

## Policy on Policy:

### Development and Maintenance of Official College Policies and Related Procedures

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#### Section 1: Purpose

Virginia Peninsula Community College (VPCC) is under the authority of the State Board for Community Colleges (SBCC) as one of twenty-three colleges in the Virginia Community College System (VCCS). The college operates under the official policies, procedures and regulations established by the SBCC. This policy establishes VPCC protocol for the development, review, approval, implementation, and maintenance of additional internal policies and procedures that are either mandated by the State Board or are unique to VPCC in assuring integrity, efficiency, efficacy, and equity of college operations.

The SBCC establishes policies that govern all colleges within the Virginia Community College System, but procedures for implementation of those policies are left up to individual colleges to allow them to respond to changes in their internal organizational structures and operations or the external environment of the communities they serve. The tie between the policy and the procedures must be clear for the college to achieve its goals and objectives for success. The SBCC may mandate that colleges develop a policy or procedures that follow a specific format or require SBCC approval before implementation to ensure the achievement of specific outcomes and avoid potential risks to both college and system operations. Policies are less likely to change over time, but procedures can quickly become outdated. For these reasons, the policies and procedures included in the college’s manual have been created as separate but linked documents.

The advantage of developing and maintaining an updated repository of policies and procedures is that it strengthens the institution and benefits the constituents it serves by increasing awareness of potential obstacles to effective and efficient operations. A comprehensive, well documented manual of policies and procedures sets standards and expectations, improves communications, reduces mistakes, increases productivity, and ensures consistency and compliance with regulations and guidelines.

- 1.1 Constituents may gain a sense of engagement and empowerment with the college and its leadership when assured that decision-making is grounded in authentic, transparent policies and procedures.

- 1.2 Publication of a policies and procedures manual increases the capacity of constituents to understand the why and how of college operations, their rights and responsibilities and personal accountability for success.
- 1.3 Access to effective policies and procedures limits confusion, conflicts, misunderstandings, and inconsistencies that contribute to inequitable treatment among and between constituency groups.
- 1.4 An effective policy and procedures manual can protect the college from possible legal action associated with a lack of compliance or an increase in vulnerability to information leaks and cyber-attacks.

## **Section 2: Scope and Function of Policy**

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This policy governs those policies that are applicable to all constituency groups within the VPCC community. Internal rules, regulations, or guidelines that affect only a limited number of individuals or a specific campus, department or office do not fall within the scope of this policy but may not conflict with official college policies. Only a directive by the SBCC to develop college-specific regulations, or an order by the president to develop regulations that address unique needs of the college shall be considered as official college policies.

This policy is intended to create a standardized framework for developing policies based on the following principles:

- 2.1 Policies will be formally developed and approved based on a commitment to a shared governance model that directly connects members of the college's designated constituency groups to the college's leadership team, giving everyone the opportunity to contribute to the decision-making process based on their expertise and specific role at the college. Final authority for approval of policy or policy modifications rests with the VPCC President.
- 2.2 Proposals for new and revised policies will be presented in a structured format that identifies the issue, proposes solutions to resolve the issue, and assigns ownership and accountability for monitoring the lifecycle of the policy development, approval, review, revision, and implementation processes.
- 2.3 Official college policies will be written in clear and concise language, stored centrally, and maintained on the college website to provide easy access to the college community. Policies will be linked electronically to related procedures and forms, and relevant external mandates or policies, accreditation standards or legal requirements.
- 2.4 Policies and related resources will be developed and kept up-to-date and compliant with all relevant internal and external mandates, policies, accreditation standards and legal requirements.

## **Section 3: Definitions**

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- 3.1 **Policy** – an overarching principle that guides the development of rules and regulations for college-wide decision-making. It provides a framework and a direction to ensure the college is compliant with higher level authorities, laws and regulations, that it takes actions consistent with its mission and, that it reduces risk to the institution as it navigates the present and anticipates the future

decisions that must be made. A policy provides the basis for accountability by setting standards, priorities, and parameters for managing college operations.

