources immediately. The Office of Human Resources will submit a "Notice of Personnel Action and Payroll Authorization" form and the employee's statement of resignation or cause for discharge. All persons terminating employment with the college should meet with the Director of Human Resources or his/her representative to satisfy themselves of the accuracy of their personnel records and to ensure that all documents related to employee termination are completed or will be completed to affect a proper termination.

DRESS STANDARDS

Panola College personnel are expected to dress appropriately while on duty. Office personnel should pay particular attention to their attire because of the professional image they are expected to project to the public. Supervisors are responsible for determining proper attire and advising those who violate this policy. Panola College's Dress Standards may be found on the website's Human Resources page.

PHYSICAL PLANT REGULATIONS

- All building alterations such as painting, window treatments, carpets, etc. are prohibited without written, advance approval by the College President.
- There should not be anything taped or affixed to doors, windows, walls, or furniture. Any exception must be approved by the appropriate Vice President.
Offices, classrooms, labs, prep rooms, and work areas should be kept professional, clean, and uncluttered.
- Any furniture added to a building must be purchased to match furnishings in the building.
- Furniture may not be relocated without approval from the appropriate Vice President.

- Pictures or framed certificates to be hung on walls must be appropriate for an educational environment and may be hung by the Maintenance Department.
- Live plants are permitted in personal offices provided they are non-toxic, well-maintained, and do not create hazards. They are not allowed in common areas to maintain a professional and uniform office environment.

IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE (FORM I-9) AND E-VERIFY

Employees must provide documentation of their status to work legally in the United States; Federal Form I-9 is used for this purpose. Employers must review this form prior to hiring a new employee; therefore, this form must be satisfactorily completed prior to any offer of employment.

All new hire employees will be verified through E-verify. E-verify is an internet-based system that compares information from the Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification, to Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Social Security Administration (SSA), and Department of State (DOS) records to confirm that new hires are authorized to work in the United States of America.

EMPLOYEE STANDARDS OF CONDUCT: SEXUAL HARASSMENT

DEFINITION

Sexual harassment is verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an employee, student, or group of employees or students because of his or her gender and that:

- Has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment; or
- Has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance of duties or studies; or
- Otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment or academic opportunities.

Harassing conduct includes (1) epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping, or threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts that relate to gender and (2) written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group because of gender and that is placed on walls, bulletin boards, or elsewhere on District premises, or is circulated in the workplace.

ISOLATED AND INADVERTENT OFFENSES

Employees who, without establishing a pattern of doing so, engage in isolated conduct of the kind defined above or who exhibit a pattern of engaging in such conduct but fail to realize that their actions discomfort or humiliate tend to demonstrate insensitivity that necessitates remedial measures. When employees become aware that such activities are occurring in their areas, they should report the circumstances to their immediate supervisor. The supervisor shall then contact the offending employees and counsel with them to help them understand the harm they are doing.

MATTERS INVOLVING SEXUALLY EXPLICIT MATERIAL

Panola College and its employees are engaged to provide instructional and other services to members of the community involving matters of varying natures. Occasionally, the College will be engaged to provide services in a matter that may include sexually explicit materials or of a sexually explicit nature.

Such services could include, but are not limited to, services and courses offered in anatomy, art, sociology, literature, counseling, parenting, nursing, and other allied health areas. Work involving such matters for members of the community is not considered a form of sexual harassment. Such work, when reasonably necessary, is considered a part of an employee's job function and should be conducted in a professional and ethical manner. In the event a particular matter involving sexually explicit materials is so offensive as to impair an employee's work performance, then the employee should bring the matter to the attention of his or her immediate supervisor, who will make an effort to reasonably accommodate the employee, subject to the requirements of the College, ethical considerations, and availability of other employees possessing sufficient knowledge and expertise to provide services consistent with the standards required by the College.

PROHIBITED CONDUCT

Employees shall not engage in conduct constituting sexual harassment. District officials or their agents shall investigate all allegations of sexual harassment and officials shall take prompt and appropriate disciplinary action against employees found to engage in conduct constituting sexual harassment.

INITIATING A COMPLAINT

Any College employee who believes that he or she has been the victim of sexual harassment, as defined above, (the "complainant") may bring the matter to the attention of his or her immediate supervisor if that supervisor is not party to the claim. If the claim is against the immediate supervisor, the claimant may bring it to the attention of the next supervisor in the chain of command. Upon receiving the complaint, the supervisor will report the complaint, excluding names, to the dean of administration. Upon resolution of the complaint, the supervisor will report the resolution to the dean of administration.

