

# THE PATHFINDER

## STUDENT HANDBOOK

The information contained in this publication may be changed without prior notice.

In this publication, the term “College” shall mean Panola College. “Student” shall mean any College student enrolled for one or more credit or clock hours in the current semester and who lives on or off-campus. The term faculty/staff shall mean any administrator, faculty member, or classified staff member currently employed by the College. References to “the student handbook” refer to this publication.

The content of this publication complies with the stipulations of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097; Telephone number 404-679-4501) Commission on Colleges’ document, *Institutional Advertising, Student Recruitment and Representation of Accredited Status*.

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

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# Quick Reference for Assistance

## QUESTIONS? ANSWERS!

Student Success	903.693.2077
Add/Drop/Withdrawal	
Address/Name Change	
Career Planning	
Clubs and Organizations	
Counseling and Testing	
Graduation/Certification	
ID Cards/Parking Stickers	
Posting Notices/Signs	
Residence Halls	
Texas Success Initiative	
Transcripts	
Tutoring	
Residence Life Coordinator	903.693.1176/1103
College Store	903.693.2019
Books and Supplies	
Post Office	
Business Office	903.693.2082
Checks Cashed	
Fees and Tuition	
Lost and Found	
Refunds	
Disabled Student Services - Student Success	903.693.1123
Campus Police	903.693.1112
Emergency Messages	
Thefts/Accidents	
Food Service/Student Center	903.693.2020
Financial Aid Office	903.693.2039
Grants/Student Loans/Work Study	
Intramural Sports	903.693.1176
Library/Learning Resource Center	903.693.2052
Fitness Center	903.693.1156
Marshall College Center	903.935.5039
Shelby College Center	936.598.9543
Shelby Regional Training Center	936.591.9075

# STATEMENT OF MISSION

Panola College shapes its mission around the needs of the people within its service area. As a two-year, public community institution, Panola College is dedicated to providing excellence in education for its constituents. The range of educational offerings, both electronic and face-to-face, includes university transfer programs, technical and workforce programs, developmental courses designed to increase academic proficiencies, and continuing education to enrich lives and improve skills. Our aim is to help all students achieve their full potential and contribute to the further development of society.

## STUDENT SUCCESS PURPOSES

The Student Success Center offers services to all Panola College students, both in and out of the classroom, to provide them with unique opportunities to develop and enhance their personal, social, and educational identity.

### Admissions and Records

Realizing that attending Panola College may be the first or only College experience for some, the staff strives to meet the students' concerns during the admission and registration processes, enabling them to benefit from the educational and social experiences available. This office is also responsible for the maintenance and security of the educational records that will be needed as students seek additional education, employment, and the fulfillment of personal goals. Students seeking admission may complete the Texas Common Application for Admission to Two-Year Institutions online at [www.panola.edu](http://www.panola.edu).

### Counseling and Guidance

The primary function of the counseling program is to help students adjust to the College environment as well as provide academic and career counseling. Counselors also provide referral information when requested. Counselors will assist students with the selection of schools to continue further study. In addition, students should meet with departmental faculty for additional information about courses of study, transfer options, and career planning.

A student may choose a counselor with whom he or she wishes to discuss a personal problem. The counselor will strive to establish a relationship, which will enable the student to work through the difficulty. The counselor may refer the student to other professional personnel in the area if the Panola College counselor cannot provide the necessary help.

### Job Placement

Panola College attempts to assist students in job placement. Interest assessment, investigating career options, and access to occupational information are provided by the Career Information Center. Job opportunities are posted regularly on designated bulletin boards. Directors of career programs provide placement information to graduates of these programs. Finding employment is ultimately the student's responsibility.

### Students with Disabilities

Panola College shall promote an environment that provides reasonable access to all programs, courses, and activities for students with disabilities, and to provide information and consultation about specific disabilities to the entire College community. Reasonable accommodations and support services for students with disabilities will be provided upon request. Requests must be submitted in writing with appropriate documentation to the Career/Technical Counselor. Students seeking help should meet with the Career/Technical Counselor whose office is located in the Student Success Center.

### Student Activities

Student activities are provided to complement the academic program of studies and enhance the social understanding, leadership, and responsibility of students through development of, exposure to, and participation in social, cultural, intellectual, recreational, and governance programs.

### Student Orientation

Orientation is conducted to help entering students maximize their chances for success at Panola College. Orientation sessions include important information on registration, academic advisement, financial aid, student activities, and other support services and programs available to students. Orientation also provides a new student with the opportunity to ask questions and to meet other students.

## **Testing and Assessment**

Panola College offers a variety of testing and assessment services. The College gives the Accuplacer Test and is a designated test center for the Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA). The ACT (American College Testing Program) may be taken on the Carthage campus in February, April, and October. The GED (General Educational Development) Test is given regularly at the Carthage, Marshall, and Center campuses. The Accuplacer test is given daily at the Carthage campus and periodically at the Marshall and Center campuses as well as at area high schools. Individuals wishing to enroll in any of Panola College's academic or career/technical programs must provide acceptable placement test scores prior to enrolling. The HESI (Health Education Systems, Inc.) test is also administered at the Carthage campus for Vocational applicants and Associate Degree Nursing students. Contact the Student Success Center for information about tests and for scheduling.

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **Inclement Weather Policy**

Panola College has scheduled its instructional program to comply with the Common Calendar of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, as well as to meet instructional requirements for awarding credit hours earned. College instructors are obligated to meet all scheduled classes. If severe weather makes it necessary to cancel classes, the College Administration will notify students through emails, text messages, local television, and radio stations. If the College President cancels classes then all work is delayed until the next class meeting or until a date determined by the instructor. If a student is in an area which experiences severe weather and the College has not officially closed, it is that student's responsibility to decide whether or not to attend class. The student must then contact the instructor for information concerning make-up of work missed.

### **Official Publications**

All students should be knowledgeable of the Panola College *General Catalog*. Students are responsible for information published in the *General Catalog*, *The Pathfinder*, the *Schedule of Classes* and other publications pertaining to policies and procedures.

### **Schedule of Classes**

Courses to be offered each semester will be published in the *Schedule of Classes* prior to the beginning of each semester. The *Schedule* includes meeting days, times, location, and instructor for each course. Copies of these schedules will be available online [www.panola.edu](http://www.panola.edu). The College reserves the right to cancel any course section for any semester in which there is an inadequate number of registrants. The College may also change the instructor for a given course without prior notice.

### **Texas Common Course Numbering System**

By joining the Texas Common Course Numbering System, Panola College simplified the transfer process for students by making transfer evaluation at the receiving school more standardized. Member schools have implemented a four-letter course prefix as well as a four-digit course number. For example, all schools in the system use ENGL as the prefix for English courses. The first digit in this number indicates the level or year of the course (for example, the number 1 would indicate a freshman-level course). The second number indicates the number of hours to be earned in the course. (For example, a 3 would indicate three College credit hours). The last two digits indicate the sequence of a course in a program of study. (For example, the numbers 01 would indicate that the course was the first of the sequence).

### **Core Curriculum**

"Core curriculum" means the curriculum in liberal arts, humanities, sciences, political, social, and cultural history that all undergraduate students of an institution of higher education are required to complete before receiving an academic undergraduate degree. Each institution of higher education shall adopt a core curriculum of no less than 42 semester credit hours, including specific courses comprising the curriculum. Refer to the *General Catalog* for detailed information.

### **Field of Study**

Prior to registration each semester, students with less than 30 hours are required to see an advisor to be assisted in selecting their courses. The catalog of the transfer school should be studied carefully, making certain that the student takes only courses which are equivalent to those required by the senior College of his or her choice. Articulation agreements with

universities indicate the courses that are equivalent to the specific degree requirements are available in the Office of Student Success.

## Unit of Credit

The standard unit of credit at Panola College is the semester hour. One credit hour is awarded for each hour of lecture scheduled in a week of instruction in a semester. Generally, three hours of lab instruction in a week earn one hour of semester credit.

## Student Load Information

A student enrolled in fewer than 12 semester hours is classified as a part-time student. Individuals enrolled in 12 or more semester hours are classified as full-time students. A normal student load during a fall or spring semester is five academic or career/technical courses totaling 14 to 17 hours of instruction. To this total, a student may add one-hour courses such as a physical education activity course. Students wishing to enroll in six academic courses will need to secure the written permission of the Vice President of Instruction after providing documentation of past academic success. A normal load during a five-week summer session is 6 semester hours with a maximum load being 7 semester hours.

## Determining the Grade Point Average

The following grades have the indicated number of points assigned for each semester hour of credit earned:

A (excellent)	4 grade points
B (above average)	3 grade points
C (average)	2 grade points
D (passing)	1 grade point
F (failure)	0 grade points
I (incomplete)	0 grade points

Although a “D” is considered passing at Panola College for College credit courses, some Colleges will not accept a “D” for transfer credit. The grade point average (GPA) is determined by dividing the total number of grade points earned by the total number of semester hours attempted.