- 3.2 **Procedure** – describes chronological, step by step, specific actions for policy implementation that are consistent with the policy and its intent and focused on achieving its goal or outcome. It assigns responsibility for oversight and ensuring accountability for results, creates a reasonable timeline and communication plan.
- 3.3 **Plan** – a strategic program of actions to achieve the objective, or a collection of procedures with the same focus. It goes beyond step by step actions and answers the *how, when, what* and *who* that serve as a basis for action.
- 3.4 **Program** – like a plan but with a beginning and an end.
- 3.5 **Cognizant Cabinet Member** – a member of the President’s executive staff who is aware of and has full understanding of the issues addressed by the proposed policy.
- 3.6 **Designated Cabinet Member** – a member of the President’s executive staff whom the President has appointed to a position of authority and responsibility for the accuracy, timeliness, and effectiveness of policies and procedures related to their departmental operations.
- 3.7 **Constituency Group** – a group of employees, faculty, or students that represents and supports the interests of individuals associated with the college based on their expertise and specific roles within the organization of the college: Faculty Senate, College Support Staff Association, Council of Mid-Level Managers, and Student Government Association.
- 3.8 **Reference** – a hyperlink or directions given in the text of the policy to refer the reader to the original source, another online source, or an external higher authority that mandated the development of the policy, procedure, or plan found in the college’s online manual.
- 3.9 **Policy Action Request** – a form used as the first step in initiating action to develop a new policy, propose substantive modifications to existing policies, or request archiving outdated policies. The form is designed as a checklist that describes conditions that must be met before the request can be reviewed by the designated Cabinet member, the Chief of Staff, and representatives from the constituency groups to determine if the request warrants development of a full proposal.
- 3.10 **Protocol** – regulations or precedents that are used as guides for preparing a document.
- 3.11 **Requester** – a constituent group member who completes a Policy Action Request form and submits it to the appropriate designated Cabinet member to initiate action on a request for a new policy, modifications to an existing policy, or archiving an outdated policy.
- 3.12 **Review Panel** – a team of representatives chosen by the constituency groups, appointed by the designated Cabinet member, and charged with the requester to draft a complete policy proposal for consideration.
- 3.13 **Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)** – describes a specific set of steps taken within a division or department to fulfill routine business operations or tasks in a coherent and consistent manner. SOPs should be simple and easy to understand for anyone interacting with the department or division. They are not necessarily linked to a guiding policy.

## Section 4: Process and Responsibilities for Development of Policy and Procedures

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### 4.1 Development and Approval of Official Policies

Final authority for approval of new policies or substantive modifications to existing policies lies with the College President. Recommendations for developing new policies, making substantive modifications to existing policies, or archiving outdated policies can be initiated by any member of the college community, but shall be formally vetted through the college's shared governance structure by a designated Cabinet member using the standardized format for policy development and approval.

All policy requests will be submitted to a designated Cabinet member and assigned a number based on the college's approved numbering system, which broadly reflects the college's administrative organization and the structure of the VCCS Policy Manual. Policies are grouped in nine(9) major numerical divisions, and the President will designate responsibility to members of the Cabinet for tracking one or more policy groups based on their areas of responsibility, authority, and expertise. A Cabinet member with specialized knowledge or understanding of a particular issue may be appointed as a cognizant Cabinet member to a policy that may be outside their normal responsibilities or authority. In collaboration with the President's Chief of Staff, the designated or cognizant Cabinet member shall assign the appropriate policy number to a policy request and monitor its development and approval following the procedure outlined in Section 4.

In response to a formal policy request, the designated Cabinet member will charge a review panel representing the college constituency groups with determining if the request warrants formal action. If approved, the Cabinet member will charge the review panel with drafting a proposed policy and determine when the draft is ready for presentation to the President's Cabinet for review. Any proposed changes made by the Cabinet to the draft will be shared with the constituency groups prior to the Cabinet's presentation to the College President for final approval.

### 4.2 Development and Approval of Procedures for Implementing Policy

The designated or cognizant Cabinet member assigned to a newly approved policy or policy modification shall disseminate the information to all constituents impacted and initiate the process of developing procedures for implementation. Constituency groups will be asked to identify 1-2 members knowledgeable about the issues addressed in the new policy to participate in the initial discussions about procedures, and the Cabinet member may invite additional members as needed from departmental staff to ensure adequate input is received.

Following deliberations by the discussion group, the designated Cabinet member will select representatives from the group to serve as a writing team to draft a procedure. Using guidelines described in [section 5.4](#) the writing team will prepare the draft and present it to chairs of the constituency groups. Based on their feedback, the designated Cabinet member will adjust as needed and forward the draft to the Cabinet for review and subsequent approval by the President.