The complainant should present the complaint to the supervisor as promptly as possible after the alleged harassment occurs.

The initial discussion between the complainant and the supervisor should be kept confidential, with no written record.

If the complainant, after an initial meeting with the supervisor, decides to proceed, the complainant should submit a written statement to the supervisor with a copy to the dean of administration, which will maintain all official records and ensure the timeliness of each step in the process. Cases involving sexual harassment are particularly sensitive and demand special attention to issues of confidentiality. Dissemination of information relating to the case shall be limited, in order that the privacy of all individuals involved is safeguarded as fully as possible.

The supervisor has ten workdays to inform the alleged offender of the allegation and of the identity of the complainant. A written statement of the complaint should be given to both parties. Every effort should be made to protect the complainant from retaliatory action by those named in the complaint.

RESOLUTION OF A COMPLAINT

Promptly after a complaint is submitted, the supervisor should initiate whatever steps he or she deems appropriate to affect an informal resolution of the complaint acceptable to both parties. If both parties are available, the supervisor has five workdays to affect a resolution satisfactory to both parties.

If either party is dissatisfied with the resolution proposed by the supervisor, he or she may request a review by the intermediate supervisor by submitting a written request within five days to the intermediate

supervisor with a copy to the dean of administration. The intermediate supervisor will have ten workdays to respond to the complainant's request.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the intermediate supervisor's response, he or she has five workdays to request an inquiry by a review committee by submitting a written request to the dean of administration. This committee will consist of the appropriate vice-president, and other employees appointed by the College President.

REVIEW BY REVIEW COMMITTEE

Members of the review committee should initially meet to discuss the complaint within five workdays. Unless the review committee concludes that the complaint is without merit, the parties to the dispute should be invited to appear before the review committee and to confront any adverse witnesses. The review committee may conduct its own informal inquiry, call witnesses, and gather whatever information it deems necessary to assist it in reaching a determination as to the merits of the allegations. The inquiry should be conducted within a reasonable time limit necessary to hear all the evidence concerning the complaint. Once such a determination has been reached, it should be communicated in writing, to both parties, within three days. A summary of the basis for the determination should be provided to either party upon request.

CORRECTIVE ACTION AND/OR DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

The review committee shall recommend to the College President such action as may be reasonably necessary to resolve the dispute, including, but not limited to, change of work assignment, educational or professional counseling, official reprimand, suspension, or termination of employment.

APPEAL

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the resolution offered by the review committee, he or she has five workdays to request a review by the College President, who will act as arbiter after all steps have been completed. The College President shall have ten workdays to reach a determination and communicate the determination to both parties. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the determination of the College President, he or she may file a written appeal within five working days to the Board.

REMOVAL OF PARTIES TO THE COMPLAINT

In the event the supervisor or intermediate supervisor is a party to a complaint under this policy, the next appropriate step will be taken in the sequence of events in this policy.

In the event a member of the review committee is a party to a complaint under this policy, such member shall be disqualified from serving on the review committee and the College President shall then appoint a suitable alternate to serve on the review committee with regard to such complaint.

TIMELINESS

From time to time, unforeseen circumstances may interfere with the timeliness of the process. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to, illness, difficulty in arranging for witnesses, and unscheduled emergencies. In the event of such circumstances, the dean of administration shall determine new deadlines, activities, or schedules and notify all parties to the complaint.

A DRUG FREE COLLEGE

In accordance with the Drug Free Schools and Campuses Drug Prevention Program Certification, Panola College has adopted and implemented a program to prevent the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs/alcohol by its students or employees on school premises or as part of any of its activities. Please see the Drug and Alcohol Policy on the College's website.

A TOBACCO FREE COLLEGE

Panola College has chosen to create a tobacco free campus. Tobacco use is only permitted in personal vehicles in the parking lots. Tobacco use is not allowed in any college-owned or leased vehicle. This policy includes the use of electronic cigarettes per Panola College Board policy.

SEXUAL ASSAULT POLICY

Panola College is committed to providing a safe, educational and working environment for its students, faculty, and staff. Policies on this subject matter are kept updated on the College's website on the Campus Police webpage.

TITLE IX

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is an all-encompassing federal law that prohibits discrimination based on the gender of students and employees of educational institutions which receive federal financial assistance. In compliance with Title IX, Panola College prohibits discrimination in employment as well as in all programs and activities on the basis of sex. For more information on Title IX, employees should visit the College's web site under the Title IX webpage.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Policy and etiquette guidelines for Panola College may be found on the College's website on the Information Technology Services webpage.