1. Multiply the second digit of the course number by the grade point value assigned to the letter grade. Example:  
ENGL 1301 (3 semester hours) x 2 (value assigned to grade of C) = 6 grade points.
2. Repeat for each course.
3. Add all grade points earned.
4. Add the semester hours attempted in all courses taken.
5. Divide the sum of the grade points by the sum of the semester hours attempted.

<u>Course</u>	<u>Semester Hours Attempted</u>	<u>Grade Earned</u>	<u>Grade Points</u>	
ENGL 1301	3	C	6	
HIST 1301	3	D	3	
BIOL 1411	4	B	12	24 divided by 14 =
MATH 1314	3	W	0	1.71 GPA
MUSI 1306	3	F	0	
PHED 1109	<u>1</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>3</u>	
	14		24	

Developmental courses are included in GPA calculation for each semester. These courses are not included in the cumulative GPA. However, they are included in determining the eligibility for financial aid and athletic eligibility.

## Grade Reports

Official grades are available on-line through Campus Connect at the end of the semester. Official transcripts may be withheld if money is owed to any department of the College. The instructors in the fall and spring semesters file mid-semester deficiency grades of “D” or “F”. Students may access the mid-term grades through Campus Connect. The grades do not become a part of the student’s permanent record. Students that receive a deficiency are encouraged to make an appointment with the teacher to discuss the deficiency. The Student Success Center will contact each student to see what services could be useful to help the student’s academic progress.

## “First Alert”

The First Alert Program is designed to identify students’ class deficiencies before it is too late to help them succeed in College. It is the College’s goal to engage the faculty and Student Success staff into the student’s path of education, by identifying deficiencies and engaging a plan for success. Contact will be made with the student to discuss all opportunities to get on a correct path for success. Perhaps tutoring or better time management is needed. Perhaps the student needs to

learn how to organize course content for better understanding. Whatever the problem may be, Panola College is committed to the success of our students.

## **Developmental Courses**

Courses designated as developmental will not count as credit toward any degree or certificate. Developmental courses have four-digit numbers; the first digit is a "0". In the developmental studies program, a grade of "C" or better indicates satisfactory progress for advancement either to the next level within the developmental program or into academic studies. A grade of "D" means the student will be retained in the same level in the developmental program, repeating the class. Receiving a "Q" can only occur once per developmental class. If the student fails to retake the class the following semester, the "Q" remains on the transcript and is treated as a "W" for state reporting purposes and Financial Aid. If a student is awarded a "Q", they must repeat the same course the next long semester or retake and pass a TSI assessment before the next long semester begins. The repeated class will receive the grade earned, but the "Q" from the previous semester will not be amended. Students who are TSI deficient in two or more areas may not skip a semester if a grade of "Q" is attributed. If a student who received a "Q" decides to retest rather than take the course again, the existing TSI policy in regards to retesting will hold true. His/Her "Q" from the previous semester will remain on his/her transcript. In the case where a student has been given an "I", after the 6 week completion period the "I" may be changed to a regular grade or a "Q" if the student meets the criteria.

## **Adding and Dropping Courses**

During a designated time (located in the current class schedule), students may change their schedules by dropping or adding courses. A fee is assessed for schedule changes. If it becomes necessary to "drop" a course after the schedule-change period has ended, students must pick up an add/drop form from the Student Success Center. Students should fill out the information at the top and put the class/classes they wish to withdraw from on the form in the proper place and sign on the signature line. Students must then have the instructor/instructors, Financial Aid or scholarship grantor (if applicable), Distance Learning (if class is Internet class) and Residence Hall Supervisor (if dropping below 12 hours) sign the form in the appropriate places. If students are totally withdrawing from College, they do not need signatures from their instructors but all other signatures are required. Students will then see a counselor/academic advisor for the final signature before returning the form to the Student Success Center. Students will then receive a copy of the completed form for their records and a copy to take to the business office. The grade of "W" (withdrawn) is given during the first 12 weeks of the semester. The grade of "W" has no negative effect on the student's GPA. All withdrawals from classes must be approved to become official. If the student does not contact the Student Success Center and exits a class unofficially, the instructor will award a grade of "F".

Legislation was passed by the Texas Senate (SB 1231) in spring 2007 which could affect your College career. This legislation applies to all students entering a Texas public institution of higher education as a **first time freshman for fall 2007** and subsequent terms. Please read the following information carefully.

- Under section 51.907 of the Texas Education Code, "an institution of higher education may not permit a student to drop more than six courses, including any course a transfer student has dropped at another institution of higher education." Any course that a student drops is counted toward the six course limit if "(1) the student was able to drop the course without receiving a grade or incurring an academic penalty; (2) the student's transcript indicates or will indicate that the student was enrolled in the course (signified by a "W" grade at Panola College); and (3) the student is not dropping the course in order to withdraw from the institution."
- The legislation does provide for some exemptions that would allow a student to drop a course without having it counted towards this limit. Contact the Student Success Center for more information.
- This statute applies to all Texas public Colleges and universities. Therefore, a Panola College student affected by this statute that has attended or plans to attend another institution of higher education should become familiar with that institution's policies on dropping courses.
- Students should contact the Student Success Center for more information before dropping a course.

## **Withdrawal from the College**

When a student finds it necessary to leave College before the end of a semester, the student **must** notify the Student Success Center. Instructions for clearing with the library and other departments will be given at the time of withdrawal. Students who fail to officially withdraw will receive the grade of "F". Ceasing to attend class does not constitute official withdrawal. Refer to the College calendar for the last day to withdraw with a "W".

## **Incomplete Course Work**

Incomplete ("I") is a temporary grade indicating that a student has satisfactorily completed the requirements of a course with the exception of a final examination or other work delayed by an illness, emergency, or authorized absence. The grade

of “I” has the effect of an “F” in computing the GPA. The student must provide documentation to the instructor when requesting consideration for additional time. Before awarding an “I”, the instructor must secure the permission of the Vice President of Instruction. The student must complete work within six weeks after the end of the semester in which the grade was issued or receive an “F” for the course.

## **Repetition of Courses**

If a course taken at Panola College is repeated, both grades will remain on the transcript but only the last grade is counted in determining the total credit and overall GPA. It is the responsibility of the student to avoid inadvertently repeating a course. Panola College scholarships will not pay for a course repeated for the third time; students will be responsible for the “3 Peat” course.

## **Repetition of Courses for Grade Improvement**

The only way a course grade may be raised is by repeating the course and earning a higher grade. If a course is repeated and a lower grade is earned, the second grade becomes the grade of record.

## **Repeat Course Fees**

The Texas Legislature has mandated that a course repeated by a student more than twice at a public institution of higher education may not be reported for state funding. For a course being “three-peated” (taken for a third time), students will be charged \$75 per semester credit hour (\$225 for a three hour course) in addition to tuition and required fees associated with the course. Courses in Developmental Studies are not affected by the supplementary fee. Scholarships do not pay for “three-peat” courses.

## **Transferred Courses**

Course work accepted for transfer is posted to the student’s Panola College transcript, but the grades are not calculated into the GPA. Proper course selection and the avoidance of duplicating course work remain the responsibility of the student. Panola College must receive official transcripts from all Colleges attended from all transfer students.

## **Scholastic Probation**

Probation occurs when the quality of a student’s work falls below the accepted standard of satisfactory progress. Scholastic probation is a conditional permission for a student to continue in College. A student must maintain a cumulative “C” (2.0 GPA) on all course work completed and/or accepted in transfer to Panola College. A student who fails to achieve a 2.0 GPA after accumulating 12 semester hours will be notified of his/her probationary status. The student should visit with a counselor concerning recommendations for improvement. (Refer to the *General Catalog* for additional important information.)

A student on probation may not register for more than four academic courses and two one-hour courses without the approval of the Vice President of Instruction.

## **Scholastic Suspension**

A student on scholastic suspension is denied the privilege of registering for one spring or fall semester, as appropriate. Following the semester of suspension, the student may re-enroll on a probationary status. A student may enroll in the summer sessions without restriction for the purpose of raising the grade point average. (Refer to the *General Catalog* for additional information).

## **Class Attendance**

Regular and punctual attendance of classes and laboratories is required of all students. When a student has been ill or absent from class for approved extracurricular activities, he or she should be allowed, as far as possible, to make up the work missed. When an instructor feels that a student has been absent to such a degree as to invalidate the learning experience, the instructor may recommend to the Vice President of Instruction that the student be withdrawn from the course. Instructors may seek to withdraw students for non-attendance after they have accumulated the following number of absences:

Fall or spring semesters:

- 5 absences, MWF classes
- 3 absences, TR classes
- 2 absences, one-day-per-week class

Summer Sessions:

- 2 absences, four-days-a-week classes
- 2 absences, two-evenings-a-week classes

The student is responsible for seeing that he or she has been officially withdrawn from a class. A student who stops attendance in a class without officially withdrawing from that class will be given a failing grade; consequently, the student must follow official withdrawal procedures in the Student Success Center.