### 4.3 Review and Updating of VPCC Policies and Related Procedures

The Cabinet member assigned to an approved policy or related procedure is responsible for reviewing and periodically vetting recommendations for updates to ensure that policies continue to be current, relevant, effective, and compliant with external mandates, laws, and requirements. A checklist (to be developed) may be used for this purpose.

Administrative adjustments or minor corrections to existing policies do not require the formal vetting and approval process outlined in section 4. These adjustments or corrections may be initiated by completing the standard form (to be developed) for requesting minor corrections or adjustments and submitting it to the Cabinet member assigned to the current policy. The President may delegate authority to approve these requests to this designated Cabinet member.

Unanticipated changes in laws, regulations, accreditation processes, or even availability of required equipment may not necessitate changes in existing college policy, but immediate adjustments in procedures, guidelines, or directions for implementing the policy may be required on a timeline too short to complete the formal review and approval process before negatively impacting policy outcomes. The President may delegate authority to the policy's designated Cabinet member to approve a new or revised procedure (form to be developed) to become effective immediately for a period of up to six months while it goes through the formal review and approval process.

#### 4.4 Cabinet Responsibilities

Cabinet members, in collaboration with the President's Chief of Staff, shall develop and promulgate procedures to implement all official college policies and will provide oversight for reviewing, vetting, and distributing new and revised policies and procedures.

Cabinet members or their designees shall ensure the accuracy and timely promulgation of official college policies and procedures related to their areas of responsibility or departments. These responsibilities include:

- 4.4.1 Identifying operations within their respective functional areas of responsibility that need new or revised policy or procedures,
- 4.4.2 Recommending appropriate policy statements to the President and Cabinet for approval,
- 4.4.3 Developing and maintaining procedures for implementing approved policies,
- 4.4.4 Conducting periodic review of policies and procedures for their areas of responsibility or departments,
- 4.4.5 Notifying members of the college community who are affected by new policies, procedures, changes, or updates,
- 4.4.6 Assuring compliance with the official policies and procedures within their respective areas of responsibility.

#### 4.5 Management of VPCC Policies and Procedures

The VPCC website is the official repository of all current college policies and procedures and is accessible electronically to all employees, students, and other constituents of the college community. The President's Chief of Staff maintains official signed copies of all college policies and related procedures, and archived records of outdated policy documents.

The President's Chief of Staff will maintain the master list of policies and the protocol for assigning policy numbers. An approved copy of each policy, with original signatures and effective dates for the initial policy and subsequent policy revisions, will be kept on file. The policies and related procedures will reside in the online *Policy on Policies: Development and Maintenance of Official College Policies*

*and Related Procedures* on the VPCC website and will be accessible to all members of the VPCC community for printing copies as needed.

## **Section 5: Instructions for Proposing New Policies, Policy Modifications, or Procedures**

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### 5.1 Initial request for policy action

- 5.1.1 Congruent with their responsibilities as members of the Executive Staff, Cabinet members are responsible for identifying needs for new or revised policies and procedures within their functional areas and working with appropriate staff to initiate a request for action. Any member of the college community can also initiate action to develop new policies, propose substantive modifications to existing policies, or request archiving outdated policies by completing a Policy Action Request form and submitting it to the appropriate designated member of the President's Cabinet.
- 5.1.2 Within two weeks of receiving a request for action, the designated Cabinet member and the President's Chief of Staff shall review the request to determine if there are any potential conflicts with existing policies and whether all conditions on the checklist (to be developed) have been met. If all conditions have been met, they shall assign an appropriate policy number based on the approved course numbering protocol and forward the request to chairs of the college's constituency groups.
- 5.1.3 Depending on the nature of the request, constituency groups will be given the opportunity over a period of no less than two and no more than three weeks following receipt of the request to select 1-2 members with knowledge of the issues to serve on a combined review panel that will recommend whether the college should move forward with developing a formal proposal. The designated Cabinet member may appoint additional representatives as needed to the review panel to ensure adequate input to make a recommendation.
- 5.1.4 If the review panel recommends moving forward with the request, the initial requestor and the review panel will be charged by the designated Cabinet member with formally drafting the proposed new policy or policy modifications, using the standardized framework described in [section 5.2](#).
- 5.1.5 If the review panel does not recommend further action on the request, the designated Cabinet member will notify the initiator of the request that it was denied and provide feedback and rationale for the decision. The requestor will also be informed that the request can be resubmitted after six months provided the review panel's concerns have been addressed.