PERIODIC REVIEW OF USER ACCESS PRIVILEGES

The policy for user access privileges can be found on the College's website on the Information Technology Services webpage.

EXPRESS BREAST MILK FOR NURSING MOTHERS

Panola College supports the practice of, and will make reasonable accommodation to employees who are nursing mothers needing to express breast milk. A reasonable amount of break time will be provided each time the employee has the need to express breast milk. The College will provide a place, other than a multiple user restroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion. Panola College may not suspend or terminate the employment of, or otherwise discriminate against anyone that has asserted their rights under this policy.

CAMPUS CARRY REGULATIONS – POSSESSION OF FIREARMS

An explanation of the campus carry regulations can be found on the College’s website on the Campus Police webpage. A downloadable document listing all of the Panola College carry regulations can be also been found within the Campus Police webpage.

COLLEGE COMMUNICATIONS AND NEWS MEDIA

The Director of Institutional Advancement (or a designated representative) is the official spokesperson for the college in dealing with the media unless otherwise designated by the president. The Office of Institutional Advancement functions as an information clearinghouse to avoid the duplication of materials that are released to the public, to maintain a consistent policy with regard to the standard and quality of publicity, and to ensure contacts with the media are coordinated through a central location and source. News releases focusing upon the College administration, faculty members, staff personnel, individual students, clubs and College matters, in general, shall be channeled through the college public information officer. Panola College also uses social media sites to encourage and to create a dialogue between the College and its target audiences, thus building relationships and supporters.

EMPLOYEE STANDARDS OF CONDUCT – MORAL TURPITUDE

All College District employees shall perform their duties in accordance with state and federal law, College District policy, and ethical standards. All College District personnel shall recognize and respect the rights of students, other employees, and members of the community and shall work cooperatively with others to serve the best interests of the College District. Employees wishing to express concern, complaints, or criticism shall do so through appropriate channels. See Panola College Board Policy DGBA.

Panola College holds all employees to the ethical standards expressed in the Texas Community College Teachers Association Code of Professional Ethics. See Panola College Board Policy DH(LOCAL).

Employees shall comply with the standards of conduct set out in this policy and with any other policies, regulations, and guidelines that impose duties, requirements, or standards attendant to their status as College District employees. Violation of any policies, regulations, or guidelines may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

Arrests, Indictments, Convictions, and Other Adjudications

An employee shall notify his or her immediate supervisor within three calendar days of any arrest, indictment, conviction, no contest or guilty plea, or other adjudication of the employee for any felony or offense involving moral turpitude. Moral turpitude includes but is not limited to: 1. Dishonesty, fraud, deceit, theft, or misrepresentation; 2. Deliberate violence; 3. Base, vile, or depraved acts that are intended to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of the actor; 4. Felony possession, transfer, sale, distribution, or conspiracy to possess, transfer, sell, or distribute any controlled substance defined in Chapter 481 of the Health and Safety Code; 5. Acts constituting public intoxication, operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, or disorderly conduct, if any two or more acts are committed within any 12-month period; or 6. Acts constituting abuse under the Texas Family Code. See Panola College Board Policy DH (LOCAL) for additional information.

Statement on Students Rights and Responsibilities of Expression

Panola College fully supports lawful freedom of expression by all members of the academic community, including students. The Student Rights and Responsibilities of Student Expression and Use of College Facilities policy and procedures can be found on the Panola College website at [Panola College Board Policy](#)

Panola College Student Free Speech and Antisemitism Policy (effective June 25, 2024)

Introduction

Panola College is committed to upholding the principles of free speech while maintaining an environment that is respectful and inclusive for all members of our community. This policy outlines our approach to free speech and specifically addresses actions to combat antisemitism on our campus, aligning with the directives of Texas Governor's Executive Order GA-44.

Policy Statement:

Free Speech and Expression: Panola College values the freedom of speech and expression as fundamental rights for all students and staff. This includes the right to express opinions, engage in civil discourse, and peacefully protest, provided such actions do not infringe upon the rights and safety of others.

Antisemitism Definition: In accordance with Section 448.001 of the Texas Government Code, Panola College adopts the definition of antisemitism as: "A certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities."

Prohibited Conduct:

Any speech or action that targets individuals or groups based on their Jewish identity, religion, or ethnicity and falls within the definition of antisemitism is strictly prohibited.