### **Religious Holy Days**

In accordance with Section 51.911, Texas Education Code, Panola College shall allow a student who is absent from class for observance of a religious holy day to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within one week after the absence if, not later than the 15th day after the first day of the semester, the student notifies the instructor of each class the student had scheduled on that date that the student would be absent for a religious holy day. Notifications of planned absences must be in writing and must be delivered by the student either personally to the instructor of each class, with receipt of the notification acknowledged and dated by the instructor; or by certified mail, return receipt requested, addressed to the instructor of each class.

### **Texas Success Initiative Plan (TSI) Required Class Attendance**

The student who has not satisfactorily completed the TSIP testing requirement must be enrolled and participate continuously (every semester) in developmental education in at least one subject area, as determined by the institution. The student who is excessively absent from the required class or does not participate in the course work will be assigned a grade of “F” for the course.

### **Change of Name or Address**

Students who change their name, residence or mailing address should notify the Student Success Center immediately. Failure to do so constitutes falsification of information. If a change of residency is made, documentation and all official correspondence will be mailed to the name and address on record. All changes must be completed in the Student Success Center (request for changes must be accompanied by official documents – drivers license, marriage license, divorce decree, etc.).

### **Access to Student Records**

Access to records by persons or agencies other than the student is limited by the Texas Open Records Act and the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. Information which may be released to the public without the consent of the student is limited to the following categories: name, address, telephone number, dates of attendance, classification, previous institutions attended, major field of study, awards, honors (including Vice President’s and President’s List), degree(s) conferred (including dates), past and present participation in officially recognized sports and activities, physical factors (height, weight of athlete), date and place of birth. This directory information is disclosed unless a request to withhold the release of the information was made in writing and received in the Student Success Center prior to or at the time of a student’s initial registration. Any change in the release information status must be made in writing. Requests for directory information must be made in writing, and each request will be considered individually. Each student may request that any or all of this information be withheld from the public by making a written request to the Admissions/Records Department. Forms are available. Parents/legal guardians have the right to view student records upon request if the student is claimed as a dependent on the federal tax return.

### **Review of Record**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, provide students with the right to inspect and review the contents of their educational records (except as limited under this law). Areas in which records are maintained:

1. Academic: registrar, continuing education and faculty offices.
2. Placement and testing records: registrar and counseling offices.
3. Financial: financial aid and business offices.

Students are entitled to obtain copies, at their expense, to receive explanations or interpretations of the records and to request a hearing to challenge the content. Access to the records must be requested on a form available from the official in charge of the particular record. Informal Review: Follow the procedure requesting examination of records. An official will date and sign a summary of action form that will be maintained in the student’s file. Formal Review: If the question of accuracy is not resolved during the informal review, the student may request a formal review. The Academic Appeals Committee will hear challenges concerning these records.

Challenging a grade must occur before the end of the fall or spring semester immediately following awarding of the grade.

## **Academic Appeals**

A student wishing to file an academic appeal must first discuss the matter with the instructor involved. If he or she is not satisfied with the disposition of the matter, he or she may then appeal to the director of the department/division. If the student wishes to continue the appeal, he or she may then see the vice president of instruction.

As the next step in the process, the student may file a written grievance within three working days with the vice president of instruction stating the problem and the history of efforts to resolve the problem. Within three working days, the vice president of instruction shall then call together the academic appeals committee, which consists of five instructors appointed for a year's term by the vice president of instruction, one administrator appointed by the College President, and one student appointed by the vice president of student services.

The appeals committee chair shall be given the written grievance and shall set the time for the committee to hear the grievance. A copy of the written grievance shall also be sent to the dean/director of the department involved. The hearing shall be conducted on the College District campus and attended only by those persons authorized by the academic appeals committee chair. This appeals process does not include appeals for forced withdrawal from developmental courses in accordance with state law.

The committee shall decide what action is warranted after hearing the information presented by the student and the vice president of instruction and/or the director of the department/division involved. The action shall be determined by a majority vote of the committee. The academic appeals committee chair shall inform the student and the vice president of instruction in writing as to the decision of the committee.

If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the committee, he or she may request an appeal to the College President within three working days of the committee decision. The President will respond within three working days. If the student still is not satisfied, the last step in process will be a request for appeal to the Board within three working days of the decision of the College President. The Board will hear the appeal and respond at its next regularly scheduled meeting.

## **FINANCIAL AID OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Grants and Work Study**

Panola College offers financial assistance to qualifying students in the form of federal and state grants and opportunities for student employment. Financial aid is money awarded to students to help pay for educational expenses. All students seeking financial aid at Panola College should complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) online at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>, along with any institutional forms required. Students should submit all necessary paperwork and have their financial aid file completed as soon as possible. Since supplemental aid is awarded on a first-come, first-served basis, it is best to apply as early as possible. Panola College receives both state and federal funds for student aid. Consequently, the entrance requirements and academic progress requirements for financial aid eligibility may be greater than those stated in other sections of this handbook.

### **Scholarships**

Panola College has various types of scholarships available, including endowed scholarships, organizational scholarships, and departmental scholarships. Students who feel that they need or are eligible for a scholarship should contact the person indicated within the scholarship description given in the *General Catalog*. Students on scholarship must be enrolled full-time (taking a minimum of 12 semester hours) and must maintain a minimum of a 2.0 cumulative GPA or maintain the specific GPA required for a particular scholarship.

### **Veteran's Benefits**

Panola College is fully approved for training of veterans under the provision of the G.I. Bill (Public Laws 346, 550, 16, and 890-358). Veterans and dependents of veterans should apply for benefits before the school term begins. Texas veterans who may be eligible for benefits under the Hazelwood Act should contact the Financial Aid Office. Consult the *General Catalog* for additional information or contact the Veteran's Advisor: 903.693.2046.

### **Loans**

Panola College participates in the Federal Direct Student Loan program. Direct Loans are low-interest loans for students and parents to help pay for the cost of a student's education after high school. The lender is the U.S. Department of Education. All student loans will be processed through the Financial Aid Office at Panola College. In order to qualify, a student must complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). The application is online at

[www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). Entrance counseling and a loan application is required. The application is online and can be accessed through the financial aid office.

### **Vocational Rehabilitation**

A student who has a disability may obtain assistance for tuition, fees, and other expenses through the Texas Rehabilitation Commission. A student who feels he or she qualifies should make application for this assistance to the Texas Rehabilitation Commission office having jurisdiction over the community in which his or her home is located.

## **FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS**

### **Deferred Payment Arrangements**

Deferred payments may be made through FACTS. There is a \$25 per semester enrollment fee. One-half (1/2) of the tuition and course-related fees will then be deducted from your checking or credit card account (Discover, MasterCard or Visa) at the time of registration. Debit/Check cards are not accepted. The other half of tuition and fees will be divided into 2 payments and processed on the 5th day of the following two months. On campus housing costs may also be deferred on FACTS. Find this plan online in the [Financial Aid Toolbox](#).

### **Refund Policy**

The State of Texas has established a tuition and fee refund policy for Community/Junior and Technical Colleges. Panola College has no ability to vary in any degree from established policy. Students who officially withdraw from classes will have their tuition and mandatory fees refunded according to the schedule printed in the *General Catalog*.

There are no cash refunds. Refund checks are processed within two to four weeks. All refunds are made by mail to the address on file in the Student Success Center. Refunds for tuition and fee payments made by VISA, MasterCard, or Discover will be credited to the account of the original charge. "Stop Payment" orders do not cause classes to be dropped. Such orders also result in a \$30 fee as with returned checks.

### **Returned Checks**

All returned checks will result in a \$30 charge. Problems must be settled within ten days of notice to avoid additional collection claims.

### **Obligation to the College**

Any unpaid balance could be turned over to a collection agency, and any fees incurred will be added to the student's account. Until a student's obligations to the College are met, he or she may be barred from future registration and the student's transcripts of credit will not be released. A "hold" on a student's records may be placed for any of the following reasons:

- Non-payment of tuition and fees.
- Failure to compensate for the loss, destruction, or damage of College property.
- Failure to supply required documentation; enrolling under false pretenses.
- Failure to comply with terms of disciplinary action.
- Any unpaid debt and/or collection fees owed to the College.

## **STUDENT SUCCESS**

### **Academic Advising**

Students taking more than 6 credit hours and having less than 30 cumulative credit hours are recommended to see an academic advisor prior to registration. Students enrolled in any developmental courses who have a cumulative GPA below 2.00 will be required to see an academic advisor prior to being eligible to register. We recommend that all students seek academic advisement from the counselors/advisors in the Student Success Center as well as advice from department chairs, advisors, or mentors. If a student elects not to seek academic advisement, the College assumes no responsibility for any delay the student encounters in graduating because the student has selected classes which do not meet graduation requirements. Students may be automatically dropped from courses for which they do not have proper prerequisites.

### **Bulletin Boards**

Students should read the bulletin boards on a regular basis for announcements of importance. Information is posted on bulletin boards throughout the campus. Students are responsible for information posted. The Coordinator of Student Activities must approve advertising not associated with College business prior to its being posted.

## **Student Center**

The Student Center offers students an opportunity to relax in the café, watch television, play billiards or ping pong, or use computers. The Student Center also includes the Panola College Store, cafeteria, and post office.