### 5.2 Development and approval of draft for new policy or policy modifications

- 5.2.1 The review panel will present their draft to chairs of the constituency groups for comment by their membership, compile the feedback and incorporate recommended changes into the proposal as needed and appropriate.
- 5.2.2 The designated Cabinet member will present the final draft proposal to the President's Cabinet for their endorsement. Any proposed changes by the Cabinet will be shared with the constituency groups prior to presentation to the College President for final approval.

- 5.2.3 Once the final policy has been approved, the designated Cabinet member will work with the college's Webmaster to post it in the appropriate section of the college's online manual of official college policies. The Cabinet member will alert the college community of the change by email and refer constituents to the website for details.
- 5.2.4 All documentation generated in the development and approval of new and/or modified policies related to the executive staff's related areas of responsibility will be maintained in a file by the designated Cabinet member. The President's Chief of Staff will maintain the original signed copy of the approved policy.

### 5.3 Instructions for Policy Format

Policies will be presented in a structured format that identifies the issue, proposes solutions to resolve the issue, and assigns ownership and accountability for monitoring the lifecycle of the policy development, approval, review, revision, and implementation processes.

**HEADER INFORMATION:** VPCC policy number  
Revision Number  
Effective Date

**TITLE:** specific subject or issue addressed

**TABLE OF CONTENTS:** a list of the subject matter covered in the various sections of the policy with hyperlinks to the pages within the online publication of the policy where the information can be found.

**SECTION 1: PURPOSE:** a statement of the rationale and the underlying principle that drives the need for the policy, including, where applicable, identification of any mandates issued by higher level authorities that require the college to develop policies, plans and/or procedures to address a public need.

**SECTION 2: SCOPE AND FUNCTION OF POLICY:** a description of the philosophy and underlying set of principles that guide the decision-making, direction, and operations of the college relative to a desired outcome; defines the scope of constituents who may be impacted.

**SECTION 3: DEFINITIONS:** the specific meaning or interpretation of words or terms used in the descriptions of the policy.

**SECTION 4: PROCESS AND RESPONSIBILITIES:** a broad description of the steps and tasks required for implementing the policy and the specific college officials with designated responsibility for developing, monitoring, and ensuring compliance with policies in their areas of operations.

**SECTION 5: PROCEDURES:** a plan of detailed steps and actions required to implement the policy in a systematic and effective way that will achieve the desired outcome. If the college is mandated to develop only the procedures for a system wide VCCS or externally mandated policy, the procedures will be hyper-linked to the source of the policy.

**SECTION 6: REFERENCES:** the external source or higher authority that mandated the development of a policy or procedure to be implemented at the college, including hyperlinks to the online source of the directive.

SECTION 7: RESPONSIBILITY FOR PERIODIC REVIEWS: identification of the college official responsible for setting the schedule for and conducting a periodic review of the policy or procedure, which may result in recommendations for changes in policy or implementation.

SECTION 8: REVIEW AND REVISION HISTORY: a chronological report of the dates on which the policy or procedure was reviewed, the name of the reviewer, and a brief description of any actions taken because of the review, including the name of the approving authority and the date the changes became effective.

SECTION 9: EFFECTIVE DATE AND APPROVAL: a statement of when and by whom the current version of the policy was approved.

#### 5.4 Instructions for Development and Approval of Procedures (for New or Modified Policies)

5.4.1 Immediately following approval of a new or modified policy, the designated Cabinet member must ensure that information is disseminated in an email and posted online to all constituents impacted by the changes.

Constituency groups will be given the opportunity to identify 1-2 members knowledgeable about the issues addressed in the new policy to participate in discussions to develop procedures for implementation. The Cabinet member may appoint additional representatives as needed from departmental staff to ensure adequate input for anticipating the policy's impact and developing a procedure that will contribute to the achievement of policy objectives.

5.4.2 Based on input from the constituency groups and staff, the designated Cabinet member will select a writing team and charge a cognizant staff member with drafting a procedure for implementing the policy using the format, forms and guidelines described in [section 5.5](#).

5.4.3 The completed draft will be presented to chairs of the constituency groups for comment by their membership. Working with the lead staff member, the designated Cabinet member will make necessary adjustments based on the feedback and present it to the President's Cabinet for review. Any proposed changes by the Cabinet will be shared with the constituency groups prior to the Cabinet's recommendation to the College President for final approval.