Conduct that promotes or incites violence, harassment, discrimination, or intimidation against Jewish individuals or groups is not tolerated.

Disciplinary Measures:

Violations of this policy, including acts of antisemitism, will be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.

Sanctions may include warnings, educational interventions, probation, suspension, or expulsion, depending on the severity and recurrence of the offense.

Implementation and Enforcement:

This policy will be prominently featured in the Panola College Student Handbook, Faculty Handbook, and Employee Handbook which are accessible to all students, faculty, and staff.

The Student Services offices and relevant campus authorities will oversee the implementation and enforcement of this policy.

Reports of antisemitic incidents or concerns should be promptly reported to designated campus officials for investigation and appropriate action.

INFECTIOUS/COMMUNICABLE DISEASE POLICY

Panola College actively promotes the good health, safety, and well-being of students and employees to such extent or degree as possible while prohibiting discrimination against persons afflicted with communicable diseases.

Communicable disease is defined as any condition which is transmitted directly or indirectly to a person from an infected person or animal through the agency of an intermediate animal, host, or vector, or through the inanimate environment. Communicable disease includes, but is not limited to: influenza; tuberculosis; conjunctivitis; infectious mononucleosis; pertussis (whooping cough); acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), AIDS-related complex (ARC), positive HIV antibody status; hepatitis A, B, C and D; meningitis; community associated methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (CA-MRSA); Coronavirus (COVID-19); measles; West Nile virus; Ebola; and sexually transmitted diseases.

Bacterial Meningitis: Texas Education Code, §51.9192, Subchapter Z, establishes the requirement for bacterial meningitis vaccination for certain students and identifies exceptions to that requirement. Typically, all entering students who are less than 22 years of age must show proof of having received a bacterial meningitis immunization or booster within the five-year period immediately preceding enrollment.

Infectious/Communicable Disease Procedures:

Persons who know or who have reason to believe they are infected with a communicable disease have an obligation to conduct themselves in accordance with such knowledge in order to protect themselves and others. Students and employees who have communicable diseases, whether symptomatic or not, will be allowed regular classroom and work attendance in a non-restrictive manner, as long as they are able to attend classes and/or work and do not pose a medically proven threat for transmission of the disease or condition. Therefore, when there is no medical justification for restricting the access of students and employees who have communicable diseases, they will be allowed access to all College facilities and services. All medical information related to the communicable diseases of students and employees will be kept confidential and no person, group, agency, insurer, employer, or institution will be provided any medical information without the prior, specific written consent of a student or employee unless providing such information is required by state and/or federal law.

Wellness Program

All full-time employees are entitled to two (2) hours of wellness leave per week, which can be utilized Monday through Thursday. This time includes any necessary clothing changes, warm-ups, and cool-downs, and must be spent on a fitness-related activity.

Employees must confirm the timing of their chosen wellness activity with their supervisors in advance. Supervisors are required to grant wellness time but should first assess any potential conflicts with major events or department coverage before approving the schedule. Additionally, employees must complete a waiver before participating, which will be kept on file by the Wellness Program Coordinator.

The wellness leave cannot exceed one (1) hour per day or two (2) hours per week and cannot be rolled over to the following week. Employees may split their wellness time into increments that suit their schedule, provided it adheres to the daily and weekly limits.

PERSONNEL CLASSIFICATION

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIALS

The College President is the Chief Executive Officer and is directly responsible in all matters to the Board of Trustees. The general administrative officers share in formulating policy and managing the various departments of the College. The general administrative officers of the College are the Vice President of Instruction, Vice President of Student Services, Vice President of Fiscal Services, Director of Institutional Advancement, and the Director of Human Resources.

CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

Position job classification is an important aspect of personnel management. In order to establish appropriate compensation levels and to conduct effective recruitment, selection, and training, the college administration must identify and analyze the duties, responsibilities, and qualifications required of various positions. In order to establish a classification plan, all similar positions must be grouped together and an appropriate job title assigned to each group. Please note that the terms; “job” and “position” are used interchangeably throughout this handbook.