## **Identification Cards**

Students are required to obtain their student ID cards at their first registration in the Student Success Center. All students are required to carry their identification while on campus and must present it upon request to any College official. This card is also used for admission to College activities, use of the Learning Resource Center, use of the Fitness Center, and for other College functions requiring identification. Students living in the residence halls must present their ID card prior to receiving meals in the cafeteria. ID cards must be validated each semester in the Student Success Center. Students borrowing or lending an ID card for any reason at any location on campus will be subject to disciplinary action. A \$10 fee will be assessed for card replacement or for a card made after the official census day.

## **Motor Vehicle Registration**

Any student, faculty member or employee who operates or parks one or more motor vehicles on the campus must register each vehicle with the Student Success Center and affix the parking sticker as prescribed.

## **Student Organizations**

Panola College recognizes the importance of student involvement in activities as an integral part of the educational process that enriches and develops the student's special interests and needs. Student organizations shall be consistent with the main objectives of the College and student organizations shall abide by appropriate regulations. Please consult the *General Catalog* for specific information concerning clubs and organizations.

## **Social Events**

Social events are planned by the various student groups under faculty supervision and coordinated with the Coordinator of Student Activities. Yearly social events include a club mixer, Fall Frolic, Spring Fling, receptions, dances, movies, and other events scheduled by the various campus organizations.

## **Intramural Programs**

A complete program of intramural sports is organized for both male and female students who are interested in this type of competition. Intramural sports include basketball, flag football, racquetball, volleyball, billiards, and other special competitions. The Coordinator of Student Activities organizes the intramural activities and those students who wish to participate should take note of announcements relative to this program each semester.

## **Student Publications**

*The Pony Express*, the College newspaper, is prepared and managed by students enrolled in journalism classes or interested in journalism. The publication is a tool for teaching and remains under the supervision of the journalism instructor.

## **Lost and Found**

A lost and found center will be maintained in the College's Business Office. The Vice President of Fiscal Services should be responsible for determining the status of items that remain unclaimed after a six-month period.

## **Fitness Center**

The Panola College Fitness Center offers a variety of opportunities to enhance personal health. The Fitness Center has two fully equipped weight rooms, six racquetball courts, a full size gym floor for basketball or volleyball, an aerobics room, and many pieces of equipment to improve your cardiovascular health. The Fitness Center is open to all Panola College students and memberships are available to the community; please contact the Business Office for payment information. Id cards are required for entry into the Fitness Center.

## **Health Services**

The College offers no health care facility on campus. If an accident or emergency occurs on campus, first aid will be administered and, if needed, additional assistance will be requested from the local hospital's emergency service. The cost of

any professional service is the responsibility of the student. Students are encouraged to have medical insurance coverage from a company of their choosing. Information concerning a sickness and accident insurance policy available to students and their dependents is available. Inquire in the Business Office.

### **HIV/AIDS and Other Communicable Diseases**

Panola College recognizes that students or employees with communicable diseases, including HIV infection, may wish to engage in as many of their normal pursuits as their condition and ability to perform their duties allow. These pursuits include attending classes or work. As long as these students or employees are able to meet acceptable performance standards, and medical evidence indicates that their conditions are not a threat to themselves or others, the administrators, faculty and staff should be sensitive to their condition and ensure that these individuals are treated consistently and equally with other students and employees.

At the same time, Panola College has an obligation to provide a safe environment for all students and employees. A student or employee with a communicable disease should report the condition to the Vice President of Student Services or to his/her immediate supervisor, as appropriate. The educational pamphlet on HIV infection developed by the Texas Department of Health is distributed to all employees and is available to students upon request.

Every precaution should be taken to ensure that a student's or employee's condition does not present a health or safety threat to others. The fact that a student or employee has a communicable disease does not relieve that individual of the requirement to comply with performance standards as long as he/she is enrolled in classes or remains employed with the College. All efforts will be made to protect the student's or employee's right to confidentiality.

### **Panola College Store**

The Panola College Store is located in the Student Center and is designed to serve both students and faculty. In addition to textbooks and other school supplies, the Panola College Store carries a variety of gift and other items. The Panola College Store hours are posted on-site and on the College's web page. Textbooks are sold throughout the school year; however, textbook "buy-back" is conducted during designated times at the end of each semester.

#### Refund and Buy-back Policy

1. Book buy-back occurs only during the final exam week.
2. A College Store receipt must accompany all returns.
3. Books must be returned within the first twelve (12) class days of the fall and spring semesters and the first four (4) class days of the summer sessions to receive a full refund.
4. New books returned by the 4th/12th class day must be unmarked and show no signs of use or wear to receive a full refund.
5. Defective books will be replaced at no charge and should be returned at once.
6. No buy-back on workbooks and books listed as no-buy-back.
7. Books "on loan" must be returned during the final exam week.

### **Campus Police**

The campus police department is composed of certified law enforcement officers who have the power to enforce all Texas laws and College regulations on the property owned and operated under the direction of Panola College. The force serves the staff and students by helping to maintain the safety and security of each person and his/her possessions while on campus.

#### Rate of Speed on Campus

The maximum rate of speed on campus is 15 miles per hour.

#### Parking Areas for Students

Students are required to park between two YELLOW lines, whether it is parallel or diagonal parking. GREEN curbs indicate faculty parking only. YELLOW curbs indicate no parking zones, RED curbs indicate fire zones, and BLUE curbs are reserved for people with handicapped certification. Student vehicles parked in these areas are subject to removal at the owner's expense. Additional information can be obtained at the Campus Police Department or by calling 903-693-1112.

#### Emergency Messages

Contact the College Police Department if a need arises to have an emergency message delivered to a student.

#### Student Right to Know

In compliance with the student right-to-know and campus security act, Panola College compiles specific information on campus crime statistics, campus security policies, and graduation rates. Panola College's police comply and distribute a brochure of pertinent information to students and employees on an annual basis. Federal law also requires that all institutions of higher education disclose graduation rates, on request, to students, applicants, and potential students. Graduation rates for Panola College are compiled and available from the Admissions/Records Department. <http://www.panola.edu/studentright2know.pdf>

## **M.P. BAKER LIBRARY**

The Learning Resources Center (LRC), named for M.P. Baker, who was president of the College for many years, supports the entire instructional program. The LRC includes the library collection and the Instructional Media Services Department. The holdings of the LRC include both print and non-print materials and audio visual equipment to satisfy the educational, informational, and recreational readings of students and faculty. The growing collection of books and audio visuals supports academic transfer programs, technical programs, and vocational programs. The library subscribes to local, regional, and national newspapers, a wide variety of periodicals, and other electronic resources. The LRC offers an online, fully automated card catalog, and TexShare interlibrary loan service with daily delivery through Texpress courier. Students may use a state-of-the art computer lab for Internet research and assignments. Orientation tours, references, and reference classes are available weekly. A beautifully furnished reading area enhances the library. Teleconferences are held in the LRC via satellite. The mission of the LRC is to be an academic information resource for the students and faculty of the College. The LRC staff strives to provide services to enhance the whole student and to provide opportunities for students to become life-long learners.

### **Copyrights**

Panola College adheres to intellectual property ownership, including copyrights. The policy states the use of copyrighted materials, and adherence of exclusive rights, fair use, performances and displays and broadcast programs as spelled out under Section 106 & 107, as well as amendment of Section 110 (Teach Act of Title 17 of the U.S. Code).

Copyrights are property rights and are protected by federal statute. Copying, reproducing, distributing (print and or electronic) materials without permission is copyright infringement. Textbooks and other commercial publications used as text or supplementary materials are copyrighted. Copying and disseminating such materials constitute copyright infringement.

Panola College policy states the following prohibitions--

Notwithstanding the fair use guidelines, the following shall be prohibited:

1. Copying of print materials and sheet music to create or replace or substitute for anthologies, compilations, or collective works. This prohibition against replacement or substitution applies whether copies of various works or excerpts are accumulated, or reproduced and used separately.
2. Copying of or from works intended to be "consumable" in the course of study or teaching. These works include workbooks, exercises, standardized tests, test booklets, answer sheets, and like consumable materials.

Copying shall not substitute for the purchase of books, publishers' reprints, or periodicals; be directed by higher authority; or be repeated with respect to the same item by the same teacher from term to term.

### **Copyright Agreement and Release**

*As a student at Panola College, I hereby agree to adhere to the Copyright Laws of the United States and Copyright policies of Panola College. I understand and agree that my voice, image, and physical presence may be transmitted, photographed, printed, and/or electronically recorded in classroom activities during participation at College-related events and activities and hereby release any claims for the use of such.*

## **STANDARDS OF STUDENT CONDUCT, RIGHTS, AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Students are expected to conduct themselves as responsible citizens. Faculty, staff, and administrators have the authority to establish and maintain standards of conduct for students. This authority not only extends to the classroom, residence halls, and all on-campus activities but also all College-sponsored, off-campus activities. Any student who fails to conduct himself/herself responsibly with respect to persons and property may be withdrawn from school. The College may drop a student from a class or from all classes for any breach of conduct. Students who are removed from a class or classes can seek appeal by due process.