5.4.4 Once the procedures have been approved, the designated Cabinet member will work with the college's Webmaster to post it in the appropriate section of the college's online manual of official college procedures, alert the college community by email to their location, and refer constituents to the website for details.

5.4.5 Unanticipated changes in laws, regulations, accreditation processes, or even availability of required equipment may not necessitate changes in existing college policy, but immediate adjustments in procedures, guidelines, or directions for implementing the policy may be required on a timeline too short to complete the formal review and approval process before negatively impacting policy outcomes. The President may delegate authority to the policy's designated Cabinet member to approve a revised procedure to become effective immediately for a period of up to six months while it goes through the formal review and approval process.



5.4.6 All documentation generated in the development and approval of new or modified procedures related to policies within their areas of responsibility will be maintained in a file by the designated Cabinet member. The President's Chief of Staff will maintain the original signed copy of all approved procedures.

#### 5.5 Instructions for Procedures Format (to be developed)

#### 5.6 Location of policies and procedures

An area of the VPCC website will be designated as the manual and official repository of current policies, procedures, and plans, and will be available electronically to all employees, students, and constituencies of the college. Supplementary information such as instructions, guidelines and forms used in the development and approval process for official policies and procedures will reside in a separate section of the online manual and linked to relevant policy documents.

To ensure college wide consistency of policies and procedures, separate publications or versions of these official documents may not be duplicated on individual campus, division, or department webpages. All references to official college policies and/or procedures must use hyperlinks to appropriate documents in the official online manual for college policies and procedures. Internal rules, regulations, or guidelines that affect only a limited number of individuals or a specific campus, department or office do not fall within the scope of this official online manual and may be published elsewhere on their individual websites. To the extent that an internal document conflicts with an official policy or procedure published in the manual, the official manual will prevail.

The format of official policy documents is outlined in [section 5.3](#) above.

Outdated or inactive policy documents are archived and stored for future reference in a different location. They are indexed and searchable, but they cannot be altered or changed. Original policy and procedures documents with signatures are maintained in the Office of the President by the President's Chief of Staff.

#### 5.7 Numeric Structure and Organization of College Policies and Procedures

To ensure that college policies and procedures are easy to locate and are aligned with Chapter 29 of the Code of Virginia, VCCS policies, procedures and regulations governing community colleges, SACSCOC principles of accreditation, the U.S. Department of Education and other governing bodies influencing public higher education, VPCC has organized its policies and procedures using a numbering system that broadly reflects the structure of the VCCS Policy Manual and the college's administrative organization.

PFO-100	Physical Facilities and Operations
HSS-200	Health, Safety, and Security
HRM-300	Human Resource Management and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
AFM-400	Administration and Financial Management
EDU-500	Educational Programs (Academic and Workforce Development)
SDS-600	Student Development Services

CPD-700	Communications, Public Relations, and Development
PRE-800	Planning, Research, and Effectiveness (Accreditation and Reporting)
ITS-900	Information Technology (Management, Operations, Security)

## **Section 6: References**

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There are no references to external authorities mandating this policy for Development and Maintenance of Official College Policies and Related Procedures.

## **Section 7: Schedule and Responsibilities for Periodic Reviews**

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This policy will be reviewed annually by the Cabinet in collaboration with the President's Chief of Staff beginning one year after the effective date following formal approval.

## **Section 8: Review and Revision History**

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Initial review of this policy will occur one year from the approval and effective date.

Original author(s): Dr. Lonnie Schaffer, Mr. Steven Felker

Original version reviewed and approved by Dr. Towuanna Porter Brannon, President on January 23, 2024

Revision proposed by: Mr. Steven Felker, Ms. Ada Badgley, February 11, 2025

Review of this policy will occur on or around February 18, 2026.

## **Section 9: Effective Date and Approval**

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Revised, reviewed, and approved February 18, 2025.

- College President, Dr. Towuanna Porter Brannon
- Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Kerry Ragno
- Vice President for Workforce Development and Innovation, Todd Estes
- Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Success, Daniela Cigularova
- Vice President for Finance and Administration, Steven Carpenter
- Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness and Transformation, Steven Felker
- Chief of Staff and Director of Strategic Initiatives, Ada Badgley