The principles underlying the classification system at Panola College are as follows:

1. The College classifies positions, or groups of duties and responsibilities, rather than employees. It does not consider the employee's length of service or extra qualifications, only the duties of the position.
2. Positions are placed in the same category (regardless of location) if their duties and responsibilities are similar enough to require the same basic knowledge and skills.
3. Titles are assigned which are descriptive of the kind and level of work. Each title is then defined and described in a job description, which lists typical duties for positions in the category, suggested minimum experience and education, and necessary knowledge of equipment. Specific duties required for each position are also included.
4. Positions are classified on the basis of duties currently being performed. Changes in organization or function may result in a reclassification of positions or revision of job descriptions. Job descriptions and classifications will be reviewed as needed to ensure that they accurately reflect work assignments.
5. Suggested job requirements are intended as general guidelines only. Any reasonably equivalent combination of experience and education may be considered appropriate in future hiring, at the discretion of the immediate supervisor. The list of skills and abilities is not all-inclusive.

Qualifications such as honesty, loyalty, integrity, and consideration for others are additional attributes, which are desirable in all employees.

BASIS FOR CLASSIFICATION

Support staff personnel and faculty members are classified under a uniform plan and are paid according to a corresponding salary schedule. For support staff personnel, each classification by job description is assigned a position level (A-F), which correlates, to a Salary Schedule that indicates a minimum and maximum hourly rate based on years of service, education, and degrees of responsibility. Classifications are made on the basis of duties and responsibilities. Faculty members are placed on the Faculty Salary Schedule based on contract length, years of service, and education. All professional and classified positions are assigned appropriate salaries, which provide equal pay for equal work and responsibility. In accordance with the provisions of federal statutes, it is the policy of Panola College not to discriminate in classification or compensation based on age, race, creed, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, genetic information, or disability.

JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Job descriptions are documents that describe the general tasks or other related duties and responsibilities of a position. Panola College job descriptions specify the functionary to whom the position reports, lists specifications such as the qualifications or skills needed by the person in the job, the FSLA status and the department in which the position reports. It is the responsibility of the employee's supervisor to notify the Office of Human Resources when job description changes are to be updated. Job descriptions may be found on the College's website on the Human Resources webpage.

EMPLOYEE PLACEMENT AND CLASSIFICATION

Responsibilities for employee placement and classification are delegated to the appropriate administrative officials, and are subject to the review of the College President. Specific responsibilities are:

1. Determination of the beginning salary rate for new personnel covered by these regulations. The beginning pay will not be less than the minimum pay rate established for the job description, nor will it be less than the minimum pay rate set forth by College policy.
2. Determination of the time sequence and amount of pay increases. Based on the appropriate Salary Schedule, these are normally reviewed when annual departmental budget recommendations are made. Full-time employees are usually considered for pay increases, which would become effective on September 1 of each year.
3. Determination of temporary assignments. Employees may be temporarily transferred to another position. Such a transfer will have a maximum duration of six months. In the event that an employee remains in a transfer position longer than six months, he/she will be regarded as occupying that position permanently. Pay rates for the position will be adjusted accordingly.

PURPOSE AND COMPONENTS OF THE COMPENSATION PLAN

The purpose of a compensation plan is to enable the organization to recruit and retain competent employees. To accomplish this purpose, the plan must address several important factors: hiring rate, stability of employment, fringe benefits, and performance evaluations. The manner in which these various factors are combined into the Panola College compensation plan is described as follows:

1. **Hiring Rates.** The beginning salary for each support staff position is established according to the appropriate local labor market. Professional staff and faculty member salaries are compared with area community college institutions so that current salaries remain competitive. These starting salaries are adjusted to be sufficiently competitive to assure the organization of its fair share of qualified employees.
2. **Stability of Employment.** Some recognition is necessary for length of service within the organization. The cost of compensating experienced employees is more than offset by savings in turnover cost.
3. **Fringe Benefits.** Considered broadly, the compensation plan also consists of the program of employee benefits. While fringe benefits are a supplement to wages rather than a substitute for them, they play a very important role in attracting and retaining good employees.
4. **Performance Evaluation.** The major purpose of the employee evaluation program is to assist individuals in the process of self-development and increased job efficiency. The success of performance evaluation is dependent upon the attitudes of supervisory personnel toward it and the manner in which it is conducted. Supervisors are expected to evaluate subordinates in terms of specific expectations and to communicate their assessment in meaningful terms to the individuals concerned. A performance evaluation should be accomplished each Spring by the immediate supervisor in consultation with the employee. It is essential to the development of good employees that he/she knows exactly what is expected of him/her. Timely and precise written documentary evidence of communications between supervisors and employees is a must.

RECLASSIFICATION OF EMPLOYEES

In the event that the duties and responsibilities associated with a position no longer correspond to a classification, the supervisor should make a recommendation to the College President to reclassify the employee currently occupying that position.

END