## **Acquaintance with Policies, Rules, and Regulations**

The standards of student conduct are subject to change by action of the College administration. Each student is expected to be fully acquainted with all published policies, rules, and regulations of the College. Copies of the *General Catalog*, *Schedule of Classes*, and *The Pathfinder* are available online at the Panola College website <http://www.panola.edu>. Board policy is available in the office of each College administrator and also online. Each student is responsible for compliance with these policies, rules, and regulations. Students are also responsible for compliance with all federal, state, and local laws.

## **Student Conduct**

While a student may receive lesser penalties for these offenses, it should be understood that dismissal from the College is possible in those cases warranting the maximum punishment. While it is not possible to list all behaviors inconsistent with membership in a scholarly community, the regulations listed in this section do identify the behavior that can lead to suspension from the College.

Some of the offenses described below are crimes in Texas and may be prosecuted independently of any disciplinary action taken by Panola College. Neither intoxication nor the use of any other drug shall serve as a defense or mitigate the seriousness of an offense. All student organizations are subject to the same regulations as those that apply to individuals. Violation of these policies will subject the organizations and/or individuals involved to appropriate discipline.

## **Violation of Policy**

Violations of a College policy, rule, or regulation may result in disciplinary action.

## **Directive of a College Official**

Failure to comply with the directive of a College official acting in the performance of his/her duties may result in disciplinary action.

## **Official Summons**

Students should respond as promptly as possible to official summons requesting their presence at an interview. Ignoring an official summons will subject the student to disciplinary action.

## **Tobacco Policy**

The College District is a tobacco-free institution committed to providing its students and employees a safe and healthy environment. The use of all tobacco products shall be prohibited on all property owned or operated by the College District. This shall include buildings, grounds, sidewalks, and streets. This policy shall also apply to vehicles owned or operated by the College District. Notice of this tobacco-free policy shall be displayed at all College District locations. Effective August 1, 2011.

Prior to August 1, 2011 the following policy is effective: Smoking or the use of any tobacco products is prohibited inside all facilities, buildings, and vehicles owned, leased, or operated by Panola College. College policy forbids smoking within 25ft. of any entrance to a building.

## **Children on Campus**

Panola College occasionally offers classes and activities for children. At all other times children may not remain unattended on campus, nor may children attend classes.

## **Alcohol and Controlled Substances**

The College has a formal **Zero Tolerance** policy that forbids illegal drugs and alcohol on campus. Any student possessing such chemicals faces disciplinary action. The possession, use, or advertising of any alcoholic beverage is not permitted on College-controlled property. Possession of alcoholic beverages in an automobile on College-controlled property shall constitute a violation of this regulation. "Illegal drugs shall be defined as a substance or substances defined and regulated under provisions of Article 4476-14 or Article 4476-5 of *Vernon's Texas Civil Statutes*, except as may be allowed by said provisions and includes but is not limited to CNS depressants, CNS stimulants, hallucinogens, and other illegal drugs as PCP (angel dust)." The use or possession of drugs, hallucinatory agents, and paraphernalia is prohibited on College-controlled property and will subject the student to disciplinary action. The production, transmittal, sale, or attempted sale of what is represented to be any of the above-listed substances is also prohibited under this policy. Also, students whose

behavior is affected by the use of these items will be subject to disciplinary action. Disciplinary actions which may be considered include but are not limited to: referral to drug and alcohol counseling or rehabilitation programs, fines, community service, probation, suspension, expulsion, and referral to appropriate law enforcement officials for prosecution.

**Exception:** A student who uses a drug authorized by a licensed physician through a prescription specifically for that student's use shall not be considered to have violated this rule.

**Steroids** - (Education Code 51.921) Anabolic steroids and growth hormones are for medical use only. State law prohibits the possession, dispensing, delivery or administering of an anabolic steroid or growth hormones in any manner not allowed by state law. State law provides that bodybuilding, muscle enhancement, or increasing muscle bulk or strength through the use of an anabolic steroid is not a valid medical purpose. Only a medical doctor may prescribe an anabolic steroid or human growth hormone for a person. A violation of state law concerning anabolic steroids or human growth hormones is a criminal offense punishable by confinement in jail or imprisonment in the Texas Department of Corrections.

## College Keys

Possession of or making use of College keys, for unauthorized purposes, is prohibited.

## Crimes of Violence

"Crimes of violence" as defined in Appendix A to Title 34, Part 99, of the Code of Federal Regulations, include:

1. Arson: Any willful or malicious burning or attempt to burn, with or without intent to defraud, a dwelling house, public building, motor vehicle or aircraft, personal property of another, etc.
2. Assault Offenses: An unlawful attack by one person upon another. Note: By definition there can be no "attempted" assaults, only "completed" assaults.
3. Burglary: The unlawful entry into a building or other structure with the intent to commit a felony or a theft.
4. Criminal Homicide – Manslaughter by Negligence: The killing of another person through gross negligence.
5. Criminal Homicide – Murder and Non-negligent Manslaughter: The willful (non-negligent) killing of one human being by another.
6. Destruction/Damage/Vandalism of Property: To willfully or maliciously destroy, damage, deface, or otherwise injure real or personal property without the consent of the owner or the person having custody or control of it.
7. Kidnapping/Abduction: The unlawful seizure, transportation, or detention of a person, or any combination of these actions, against his or her will, or of a minor without the consent of his or her custodial parent(s) or legal guardian. *Note:* Kidnapping/abduction includes hostage taking.
8. Robbery: The taking of, or attempting to take, anything of value under confrontational circumstances from the control, custody, or care of a person or persons by force or threat of force or violence or by putting the victim in fear. *Note:* Carjacking is a robbery offense where a motor vehicle is taken through force or threat of force.
9. Sex Offenses, Forcible: Any sexual act directed against another person, forcibly or against the person's will where the victim is incapable of giving consent.
  - a. Forcible rape (except "statutory rape"). The carnal knowledge of a person, forcibly or against that person's will, or both; or not forcibly or against the person's will where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his or her temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity (or because of his or her youth).
  - b. Forcible sodomy. Oral or anal sexual intercourse with another person, forcibly or against that person's will or both; or not forcibly or against the person's will where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his or her youth or because of his or her temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity.
  - c. Sexual assault with an object. To use an object or instrument to unlawfully penetrate, however slightly, the genital or anal opening of the body of another person, forcibly or against the person's will where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his or her youth or because of his or her temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity. *Note:* An "object" or "instrument" is anything used by the offender other than the offender's genitalia. Examples are a finger, bottle, handgun, stick, etc.
  - d. Forcible fondling. The touching of the private body parts of another person for the purpose of sexual gratification, forcibly or against that person's will, or both; or not forcibly or against the person's will where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his or her youth or because of his or her temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity. *Note:* Forcible fondling includes "indecent liberties" and "child molesting."
10. Non-forcible Sex Offenses (Except "Prostitution Offenses"): Unlawful, non-forcible sexual intercourse.
  - a. Incest: Non-forcible sexual intercourse between persons who are related to each other within the degrees wherein marriage is prohibited by law.
  - b. Statutory rape: Non-forcible sexual intercourse with a person who is under the statutory age of consent.

## **Destruction of Property**

Any student, student organization, or group of students participating in activities that destroy, deface, or remove College property, or property of other students or visitors, will be held liable for full damages and will face disciplinary action.

## **Disruptions/Demonstrations**

A person commits an offense if the person, alone or in concert with others, intentionally engages in disruptive activity on the campus or property of the College. Disorderly conduct shall include behavior of a boisterous and tumultuous character such that there is a clear and present danger of alarming persons where no legitimate reason for alarm exists; interference with the peaceful and lawful conduct of persons under circumstances in which there is reason to believe such conduct will cause or provoke a disturbance; violent and forceful behavior at any time, such that there is a clear and present danger that free movement of other persons will be impaired; behavior involving personal abuse or assault when such behavior creates a clear and present danger of causing assaults or fights; violent, abuse, indecent, profane, boisterous, unreasonably loud, or otherwise disorderly conduct under circumstances in which there is reason to believe that such conduct will cause or provoke a disturbance; willful and malicious behavior that interrupts the speaker of any lawful assembly or impairs the lawful right of others to participate effectively in such assembly or meeting when there is reason to believe that such conduct will cause or provoke a disturbance; willful and malicious behavior that obstructs or causes the obstruction of any doorway, hall, or any other passageway in a College building to such an extent that the employees, officers, and other persons, including visitors, having business with the College are denied entrance into, exit from, or free passage in such building.

## **Distribution of Literature on Campus**

Distribution of non-commercial literature or leaflets by organizations chartered by the College or individual students is permitted in areas designated for this purpose. Prior to posting a sign on College-controlled property, a student or registered student organization must contact the Coordinator of Student Activities and follow the procedure pertaining to this activity. Literature and materials for distribution on College-controlled property must not contain: 1) Writings which are libelous, obscene, or in violation of federal, state, or local laws; 2) Material which attempts to exploit for commercial purposes the name, image, or reputation of Panola College through the sale of subscription copies or advertising space.

## **Disturbances**

Students creating disturbances on College-controlled property or at a College activity resulting in the disruption of normal activities and order will be subject to disciplinary action. Disruptive behavior in a classroom or residence hall is judged to be a disturbance. The instructor has responsibility for control of the classroom and may take steps to ensure an orderly environment in which learning may occur unimpeded. Such steps taken by the instructor should be taken after consultation with the appropriate instructional Vice President.

## **Dress Code**

Students' dress or grooming may not materially and substantially interfere with normal school operations. Students are expected to follow accepted standards of common decency in their mode of dress. Health regulations require acceptable foot coverage be worn in public places. Health Science and cosmetology students should inquire of their teachers regarding departmental dress codes.

## **False Testimony**

Giving false testimony or evidence will result in disciplinary action.

## **Falsification of Records**

Any student who engages in forgery or who otherwise furnishes false or misleading information on admission, registration, personal identification on any form used by the College, or who alters any College record in any manner is subject to disciplinary action.

## **Fighting**

Disputes and differences of opinions should be handled in a mature and responsible manner. Students who resort to physical violence over such matters raise a question concerning their suitability as College students. The parties involved in a fight will be subject to disciplinary action.

## **Gambling**

Any student who participates in gambling on College-controlled property will be subject to disciplinary action.

## **Harassment**

The College prohibits any harassment related to a person's race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, age, or disability. [Discrimination Grievance Procedure] This information is found on the Panola College website under Student Success.

Sexual harassment or abuse 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:

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

Harassing conduct includes (1) epithetic 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 College premises, or is circulated in the workplace.

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

An employee or student who believes that he or she has been or is being subjected to any form of sexual harassment shall bring the matter to the attention of a College Vice President or an immediate supervisor in accordance with the procedures in the College's complaints policy. Bad faith allegations or use of the policy for purposes unrelated to its clear intent are expressly prohibited and could result in expulsion.

## **Hazing**

Hazing of any kind is prohibited. [Education Code, Chap. 37; Texas Penal Code] Hazing is a criminal offense in the State of Texas. Hazing means any intentional, knowing, or reckless act occurring on or off school property directed against a student, by one person alone or acting with others, that endangers the mental or physical health or the safety of a student for the purpose of pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization whose members are or include other students. Student means any person who is registered in or in attendance at an educational institution, has been accepted for admission at the educational institution where the hazing incident occurs, or intends to attend an educational institution during any of its regular sessions after a period of scheduled vacation. The term includes, but is not limited to:

1. Any type of physical brutality, such as whipping, beating, striking, branding, electric shocking, placing of a harmful substance on the body, or similar activity.
2. Any type of physical activity, such as sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement in a small space, calisthenics, or other activity that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student.
3. Any activity involving consumption of a food, liquid, alcoholic beverage, liquor, drug or other substance that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student.
4. Any activity that intimidates or threatens the student with ostracism, that subjects the student to extreme mental stress, shame, or humiliation, or that adversely affects the mental health or dignity of the student or discourages, the student from entering or remaining registered in an educational institution or that may reasonably be expected to cause a student to leave the organization or the institution rather than submit to acts described above.
5. Any activity that induces, causes, or requires the student to perform a duty or task that involves a violation of the Penal Code.

### **Personal Hazing Offense**

- A. A person commits an offense if the person commits any of the following:
  1. Engages in hazing.
  2. Solicits, encourages, directs, aids, or attempts to aid another in engaging in hazing.
  3. Recklessly permits hazing to occur.
  4. Has firsthand knowledge of the planning of a specific hazing incident involving a student in an educational institution, or first-hand knowledge that a specific incident has occurred, and knowingly fails to report that knowledge in writing to the President or designee.
- B. The offense of failing to report is a misdemeanor punishable by a fine not to exceed \$1,000, confinement in county jail for not more than 180 days, or both such fine and confinement.

- C. Any other offense under this section which does not cause serious bodily injury to another is a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not less than \$500 nor more than \$1,000, confinement in county jail for not less than 90 days not more than 180 days or both such fine and confinement.
- D. Any other offense under this section which causes serious bodily injury to another is a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not less than \$1,000 nor more than \$5,000, confinement in county jail for not less than 180 days not more than one year, or both such fine and confinement.
- E. Any other offense under this section, which causes the death of another, is a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not less than \$5,000 nor more than \$10,000, confinement in county jail for not less than one year nor more than two years, or both such fine and confinement.

**Organization Hazing Offense:**

- A. An organization commits an offense if the organization condones or encourages hazing or if an officer or any combination of members, pledges, or alumni of the organization commits or assists in the commission of hazing.
- B. An offense under this section is a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not less than \$5,000 not more than \$10,000 or if a court finds that the offense caused personal injury, property damage, or other loss, the court may sentence the organization to pay a fine of not less than \$5,000 nor more than double the amount lost or expenses incurred because of such injury, damage, or loss.

**Consent Not A Defense:**

It is not a defense to prosecution of an offense under this subchapter that the person against whom the hazing was directed consented to or acquiesced in the hazing activity.

**Immunity from Prosecution:**

Any person reporting a specific hazing incident involving a student in an educational institution to the Vice President of Student Services or other appropriate official of the institution is immune from liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed as a result of the report. Immunity extends to participation in any judicial proceeding resulting from the report. This section does not protect a person reporting in bad faith or with malice.

**Offenses in Addition to Other Penal Provisions:**

This subchapter does not affect or repeal any law of this state. Nothing in this subchapter shall limit or affect the right of an educational institution to enforce its own penalties against hazing.

**Indecent Conduct**

The College prohibits conduct which is indecent, lewd, or obscene (includes, but is not limited to indecent exposure, public urination, and public nudity). Punishment of probation, fine, or suspension will be given due to the severity of the incident.

**Institutional Name (Use of)**

No student organization or individual student may use the institutional name in solicitation of gifts from persons or agencies off campus without the written permission of the President. The President grants permission for the solicitation of advertising or the acceptance of paid advertising.

**Loitering**

Loitering is not permitted in or around residence halls or other buildings on campus after 11:00 p.m. Sunday through Thursday or after 12:00 Midnight Friday and Saturday.

**Probation Violation**

Any student on disciplinary probation can be suspended if, while on probation, he/she commits the same offense or another offense.

**Prohibited Weapons**

A student shall not knowingly, intentionally, or recklessly go onto school property or to a school-sponsored activity with any prohibited weapon, as defined below, unless pursuant to written regulations or written authorization of the College. This prohibition shall not normally apply to school supplies such as pencils, compasses, scissors, and the like, unless those instruments are used in a menacing or threatening manner. Students found to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, including suspension.

Prohibited weapons include but are not limited to:

1. A firearm (any device designed, made, or adapted to expel a projectile through a barrel by using the energy generated by an explosion or burning substance or any device readily convertible to that use).
2. An illegal knife (knife with a blade over 5 ½ inches, hand instrument designed to cut or stab another by being thrown, dagger, Bowie knife, sword, spear).
3. An explosive weapon (any explosive or incendiary bomb, grenade, rocket, or mine that is designed, made or adapted for the purpose of inflicting serious bodily injury, death, or substantial property damage, or for the principal purpose of causing such a loud report as to cause undue public alarm or terror, and includes a device designed, made or adapted for delivery or shooting an explosive weapon).
4. A machine gun (any firearm that is capable of shooting more than two shots automatically without manual reloading, by a single function of the trigger).
5. A short-barrel firearm (rifle with a barrel length of less than 16 inches or a shotgun with a barrel length of less than 18 inches, or any weapon made from a rifle or shotgun that, as altered, has an overall length of less than 26 inches).
6. A switchblade knife (any knife with a blade that folds, closes, or retracts into the handle or sheath and that opens automatically by pressing a button or by the force of gravity or centrifugal force).
7. Knuckles (any instrument consisting of finger rings or guards made of a hard substance that is designed, made, or adapted for the purpose of inflicting serious bodily injury or death by striking a person with a fist enclosed in the knuckles).
8. "Live" ammunition.
9. A chemical dispensing device (device other than a small chemical dispenser sold commercially for personal protection, that is designed, made, or adapted for the purpose of causing an adverse psychological or physiological effect on a human being).
10. A zip gun (a device or combination of devices that was not originally a firearm and is adapted to expel a projectile through a smooth-bore or rifled-bore barrel by using the energy generated by an explosion or burning substance).
11. A club (an instrument specially designed, made, or adapted for the purpose of inflicting serious bodily injury or death by striking a person with the instrument, including a blackjack, nightstick, mace, and tomahawk).
12. Fireworks, throwing stars, and other martial arts weapons are prohibited.

**No weapons of any kind, whether operable or not, are allowed in the residence halls.** College personnel may inspect lockers and cars parked on College premises if there is reasonable cause to believe they contain weapons.

## Scholastic Dishonesty

Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their educational pursuits. Scholastic dishonesty shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Cheating on a test
  - a. Copying from another student's test paper.
  - b. Using test materials not authorized by the person administering the test.
  - c. Collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test without permission from the test administrator.
  - d. Knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, or soliciting, in whole or in part, the contents of an un-administered test.
  - e. The unauthorized transporting or removal, in whole or in part, of the contents of the un-administered test.
  - f. Substituting for another student, or permitting another student to substitute for oneself, to take a test.
  - g. Bribing another person to obtain an un-administered test or information about an un-administered test.
2. Plagiarism - defined as the appropriating, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another's work and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of it in one's own written work.
3. Collusion - defined as the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work for fulfillment of course requirements.

Scholastic dishonesty may lead to failure of the test, course, suspension from the class, or suspension from school.

For additional information refer to Academic Appeals section in this publication or the *General Catalog*.

## Searches

The College respects the right of students to privacy and security against arbitrary invasion of their person or property. However, College officials have a limited right to search students or their property when in the interest of the overall welfare of other students or when necessary to preserve the good order and discipline of the school. Stolen items and items which are forbidden by Board policy or law may be impounded and may be used as evidence in internal College disciplinary proceedings against the student. [FLC]

## **Selling, Peddling or Soliciting on College-Controlled Property**

Unauthorized selling, peddling, or soliciting is prohibited by the College. Vendors who desire to offer their wares for sale on College-controlled property must obtain approval from the Vice President of Fiscal Affairs.

## **Stealing**

Any student who steals will be subject to disciplinary action.

## **Unauthorized Entry**

Unauthorized entry into or use of College-controlled property is prohibited. Unauthorized entry will be turned over to the campus police and will be handled according to state or federal laws.

## **Unlawful Assembly**

Panola College recognizes that the freedom to assemble is indispensable in a College community that exists for the transmission of knowledge, the expression of ideas, the pursuit of truth, and the overall development of students. It is the College's responsibility and intention to be firm in establishing and enforcing reasonable rules and regulations to insure that such activities of students and non-students do not disrupt the normal and essential operations of this institution. Unlawful assembly is defined as the congregation by students or others on College-controlled property in doorways, hallways, classrooms, and other facilities so as to prevent students, faculty, or administrative officials from entering or leaving classes, offices, or any other facility. Preventing persons from pursuing their lawful occupation is a criminal violation of the statutes of Texas. Students who participate in such activities will be subject to disciplinary suspension and prosecution under the laws of Texas. Persons not connected with Panola College will be referred to the local law enforcement authorities for possible prosecution.

## **Violation of Law**

Arrest and/or conviction for violation of federal, state, or local law (either on or off College property) may result in disciplinary action where, in the judgment of the College officials, the individual represents a potential threat to the safety and security of the College community. The College reserves the right to refuse acceptance to prospective or former students who have criminal records including conviction of a felony, offenses involving moral turpitude, or other offenses of serious character.

# **SAFETY AND SECURITY**

Members of the College community have the right to expect to be safe and secure in their persons and property. Conduct that, in the judgment of College officials, endangers the health, safety, or security of the College community, or of visitors, may subject the student to disciplinary action, including removal from College-controlled property.

## **Emergency Evacuation**

If the fire alarm sounds, students are to evacuate the building IMMEDIATELY, following the instructions below:

1. If your door is hot to the touch, DO NOT OPEN IT.  
\*Roll up a towel and place it at the base of the door to prevent smoke penetration.  
\*Go to the window and crawl through or crack it open. Stay there until help arrives. Do not jump from an upstairs window unless it is the last resort.
2. If the door is cool, open it slowly. Proceed down the hall to the nearest exit. If the hall is filled with smoke, stay low to the floor and crawl to the nearest emergency exit.

## **Residence Hall Emergency Evacuation**

When evacuating the Residence Halls, all residents will immediately proceed to the Fitness Center gym to await further instruction.

## **Emergency Illness or Accident**

Panola College provides no health facilities for treatment of illness or injury. In the event of an emergency, the individual should go to the emergency room of the local hospital. If possible, notify the Residence Hall Supervisor. If an emergency occurs that requires local authorities, ambulance, or the fire department, call 9-1-1.

Police/Fire Ambulance	9-1-1
Campus Police	903-693-1112
	903-693-1111
Residence Life Coordinator	903-693-1103
	903-693-1176
Residence Life Cell Phone	281-748-3172

## Fire Fighting Equipment

Damage to, tampering with, unauthorized use, possession, or alteration of fire fighting equipment (fire alarm boxes, fire extinguisher, smoke detectors, etc.) safety devices, exit signs, or campus security property is prohibited. Fire extinguishers are installed in all residence halls. If an extinguisher is maliciously discharged, a fee for refilling the extinguisher and for clean-up will be assessed and disciplinary action will be taken. Unauthorized use of the fire exits is prohibited by the fire code. Violations will be turned over to the Campus Police or City Fire Marshall to be handled according to public laws.

## Fire Prevention

Students should take responsibility to ensure Residence Halls are free of fire hazards. **Open flames such as candles, incense, matches, or lighters are prohibited due to their potential as fire hazards.** Irons and other appliances should never be left on when the room is unoccupied. Wall plugs that increase the available number of outlets are prohibited. Electrical outlets should not be overloaded. These items may be removed from student's rooms without notification. Items may be returned at the end of the semester in which they were found.

## DISCIPLINE AND PENALTIES

The Residence Life Coordinator or other designee of the College has the authority to issue disciplinary sanctions in accordance with Panola College policy he/she deems necessary to maintain order and safety. All incidents will be recorded and sent to the Vice President of Student Services along with the recommended disciplinary action.

The disciplinary action taken in a particular situation may reflect consideration of the student's previous experience and attitude, the welfare of the student, other students, and the College. The guidelines for behavior outlined in this *Handbook* provide the basis for disciplinary procedures. There may be times when disciplinary action is necessary in response to behavior not specifically addressed in this *Handbook*.

The following is considered a violation of disciplinary proceedings and will result in either suspension and/or some form of disciplinary action:

- Obstruction or disruption of disciplinary procedures
- Furnishing false information to Panola College officials with the intent to deceive
- Interference with the performance of the duties of any resident official or employee of Panola College
- Failure to comply with any disciplinary action
- Disrespect and/or failure to comply with properly designated positions of authority on campus. These positions include faculty, administration, staff, or appointed student representatives.

When the Residence Life Coordinator or other designee of the College President receives information that a student has allegedly violated the standard of student conduct, a College policy, or administrative rule, the Residence Life Coordinator shall investigate the alleged violation. After completing a preliminary investigation, the Residence Life Coordinator (Level 1) may:

1. Dismiss the allegation.
2. Summon the student for a conference. The alleged violation will be presented to the student and procedures will be explained. The student will be given an opportunity to present his/her case. Failure to respond after two notices may result in sanctions being administered in the student's absence. After conferring with the student, the Residence Life Coordinator shall:
  - a. Dismiss the allegation.
  - b. Proceed with the disposition of the violation.
    - The Residence Life Coordinator shall assess a sanction appropriate to the violation and shall inform the student of such action in writing. The student shall be informed about the appeal process.
    - If the student accepts the recommended sanction, the decision becomes final.
    - The student must sign a statement indicating understanding of the sanction and shall automatically waive all further rights to procedures for appeal.

If the student chooses to appeal the Level 1 decision, he/she must request and conference with the Vice President of Student Services (Level 2) within three business days of the decision. The Vice President of Student Services will render a decision. The student may opt to conclude future action with this decision. The student's failure to appear affirms the Level 1 decision and ends further consideration. With the exception of suspension or expulsion from the College, decisions regarding sanctions are final at Level 2.

If the student chooses to request a hearing by the Committee on Student Conduct (Level 3, after completing Levels 1 and 2), he/she must submit a written request to the Vice President of Student Services within three days of the conference. Failure to meet with the Vice President before requesting a formal review by said Committee or failure to submit a written request for Committee review shall constitute a waiver of all rights for further consideration of the matter.

## **Disciplinary Sanctions**

The College may impose upon individuals, groups, or organizations one or more of the following sanctions. Sanctions for violation of institutional policies, rules, or regulations will be correlated to the seriousness of the offense, the effect of the misconduct on the College environment, the student's record of misconduct, and statutory requirements. Sanctions may be administered regardless of whether the actions of the student are civil or criminal violations.

1. Formal warning: A formal notice, either written or verbal, that a violation has occurred and that future violations will be dealt with more severely.
2. Disciplinary probation: Implies that the individual's standing with the College is in jeopardy and that further negligent or willful violations will normally result in suspension or expulsion.
3. Withholding of grades, official transcripts, or degree.
4. Restitution: Compensation for loss, damage, or injury to the appropriate party in the form of money, service, or material replacement.
5. MONETARY FINES
6. Community Service: Performance of a specified number of hours or tasks designated to benefit the community and help the student understand why his or her behavior was inappropriate. This sanction will be fulfilled whether on or off campus. On-campus service will be in a designated department.
7. Class or workshop attendance: Enrollment and completion of a class or workshop that could help the student understand why his/her behavior was inappropriate.
8. Educational Project /Internet Based Module: Completion of a project specifically designed to help the student understand why his/her behavior was inappropriate and learn appropriate community behavior.
9. Removal from specific courses or activities.
10. Restriction from entering specific College areas and/or all forms of contact with certain persons.
11. Suspension: Separation from the College for a specified period of time or until certain conditions are met. Grades will be assigned in accordance with the College's grade policy and the College calendar.
12. Expulsion: Permanent separation from the College. Grades will be assigned in accordance with the College's grade policy and the College calendar.
13. Revocation of degree or withdrawal of diploma.
- 14 Refer to the Residence Life Handbook for additional sanctions or policies for students residing in the residence halls.

## **Emergency Suspension**

A Vice President or designee of the College President may take immediate disciplinary action, including suspension pending a hearing, against a student for policy violations if the continuing presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disrupting the academic process.

## **Suspended Students**

No former student who has been suspended for disciplinary reasons from the College shall be permitted on the campus or other facilities of the College during the period of suspension without the prior written approval of the College President or a designated representative.

## **DISCIPLINE HEARING PROCEDURE [FMA]**

After a student has completed the Level One and Level Two process [see FM], the student may request that a hearing committee (Level 3 - Committee on Student Conduct) review the charges. The hearing committee shall be impartial and shall be designated by the College President or selected according to procedures approved by the College President. The hearing committee shall preside over a fair hearing for the student and the College's administration. Counsel at the hearing may represent the student and the College.

**Notice** – The hearing committee shall notify the accused student by letter of the date, time, and place for the hearing. Unless the student and the hearing committee otherwise agree, the hearing shall take place within five business days after the date of the letter. If the student has been suspended, the hearing shall take place as soon as possible. The notice shall:

1. Direct the student to appear on the date and at the time and place specified.
2. Advise the student of his or her rights.
  - a. To have an advisor present at the hearing. This person may not present the case, question witnesses, or address the committee.
  - b. To call witnesses, request copies of evidence.
  - c. To have the hearing tape-recorded.
  - d. To ask questions of each witness who testifies against the student.
3. Contain a copy of description of the complaint in sufficient detail to enable the student to prepare his or her defense against the charges.
4. Restate the disciplinary sanction.

**Failure to Appear for Hearing** – The hearing committee may proceed with the hearing in the student’s absence.

**Hearing Procedure** – The hearing shall proceed as follows:

1. The hearing chairperson shall read the student’s request for formal review.
2. The hearing chairperson shall inform the student of his or her rights.
3. The designated official shall present the College’s case.
4. The student shall present his or her defense.
5. The designated official shall present rebuttal evidence.
6. The designated official shall summarize and argue the College’s case.
7. The student shall summarize and argue his or her case.
8. The designated official shall have an opportunity for rebuttal argument.
9. The hearing committee may take the matter under advisement for 24 hours before rendering a decision.
10. The decision shall be communicated to the student in writing within 5 days of the hearing.

**Evidence** – Evidence shall be handled according to the following:

1. Legal rules of evidence do not apply; the hearing committee chairperson may admit evidence that is commonly accepted by reasonable persons in the conduct of their affairs. The hearing chairperson may exclude irrelevant, immaterial, and unduly repetitious evidence.
2. At the hearing, the College shall be required to prove by a preponderance of the evidence that the charges are true. This is known as the greater weight of the credible evidence, not reasonable doubt as in criminal cases.
3. A student may not be compelled to testify.
4. The hearing committee shall decide the issue of guilt or innocence solely on the basis of evidence presented at the hearing.
5. A tape recording shall be made of the hearing. If needed for an appeal, transcripts will be made at the written request of the student or Vice President of Student Services. The cost will be borne by the one requesting the transcription.

**Decision** – The hearing committee shall render a written decision as to the student’s guilt or innocence of the charges; if it finds the student guilty, it shall set forth finding of facts in support of its decision. The Vice President of Student Services shall administer the sanctions.

**Hearing Records** – The disciplinary proceedings shall be kept confidential.

**Appeal** – Within three days of receiving notice of the committee’s decision, either or both parties may petition in writing the College President (Level 4) to review the decision. The petition(s) will state with particularity why the decision is believed to be incorrect or unfair. The College President may at his sole discretion, choose to allow oral argument on the petition(s).

Within five days of receiving the petition, The College President may act to affirm, modify, remand, or reverse the decision. If no action is taken within 5 business days, the committee’s decision will thereby be affirmed and final.

## **DISCRIMINATION GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

<i>Exclusions</i>	Student complaints regarding discipline and sexual harassment are covered by separate procedures.
<i>Purpose</i>	The purpose of this policy is to secure at the first possible level prompt and equitable resolution of student complaints, including those alleging discrimination on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, national origin, age, or disability.
<i>Representation</i>	The student may be represented at any level of the complaint. If the complaint involves a problem with an instructor, the student shall discuss the matter with the instructor before requesting a conference with the department chairperson at Level One.
<i>Level One</i>	A student who has a complaint shall request a conference with the instructional administrator or Student Success counselor, who shall schedule and hold a conference with the student.
<i>Level Two</i>	If the outcome of the conference with the instructional administrator or Student Success counselor is not to the student's satisfaction, the student has 15 calendar days to request a conference with the appropriate administrator who shall schedule and hold a conference. Prior to or at the conference, the student shall submit a written complaint that includes a statement of the complaint and any evidence in its support, the solution sought, the student's signature, and the date of the conference with the department chairman or Student Success counselor.
<i>Level Three</i>	If the outcome of the conference with the appropriate administrator is not to the student's satisfaction, the student has 15 calendar days to request a conference with the College President or designee, who shall schedule and hold a conference. Prior to or at the conference, the student shall submit the written statements required at Level Two and the date of the conference with the Vice President.
<i>Level Four</i>	If the outcome of the conference with the College President or designee is not to the student's satisfaction, the student may submit to the College President a written request to place the matter on the agenda.  The College President or designee shall inform the student of the date, time, and place of the meeting. The Board Chair shall establish a reasonable time limit for complaint presentations. The Board shall listen to the student's complaint and take whatever action it deems appropriate.  The Board's consideration shall be based on the complaint records developed at the administrative reviews and the Board shall receive no new evidence. Each side shall be entitled to make oral arguments based on the complaint record within the time restrictions established by the Board.
<i>Closed Meeting</i>	If the complaint involves complaints or charges about an employee, it will be heard by the Board in closed meeting unless the employee complained about requests it to be public.

## Appendix:

Panola College is required by federal and state law to provide the following information on certain diseases, the Panola College Alcohol and Drug Policy, and campus safety to all incoming students.

### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT BACTERIAL MENINGITIS**

This information is being provided to all new College students in the state of Texas. Bacterial Meningitis is a serious, potentially deadly disease that can progress extremely fast – so take utmost caution. It is an inflammation of the membranes that surround the brain and spinal cord. The bacteria that causes meningitis can also infect the blood. This disease strikes about 3,000 Americans each year, including 100-125 on College campuses, leading to 5-15 deaths among College students every year. There is a treatment, but those who survive may develop severe health problems or disabilities.

#### WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

- High fever
- Lethargy
- Stiff neck
- Rash or purple patches on skin
- Severe headache
- Nausea
- Light sensitivity
- Vomiting
- Seizures
- Confusion and sleepiness

There may be a rash of tiny red-purple spots caused by bleeding under the skin. These can occur anywhere on the body.

The more symptoms, the higher the risk, so when these symptoms appear, seek immediate medical attention.

#### HOW IS BACTERIAL MENINGITIS DIAGNOSED?

• Diagnosis is made by a medical provider and is usually based on a combination of clinical symptoms and laboratory results from spinal fluid and blood tests.

Early diagnosis and treatment can greatly improve the likelihood of recovery.

#### HOW IS THE DISEASE TRANSMITTED?

• The disease is transmitted when people exchange saliva (such as by kissing, or by sharing drinking containers, utensils, cigarettes, toothbrushes, etc.) or come in contact with respiratory or throat secretions.

#### WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF THE DISEASE?

- Death (in 8 to 24 hours from perfectly well to dead)
- Gangrene
- Permanent brain damage
- Coma
- Kidney failure
- Convulsions
- Learning disability
- Limb damage (fingers, toes, arms, legs) that requires amputation
- Hearing loss, blindness

## CAN THE DISEASE BE TREATED?

• Antibiotic treatment, if received early, can save lives, and chances of recovery are increased. However, permanent disability or death can still occur.

• Vaccinations are available and should be considered for:

• Those living in close quarters.

• College students twenty-five years old or younger.

• Vaccinations are effective against four of the five most common bacterial types that cause 70% of the disease in the U. S. (but do not protect against all types of meningitis).

• Vaccinations take seven-ten days to become effective, with protection lasting three-five years.

• The cost of vaccine varies so check with your health care provider.

• Vaccination is very safe – most common side effects are redness and minor pain at the injection site for up to two days.

• Vaccination may be available at your health care provider or local or regional Texas Department of Health office.

## HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION?

• Contact your own health care provider.

• Contact your local or regional Texas Department of Health office at 903-693-9322 (Carthage).

• Contact websites: [www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo) or [www.acha.org](http://www.acha.org)

Source: Chapter 51, Education Code, Section 51.9191;  
Chapter 38, Education Code, Section 38.0025.  
Senate Bill 31; Fall 2001.